1. Fivush says that adolescents use “culturally available” narratives to construct life stories, for example,the “rags to riches” narrative which is prominent in American culture. What other narratives would be readily available in the cultures with which you are familiar?

2. Fivush writes, “autobiographical narratives are the point at which the individual and culture intersect.” Briefly explain what she means by this statement and give an example of how it might work in a concrete, practical situation.

3. Fivush claims that a child’s memory is often a “coconstruction.” What does “co” refer to? What does “construction” refer to? What does this model of memory suggest about how culture is formed and maintained?

4. Hanley, Perlstein, and Steinberg each provide some examples of beliefs and values associated with working class life. Consider one of their examples and describe how it could conceivably be the product, as Fivush describes, of having been “drawn into conversations about the past and … invited to participate in coconstructing narratives of daily events.”

5. Summarize the differences described by Fivush between Eastern and Western mothers’ elaborative style in coconstructing autobiographical narratives (p 327). What rationale does she offer for why these differences might exist? Which of Greenfield’s three approaches to studying cultural phenomena do you think this kind of cultural research exemplifies? Why?

6. Both Fivush and Rogoff refer to a “sociocultural model.” Are they talking about the same thing? Summarize what Fivush is modeling and what is sociocultural about her approach?

7. Gjerde says that he “asks whether culture is something ‘out there’ for us to discover, or whether it is produced and sustained through discourse and power” (p. 138). What is his answer to this question? Give an example of “the forces that give rise to culture” (p. 139) from his point of view.

8. Speaking of cultural psychology, Gjerde objects to “the use of nations as ‘cultural containers’” (p. 144), and argues for “emphasizing classes, not countries, as our units” (p. 145). Why is he taking this position? How is it related to his concern about power? How well does his concern with power and class seem to fit with Hanley’s description of the problems of social mobility?

9. Gjerde argues that beneath the seeming uniformity of cultural practices we can see struggles over meaning in cultural discourse? He says in the study of culture we are dealing with “constructed entities” rather than “natural entities” (p. 147). What are some of the forces that construct and maintain cultural practices – such as Canadian multiculturalism, for example?

10. Gjerde suggests cultural psychologists focus on cultural “concerns” (p. 148, 152) rather than cultural values. What does he see as the advantage of his suggestion? How is his interest in concerns related to his interest in “how real people struggle with the complexities and indeterminacies of daily living” (p. 139) and with a “careful study of ‘personal culture’” (p 152)?

11. Suppose that Gjerde read the article by Fivush. What compliments and criticisms do you think he would give her for the work she describes?