

## CULTURE AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS AS EXPERIMENTAL SYSTEMS

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Culture is (1) that relational (ca. 1848), (2) complex whole . . . (1870s), (3) whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts (ca. 1914), (4) mediated through powerful and power-laden symbolic forms (1930s), (5) whose multiplicities and performatively negotiated character (1960s), (6) is transformed by alternative positions, organizational forms, and leveraging of symbolic systems (1980s), (7) as well as by emergent new technosciences, media, and biotechnical relations (ca. 2005).

Without a differentiated and relational notion of the cultural (the arts, media, styles, religions, value-orientations, ideologies, imaginaries, worldviews, soul, and the like), the social sciences would be crippled, reducing social action to notions of pure instrumentality.<sup>1</sup> When singularized, frozen, or nominalized, “culture” can be a dangerous concept, subject to fallacies of pejorative and discriminatory hypostatization (“We have reason, they have culture”) or immobilized variables (“Their culture is composed of ‘x’ features”).<sup>2</sup> The challenge of cultural analysis is to develop translation and mediation tools for helping make visible differences of interests, access, power, needs, desires, and philosophical perspective. I draw on the notion of experimental systems as developed in science studies (particularly Hans-Jörg Rheinberger’s *Toward a History of Epistemic Things* [1997]) as a way of thinking about how the anthropological and social science notion of culture has evolved as an analytic tool. Where this article ends provides the starting point, in reciprocal manner, for a companion article to rethink the cultural genealogies of science studies (Fischer 2006b).

The modern social science use of the term *culture* is rooted in the historical milieus that arose with the dismantling of the religious and aristocratic legitimations of feudal

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Vol. 22, Issue 1, pp. 1–65. ISSN 0886-7356, online ISSN 1548-1360. © 2007 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press’s Rights and Permissions website, <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp>. DOI: 10.1525/can.2007.22.1.1.

and patrimonial regimes, and the agons of Third World particularistic “cultures” against First World claims of universal “civilization”. These agons began with the English industrial revolution, the U.S. and French “bourgeois” revolutions, and the efforts of peripheral states in what would become Germany and Italy (and later in what would be called the Second and Third Worlds) to “catch up” without losing their “identity.”<sup>3</sup> The collection of folklore, epics, oral genres, ritual forms, customs, kinship terminologies, jural norms and sanctions, dispute mediation techniques, material-semiotic objects, music, and the like, were important in nation-building ideologies, in nostalgia-based constructions of identity, and in hegemonic struggles between what was counted as future-oriented “modernity” and what was counted, reconstructed, or reinvented as past-oriented “tradition.”

Official histories of anthropology often credit Sir E. B. Tylor’s “omnibus” definition – “culture or civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” – as providing the first canonic counterpoint to definitions of culture as the “best” productions in aesthetics, knowledge, and morals.<sup>4</sup> Although such elitist “high culture” definitions of culture arose in dialectical relation to more demotic or foreign cultural forms,<sup>5</sup> the anthropological understanding of culture that Tylor began to unpack asserts the importance of understanding the relations between all cultural forms at play, in contestation within social formations. The 19th-century rise of Quakers such as Tylor and scholars and reformers from other dissenting sects in England provided a critique of state-established forms of religious legitimation and cultural presuppositions, in synergy with scientific and political Enlightenment ideals of the previous century (and taken up also in reform movements in India, the Islamic world, China, the United States and elsewhere, as is acknowledged by the florescence of recent work on “alternative modernities”; see, e.g., Gaonkar 2001).<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, political economy reformers (including Chartists, abolitionists, St. Simon, Comte, Proudhon, Marx, and others) provided a space for critique and for organizing political movements to reshape the material environments and infrastructures of cultural formations. These 19th-century articulations would develop into the methods of cultural accounting of classical sociology, British social anthropology, U.S. cultural anthropology, French structuralism, poststructuralisms, and considerations of “alternative modernities.”

The “jeweler’s eye view” of ethnographers of the early and mid-20th century succeeded in putting on the comparative philosophical map the cultural logics—and their social implications, and historical circumstances—of the Trobriands, Nuer, Azande, Yoruba, Ndembu, Navaho, Kwakiutl, Shavante, Arante, Walpiri, and others. These cultural logics were used to create structural understandings of the possible

cultural variabilities and their social implications in diverse domains including exchange theory and kinship, political organization and cosmology, jural roles and personhood, speech genres and interactive sociolinguistic styles, economic spheres and informal power, gender roles and psychodynamic complexes, and the structuring of knowledge and awareness by linguistic grammars and cultural frames. The “jeweler’s eye view” means not only the ability to bring out the different facets of cultural variability, but also a constant back and forth movement between (loup assisted) close-up viewings and sitting back for a more global view of the settings. Classic ethnographies, constructed as “synchronic” snapshots of a “moment” in time (classically an annual cycle and a half or 18 months), need and are receiving historical recontextualization, through both restudy and archival work.

Just as we increasingly recognize the cultures of classic ethnographies (both as they were, and as they have become) as already reworked parts of cultures of larger national, colonial, imperial, regional, and global formations, yielding often out-of-sync alternative modernities, so too the interactions of proliferating kinds of cultures (indigenous, ethnic, occupational, expert, linguistic, local-regional, etc.) are becoming more complex and differentiated. New forms of globalization and modernization are bringing all parts of the globe into greater, but uneven, polycentric interaction. New multicultural ethics are evolving out of demands that cultures attend to one another. Within transnational and global technoscientific networks proliferating specialized vocational and class cultures must pay attention to one another in information-rich and multiperspectival institutions lest high-hazard, mission-critical operations (chemical, aeronautical, medical industries), or even just ordinary trade (global advertising, production, and sales operations) go awry.

Culture, defined as a methodological concept or tool of inquiry, might best be understood in terms of its historically layered growth of specifications and differentiations, refined into a series of “experimental systems” that, in a manner akin to the “experimental systems” of the natural sciences, allow new realities to be seen and engaged as its own parameters are changed. To think of the methodological concept of culture as experimental systems is to assert that there is something both experimental and systematic: that social science accounts of culture emerge from intermediate and interactional spaces, both intersubjective and institutional, that were awkwardly or poorly handled by prior accounts.<sup>7</sup> Objects, theories and techniques change in focus, resolution, or fidelity (to draw on visual and sonic descriptive modalities) as we vary our cultural concepts. Historically, concepts of culture have been rhetorical as well as analytical tools in struggles over class and religion; universalistic versus particularistic claims about reason, aesthetics, morality; legitimate versus illegitimate forms of power; science, politics, public spheres, civil societies, and rights and justice.

Alternative genealogies can be constructed for the word (*cultura* as a Latin future participle of what comes into being rather than what is), as can humanistic usages (Giambattista Vico's 18th-century notion of culture as that which is knowable because created by man). But the modern social science and anthropological construction of the term arises initially in the intergenerational reformulation between the grand comparativists of the 19th-century and the in-depth fieldworkers of the 20th century.

Although science, technology, literacy, poetics, religion, and capitalism have, since Marx and Tylor, been central to discussions of culture, the focus of debate, the drawing of metaphors and epistemic analogies from the leading sciences of the day, and the refinement of methodological concepts of culture have shifted over the past century and a half, layering themselves as a set of lenses and devices of increasing generativity.

### CULTURE IS THAT RELATIONAL (CA. 1848) . . .

Premonitions and protoformulations of what later would develop into four components of *relational cultural analysis* or cultural accounting can be found already in various places in the mid-19th century. The emergence of *working-class cultures* in relation to bourgeois and aristocratic class cultures can be found in Friedrich Engels's protoethnography of working-class Manchester in 1844 (Engels 1887, Marcus 1974); and in the organized complaints of industrially displaced Luddites (skilled workers protesting not all machines but de-skilling machines and the introduction of prices not related to custom and skill that would destroy their control over their means of production and turn them into unskilled proletarians), Chartists (workers who felt excluded by the suffrage Reform Act of 1832 and the Poor Law of 1834 and demanded charters of universal male suffrage and other political reforms), and the demands for "right to labor" at one's craft (rather than as proletarianized unskilled labor) in the 1830 and 1848 revolutions in France. These organized complaints and political demands would develop into an explicit working-class culture in the late 19th century (Nimitz 2000; Sewell 1980; Thompson 1968).<sup>8</sup> The emergence of a *bourgeois culture* can be seen in the discussions of *Bildung* (culture) in Germany, institutionalized by Fichte's new university in Berlin (Lepinies 2006; Ringer 1969; Readings 1996).<sup>9</sup> The emergence of *national cultures* becomes crystallized in the standardized national languages, creation of university-taught canons of literature and history in these languages, and the print-mediated literacy required by industrialization (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Habermas 1989).<sup>10</sup> The emergence of *culture* as a dialectical agonist to *civilization* can be seen in the nationalist and nation-state building discourses, in which locality, nation-building, and universality contest. The emergence of notions of *culture as hegemonic* power relations becomes explicit in the sketches by Hegel, Heine, and

Marx of why different groups in society might see their interests in agonistic fashion as well as why, critically, they often misrecognize their own interests in ways that benefit others (ideology, hegemony), as so memorably expressed in Marx's 1852 essay *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1898).

Four components of relational "culture" begin to become clarified in the mid-19th century by the agonistic differentiation and reorganization of modern societies: (1.1) folklore and identity; (1.2) ideologies and political consciousness; (1.3) class and status cultures; and (1.4) pluralized, relational cultures versus universalizing civilizational ideologies

### **Folklore and National Cultural Identities**

The 19th-century novels of Sir Walter Scott (d. 1832) began in English literature an exploration of looking back at fading regional cultural settings from an insider-outsider perspective. A member of the lowlander elite writing about highlander Scottish society, Scott's novels became key to Scottish identity for unionist United Kingdom and English audiences, thereby helping to define an emergent British national and British imperial identity. The debates of the period over James Macpherson's 1760 *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language*, judged to be fraudulent and imaginatively composed, were not unlike efforts to compose national epics in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, which Ernest Gellner credits as the background to the suspicion of Bronislaw Malinowski toward explanation by historical roots and insistence instead of the ideological functionality in the present of the formulation or retelling of such cultural forms (Gellner 1988:175). Among such functionalities were also projections or models used in colonial settings: It is often remarked that Scottish clan structures provided models for Robertson-Smith and others for understanding and characterizing tribal organization in Arabia, in the Hindu-Kush, and elsewhere. (See further, under late 19th century, below.)

### **Cultural Ideologies, and Political Consciousness**

Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, written in the aftermath of the failures of the 1848 revolutions, not only became a touchstone for later writers trying to puzzle out underlying structural patterns of social organization and cultural forms (Claude Lévi-Strauss says he would always reread *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* before sitting down to write a new project), but is also an early locus classicus for thinking about class cultures and how they are aligned under hegemonic ideologies. His resonant phrase about the peasants being like potatoes in a sack was not contemptuous but a summary tag for the ways in which their economic, organizing and strategizing possibilities were fragmented and controlled.<sup>11</sup> His dramatization of a revolution running backward (propelled by each higher class abandoning the

interests of the next lower one when it thought it might gain momentary advantage, but thereby in the longer term isolating and weakening itself) was a vivid way of charting the different class fractions in the revolution (class fractions resonating with petrochemical fractioning of different grades of oil, as well as with the arithmetic of voting, just as class strata and stratification resonated with slower but active geological processes of sedimentation, upheaval, intrusion, and temporary consolidation).

At issue in both examples were problems of political consciousness and ideology, not just economic interests. Key to the stabilization of ruling classes, fractions, or coalitions was the ability to make their control appear to be the natural order of things, legitimizing their society's cultural forms, hierarchies, and practices. Marx was a pragmatic organizer, trying to prevent precipitous armed labor rebellions that could only be crushed, and rethinking the failures of earlier conceptions as with the defeats of 1848. It became clear on the 1848 barricades of Paris that this would be the last of the artisan revolts, and that an industrial proletariat would not come into political strength for many more years. Even then, as in Germany, it would compete with a rapidly growing white-collar class for political power. Consciousness, alienation, commodity fetishism—cultural armatures of political economy—would be central to these struggles. Indeed, in the 1869 preface to the second edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, Marx contrasts his explanatory narrative with “great man in history” accounts (Victor Hugo's *Napoleon les Petit*) as well as with deterministic ones (Proudhon's *Coup d'etat*), insisting on the theatrical, linguistic-translational, allusional nature of cultural and social forms, including a fortiori revolutions, which draw on and are haunted by cultural forms of the past, and yet sometimes can leverage novel breakthroughs and transformations.

As Bendix and Lipset (1951) would put it in one of many meditations on why the concept of class seemed so much less politically salient in the United States than in Europe, class in Europe was always an interpretive cultural construct involving theories of social change in which class becomes salient at times of misalignment between power and interests (as when a new class begins to challenge the power of a weakening hegemonic one). In the United States, as William Lloyd Warner demonstrated in his long-running *Yankee City* studies (1949–51), people tended to view class without any such theories of social change. Class was conceived as either objective indices (income, job type, education, church and voluntary association affiliations, etc.) or as relative subjective feeling states (in which those close to but not at the top, the lower upper class or upper middle class, had the most sharply developed sense of the pecking hierarchy) that in any case could be gotten around by individualistic hard work or moving westward.

Distinctive working-class cultures became politically salient, organized through unions, workingmen's circles, sports clubs, and parties, sometimes fueling thinking about social change and national or international futures, but as often, as Paul Willis's ethnography *Learning to Labor* (1977) described for later 20th-century working-class lads in England, locking people into class position. The elucidation of various working-class cultures around the world, although usually grounded in political economic analyses, take on a variety of cultural armatures, from C. L. R. James's (1963) situating of Caribbean working-class formations of "respectability" in relation both to empire and to fears of sliding back into the desperations of the poor to the Subaltern historians teasing out working-class cultures in India in the context of caste and language differences.<sup>12</sup>

### Class Cultures and Status Distinction

It is with Max Weber's *Verstehende Soziologie* ("interpretive sociology" or sociology of understanding or meaning) that analytic tools for unpacking the cultural formations of estates, status groups, and classes began to come into sharper focus. Using a comparative approach to questions of power and legitimacy, education and bureaucracy, this-worldly ethics and inner motivations, Weber compared the mandarin examination system used to recruit bureaucratic officials in China to the use of Greek, Latin, and vernacular classics as a mode of recruiting officials from the new educational institutions (gymnasium, the new universities in Berlin and elsewhere) for the new German bureaucratic state. Greek was not of particularly instrumental use in a modern bureaucracy, but as with recruitment to the imperial cadres of the British Empire, it was one of a set of markers of status distinction. In German, the term for such cultivation (*Bildung*) had everything to do with the creation of the bourgeoisie as well as the civil service. *Bildung* involved *Kultur*, which in turn was part of universal civilization, but German *Kultur* was also distinctive, constructed around a canon of literature and philosophy. *Bildung* involved dress, behavior, punctuality, discipline, and various knowledge sets.

Modern capitalist class and ideological cultures come into being historically, according to Weber, through a conjunction of material and cultural causes. Whereas feudal estates or patrimonial status groups have other motivations, values, and cultural styles, the culture of industrial capitalism comes into being through the conjuncture of five causal factors: (1) an anxiety structure of theological beliefs in predestination and need for signs of whether one is among the saved, which provided a this-worldly economic ethic of demonstrating God's pleasure through worldly success (the Protestant ethic); (2) an organizational structure that disciplined its members to adhere to this work ethic (the "sect"); (3) a position in the stratification system where such an

ethic could be especially effective in achieving upward mobility or stable income—the lower middle and upper lower classes, small businessmen (Marx's low road to capitalism); (4) a historical cultural change of values and life style among mercantile classes of the 17th century, who stopped using profits to buy land, positions of nobility, and luxury lifestyles, and began living Spartan lives and investing profits back into productive enterprises (Marx's high road to capitalism); and (5) world-historical changes in global markets and technologies.

None of these causes are sufficient alone, Weber cautions, nor exclusive to Protestant communities: other religions have their forms of anxiety structures, organizational discipline, and finely measured religiosities that may be equally productive of this-worldly economic drive (Jains, Jews, and Parsis are among his examples), and may become part of industrial capitalist modes of production, given the proper conditions. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1930)—two essays written from a vivid comparison of North Carolina and Germany, part of his larger comparative sociology of religions, in turn part of his larger comparative studies of economy and society, for which motivating and legitimating cultural forms are central—Weber tries to account for the elective affinity of causes.

The multicausal analysis, as well as Weber's attention to the varieties of Protestant forms and their changes in social locus over time, protects both against the chauvinism of attributing all progress to Christian or Protestant grounds, and against scapegoating Jews (or similar groups) for the ills of capitalism.<sup>13</sup> The work sparked a parallel debate over the rise of the modern sciences in 17th-century England (Merton 1938), a debate taken up again in the 1980s with a Weberian attention to the material, literary, and social "technologies" of experimental sciences as well as the synergy or "coproduction" between a particular field of rationalization and other arenas of legitimation of authority (e.g., Shapin and Shafer 1985).

What is crucial here for the study of cultural forms is Weber's insistence on understanding the cultural frames of reference of the motivations and intentions of actors. Even a concept such as power for Weber is famously defined as the probability that an order given will be obeyed, and therefore the strongest form of power is neither force nor economic monopoly but culturally formulated legitimate domination (on the grounds of tradition or that the person giving an order is legitimately entitled to do so). Thus religion, as a central component of culture, is often analyzed by Weber not only as differentiated by social position (priestly classes and laity have different relations to the symbolic, ritual, and belief systems), but also as legitimating ritual structures for state formations, especially for the ancient empires and their patrimonial successors.



Classic Weberian accounts utilizing the more detailed knowledge of 20th-century fieldwork, or utilizing the questions raised by such an ethnographic sensibility, include Clifford Geertz's account, in *Religion of Java* (1960), of how class and status stratified religious and cultural formations in a decolonized, modernizing "new nation;" E. P. Thompson's *History of the English Working Class* (1968), which, albeit a more self-described Marxist account, analyzes the cultural formation of work discipline and the role of the religiosity of the dissenting sects; and Joseph Gusfield's *Symbolic Crusade* (1963), a study of the temperance movement in the United States that likewise illuminates the religious and class inflected antagonisms of small town elites feeling themselves losing political ground to Catholic and urban immigrants, all formulated through the language of cultural legitimacy.

### **Culture(s) and Civilization(s)**

Nineteenth-century England and France saw themselves as the vanguard of universal civilization, carriers of comparative knowledge from which education and reason could devise progressively more humane, efficient, just, and free societies (*liberté, fraternité, égalité*, in the French version; white man's burden in a tutelary vision of the task of colonialism). Germany and other nations on the periphery saw cultures in dialectical relationship to the French and English metropolises rather than only singular civilization. German social theories would thus emphasize the plurality of cultures, and even more importantly the dialectical relationship between First World cultures and Second or Third World ones, beginning with Marx's sensitivity to the contradictions of class positions and their "cultural" perspectives or dialectical (in)abilities to develop political consciousness, and also with his notes on the relation between labor in the colonies (Ireland, the United States, and India) and conditions in England.

As the Moroccan historian Abdullah Laroui (1976) would put it in the 1970s, Marx was the model Third World intellectual, to be followed by many others, moving to the metropole to study and strategize ways out of his homeland's subordinate position in a globalizing world, paying particular attention to what would come to be called dual societies, underdevelopment, deskilling, and proletarianization. For colonial political leaders and social theorists (Gandhi, Ambedkar, Fanon, Memmi, Mamoni, Césaire, C. L. R. James, W. E. B. Du Bois, etc.) the dialectical relationship between self and other, between the conditions of the colonized and the colonizer, could never be forgotten in a simple universalistic account. Laroui would emphasize a quintessential cultural dilemma in *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual* (1976) in the last quarter of the 20th century: one could adopt a Marxian ideology and, as in South Yemen, seize control of the state, but then have to impose a tutelary dictatorship until the population catches up to the cultural perspective of the vanguard (all the

more oppressive the smaller the vanguard); or one could attempt to mobilize change by utilizing the cultural language of the masses, Islam, but then have to deal with a cultural language vulnerable to theocratic or fundamentalist capture.

The 19th-century terms *culture* and *civilization* became pluralized in the 20th century, and at the core of this pluralization in both cases were notions of cultural symbols and meaning structures, usually with deep histories, as in “Islamic,” “Persian,” “Indian,” or “Chinese” civilizations, which each could contain numbers of cultures within.

**CULTURE IS (1) that relational (CA. 1848), (2) complex whole (1870s) . . .**

Sir E. B. Tylor’s second key contribution, complementing the “omnibus” definition of culture, was his paper pointing out the arbitrariness of Victorian charts of progress, made nowhere more obvious than in the field of morality. Indeed, although British anthropology remained within a general self-congratulatory evolutionary paradigm through WWI, it is crucial to recognize that the fight waged by anthropology on behalf of rationalism and empiricism against the dogmatism of the established church was part of a larger series of social struggles having to do with the various reform acts of 19th-century England, including those which enfranchised more and more of the population, reformed penal law and social policies for dealing with the poor and reserve labor force, and those that reformed marriage and family law. Anthropologists were often associated with the dissenting sects of the rising shopkeeper, artisan, and independent professional classes, espousing individualism and self-reliance, and hostility to older relations of hierarchy, status, and ascribed rather than achieved position. And some, such as William Robertson-Smith, even on occasion lost their chairs for their outspokenness against the dogmas of the established church.

Whereas in England utilitarianism became the new social theory, in Germany (and France after the Franco-Prussian War), the rapid industrial revolution and state formation under Bismarck would lead to recognition that the second industrial revolution required a social theory more integrative or institutional than a merely utilitarian dependence on the decisions of atomized individuals.

The four components of the relational culture concept that began to emerge in the mid-19th century now become, in the last quarter of the 19th century, (2.1) engaged in England with the elaboration of utilitarianism both as a tool for rationalized social reform and as an ideology of Victorian culture; and (2.2.) on the European continent with the reformulation of cultural nationalisms and universal civilization(s), including at least an intellectual engagement, through philology and comparative religion, with universal civilizations other than Christendom.

## Utilitarianism as Native Social Theory, a Class Culture, and a Professional Culture

Within the various emergent forms of utilitarianism in England and elsewhere, socialism of both the Marxian and Fabian varieties were accommodated under the calculus of the “greatest good for the greatest number” and the social welfare of society. This calculus left little explicit room for notions of culture except in the form of values and preferences that might be factors in utility curves. Yet the educational curriculum in public schools in preparation for the colonial service and public administration at home was based more on classical humanities than on engineering or other practical skills. Culture was carefully constructed and enacted while being misrecognized as merely the “best that civilization has to offer.” As citizens of one of the two most powerful global empires of the day, the temptation for British thinkers was to see English utilitarianism as a universal logic rather than as a conceptual machine that could be used to erase or obscure the presuppositions, assumptions, or cultural logics that allowed the calculation to work. “Formally free labor markets” in which workers might bargain with employers by organizing were recognizable, but less easily recognizable were the nonmonetary elements that went into the reproduction of the labor force. Utilitarianism tended to obscure why it might be in the interest of plantation laborers in Jamaica or British Guyana only to work until a certain amount was earned each week, and then use the rest of the week for their own nonmarket subsistence agriculture (therefore being stigmatized as “lazy,” “nonmaximizing,” and “noneconomic” actors with low productivity), or why paying copper miners in Northern Rhodesia insufficient wages to support families back home for their lost labor in the tribal economy might cause agricultural collapse and famine (Allen 1965; Dumont 1957; Richards 1939; Rodney 1972). *Culture* in these colonial conditions often became a pejorative mode of dismissing the rationality and sophistication of subaltern populations: “their culture, their values” are different.

Utilitarianism of this reductionistic sort remains powerful in such professional *cultures* as classical and neoclassical economics (in competition with more cultural-analytic fields as institutional, historical, political, family, or feminist economics), and it continues to provide several important legacies. The first is the ability of rationalistic models to serve as probes against which reality can be measured and new questions generated. The second is the optimistic, prudential reformism, the insistence that because society and culture are made by human beings, they can be improved (Vico’s humanism reformulated in terms of restructuring social institutions and moral education).<sup>14</sup> A third legacy, central to 19th-century utilitarian reformism, was Jeremy Bentham’s insistence that the rules of government be published and made

public, thereby tempering the arbitrary capriciousness of a monarch, tyrant, dictator, power elite, imperial president, or executive's will.

*Culture* begins to emerge in these very practical fields, first as a conceptual tool for making visible the (often counterfactual) assumptions on which rational choice models are constructed; second, as a professional or disciplinary formation with its own incentives and sanctions on thinking otherwise; and third, as embodied in material media and forms of communicative action and performance, as in Bentham's demands for public accountability.

Two problematics develop in the 20th century alongside these articulations of culture. The first has to do with democratic theory: what Carl Schmidt called the dilemmas of constitutional democracies (how to deal with political forces that want to destroy the constitutional form, but forces that nonetheless cannot simply be excluded [Kennedy 2004]), and what Jürgen Habermas called the decay of the public sphere (the manipulation of common sense and public opinion [Habermas 1989, 1975]). The second has to do with the atomization of cultural accounting whether in political economy (individualist "contract theory"), evolutionary theories that debated "diffusion" versus "independent invention" of cultural "traits" (the "shreds and patches" version of culture) at best recognizing "culture complexes" of traits that seemed bound together, or stories of how universal reason might triumph over local superstition.

### **The Reformulation of National Cultures**

The demotic omnibus definition of culture as everything produced by human beings provided a productive foundation for including in social science accounts the cultures of peasants, religious groups, migrants, and a variety of others, contesting the dominance of high culture, and figuring culture as a field of contestation and differential interpretation among social groups. Epics, poetry, and folklore collections were often important to nation-building and their ideological legitimation. Canonic collectors of folklore were often influenced by modernist movements: the brothers Grimm in Germany, Charles Perrault in France, Itzhak Manger for Yiddish Poland, Yangita Kunio in Japan, Sadeq Hedayat in Iran, and so forth. Contending nationalist mythologies continue to be used as mobilizers of irredentism and communal strife.

Sir James Frazer's collection of folklore in *The Golden Bough* (1890, 1915) remains one of the most influential works of this phase of the culture—civilization dialectic. On the one hand, it powerfully influenced a generation of early 20th-century European writers in search of symbols and imaginative forms to expand their literary and cultural repertoires (Vickery 1973). As a work of comparative ethnology, it remains a descriptively rich collection that repays returning readers. It is particularly rewarding on ancient Middle Eastern and East African rituals and the notions of sacred kingship,

and the assimilation of the Christian ritualization and sanctification of Jesus as one more of the Middle Eastern seasonal renewal rituals. And for the study of English culture of the late 19th century, *The Golden Bough* is itself a testimony to the ideological drive for modern reason against superstition and clerical authority.

On the other hand, for the development of anthropological methods, Frazer became the benchmark against which the next generation of methodological innovation defined itself, eschewing his “among-itis” (comparing items from different cultures out of context), and his reduction of meaning to the common sense of his own culture (not having methods of access for richly understanding the “native point of view,” and thereby discounting the intelligence of the other).

The struggle between utilitarianism and culture (Durkheim 1912; Parsons 1937, 1951), culture and practical reason (Sahlins 1976), or idealism and utilitarianism (Kant d. 1804) is an enduring tension between the recognition of society as open to reform and directed change, and the recognition that when one tries to change something, others things may change concomitantly often in unexpected ways. Some of these concomitant changes may be anticipated if one has both a structural and a hermeneutical understanding of the interconnections of cultural understandings and institutions.

**CULTURE IS (1) that relational (CA. 1848), (2) complex whole . . . (1870s), (3) whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts (CA. 1914) . . .**

At the turn of the 20th century the notion of culture comes to partake of a vision of structure and function widespread across intellectual disciplines (geology, biology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, Durkheimian sociology, British social anthropology), a search for relations among parts, and a sense that phenomena have structures and functions integral to their existence, adaptability, growth, and decay. Central to the emergent formulations of culture in this period are the methodological discussions of how to study the “meanings” or symbolic structures that make culture a level of analysis not reducible to mere biological, psychological, or sociological frames. These discussions about the *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Verstehendes Soziologie* (or interpretive, hermeneutic, or symbolic analysis of social communicative action) were central to philosophy (Dilthey), history (Weber), sociology (Durkheim), linguistics (de Saussure, Bloomfield), and anthropology (Boas, Malinowski, Kroeber, Sapir, Hallowell, etc.).

The evolution of class structures (esp. the growth of the white-collar classes faster than the industrial proletariat in Germany), changes in the bureaucratic requirements of the second industrial revolution and large scale societies (no longer built on small feudal and parish institutions), and new forms of urban life mediated by commodity fetishisms (crowds, boulevards, shop windows, walls decorated with advertisements,

etc.) are key grounds on which “culture” now became formulated in direct opposition to the cultural theories of utilitarianism and early industrial capitalism.

In a formulation that became canonic for mid-20th-century sociology, Talcott Parsons suggested that whereas utilitarian social theories were based on atomism (actors as individuals), means–ends models, and an unordered, ever growing, and infinite number of possible wants, desires, and ends, Durkheimian sociology (and other social theories of the second industrial revolution) challenged all three of these “axioms:” Individuals are divided entities, only partially “socialized” by their families, communities, and nation-states. Values are organized through collective representations (or systems of symbols) and the *conscience collective* (punning on conscience and consciousness, a moral force as well as a system of representations). Short-term, means–ends rationalities very often do not account for the choices and actions of individuals and social groups. Max Weber similarly distinguished between short term instrumental rationalities and long-term value rationalities that were organized into systems of “legitimate domination” that allowed the exercise of power through individuals feeling that orders given should be obeyed because they were right and legitimate, what Marx earlier had delineated as the ideological ability of ruling political factions to make their perspective on the world appear as part of the natural order.

In the early 20th century, four analytics of culture begin to take on methodological rigor: (3.1) culture and linguistics; (3.2) culture and hermeneutics; (3.3) culture, social structure, and personhood; and (3.4) culture and the comparative method.

### **Culture and Linguistics**

The structural linguistics of Fernand de Saussure, Leonard Bloomfield, Nikolay Trubetzkoy, Roman Jakobson, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Whorf, and the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce were to become growing influences on anthropological theories of culture. From 19th-century efforts by Sir Henry Maine and Louis Henry Morgan to deal with systems of kinship terms and totemic systems as ordered linguistic and jural sets, the movement was toward the model that Saussure classically formulated: meaning is established by a system of differences. Just as each language selects but a few phonemes from the possible set of phonetic sounds, so too languages and cultures divide up grammatical and semantic spaces differently. (*Mouton* in French is not the same as *mutton* in English.) The Sapir–Whorf Hypothesis (Whorf 1956) generalized the recognition that Native American languages expressed mood, place, aspect, and tense in radically different ways than do Indo-European languages, and that therefore common sense, presuppositions, and worldviews would be quite different. Peirce’s notions of icons, signs, and symbols, and how both relations among referential systems and speakers and addressees operate would become one source of thinking both about the pragmatics of language use, sociolinguistics, and about the relations

among communicative units not reducible to morphology, grammar, or semantics. In midcentury, this thinking would be combined with work on cybernetics and information theory, with further work in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, and in the 1960s with structuralism, ethnosemantics, the emic–etic distinction, the Kuhnian notion of paradigm, and symbolic anthropology.

Crucial to all of these elaborations is the probing of the interconnected systematicities of binary distinctions and complementary distribution (on which the phonemic model of language and information theory more generally depend) creating meaning or value,<sup>15</sup> and the distinction between native knowledge and structural rules that can operate beneath the consciousness of the native speaker: for example, a native speaker can correct grammatical mistakes, and thereby teach a novice, child or linguist, without being able to articulate the grammatical rules being used (but that the linguist can elicit through systematic binary pairs). Lévi-Strauss would make it a rule of thumb not to trust native models or explanations but to systematically analyze for the underlying structural rules. However, equally important for the study of knowing how actors understand their worlds is eliciting their native points of view, their hermeneutical modalities of interpretation, and their critical apparatuses of evaluation.

#### **Culture and Heremeneutics: Vico, Dilthey, Weber, Freud**

The late 19th-century debates about the methodology of the social sciences in distinction to the natural sciences turned on the paradox that if actors become aware of the description of their actions by an observer, they may well alter their actions to make those descriptions appear nonpredictive. Sentient actors do not behave like crystals or atoms. The *Geisteswissenschaften* (the German translation of the English “moral sciences”) became defined as the study of meaning to the actors, something that could be “objective” because dependent on the public nature of language and communication. All social action by individuals is intersubjective, and can be analyzed like any other linguistic phenomena in terms of message, sender and receiver, context and pragmatics. Although the roots of these formulations go back to Vico; were then elaborated by Schiller, Herder, and other German Romantics; and were then reformulated for the human sciences by Wilhelm Dilthey, it is the generation of “classical” Germany sociology (Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Ferdinand Tönnies) that provided a groundwork for the notion of culture used by 1960s symbolic and interpretive anthropology. Contributing to their formulations were the sharp contrastive contexts of Germany vis-à-vis England and France, and of the accelerated pace of social change in Germany formulated as a transformation from feudal rural, agrarian, and customary *Gemeinschaft* (community) to industrial, urban, more impersonal, contractual, commoditized, and bureaucratic *Gesellschaft* (society).

Weber, the master sociologist of the period, worked out a methodology that paid attention both to causally adequate explanations (economics, law, politics) and explanations adequate at the level of meaning to the actors (culture, values). His study of the interaction between *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1930), for instance, as already described, insisted on a multicausal explanation involving anxiety structures, organizational mechanisms, structural position of actors, a value-orientation shift and a particular (emergent) political economic formation. The texts, journals, letters, accounts of church methods of the early Protestants (as well as his own observations in Germany and North Carolina) provided access to the cultural forms through which the actors felt themselves compelled to act and by which they justified their actions. Weber also lays ground for recognition that predictive models good for governance require understanding of cultural patterns systematic enough to be at least predictive "ideal types" or "as-if" accounts. Weber here is not as fully hermeneutic as later scholars armed with tape recorders and engaging in longer term participant-observation might be, but he provides the beginnings of an intersubjective methodology that can lay claim to empirical objectivity, and that can be iteratively tested and corrected.

Freud, the other master hermeneuticist of the period, provided a set of elicitation and story-structuring techniques. There were, first of all, his theatrics of elicitation: the sofa, the analyst outside the vision of the analysand, the fixed time, free association, and dream reporting. There were the dramatic markers of emotional truth: the way in which a suggestion would either be confirmed by vigorous further elaboration or by violent denials and changes of subject. There was the hunt for clues in slips of the tongue, rebus visualizations, word substitutions, and the like. There was the production of the case history as a literary form that weaves together different plots, story lines, and temporalities: those of the order of discovery, the order of presentation of symptoms and development of illness, and the reconstructed etiology or causal sequence (Brooks 1984). There were the cultural templates for patient and physicians to use as analogues, often drawn from the Greek mythologies on which the educated middle class was raised, such as Oedipus. And there were the social issues of the day: the shell shock of WWI (that also preoccupied W. H. R. Rivers in England), bourgeois sexual repression, and status anxiety (as wonderfully recontextualized in the case of Dr. Schreiber by Eric Santner 1996). Finally, there was the metaphysical topology of *das Ich* (ego), *das Es* (id), and *das Über-Ich* (super-ego), functioning somewhat differently in the colloquial German from the more Latinate English (intended to bolster the authority of the discipline), but again functioning as a cultural template to think about the way the unconscious works its uncanny and subterranean tricks (Bettelheim 1983; Ornston 1992; also Ricoeur 1970 for a hermeneutic reading of Freud).





**FIGURE 1.** “In Return I Give Water,” 2005, etching and aquatint print, by Germaine Arnaktauyok. A perfect illustration of Mauss’s *The Gift* (1925) and the culture of mindfulness of reciprocity between humankind and the environment, the return gift of fresh water is to aid the seal in its journey into the next world. Germain Arnaktauyok of Yellow Knife remembers as a girl coming upon her father on the ice engaging in this rite. Born in Igloodik (now Nunavut) in 1946 to carvers Therese Nattok and Isidore Iytok, she is well known for her prints, children’s book illustrations, and the design of “The Drummer” on the 1999 \$2 Canadian coin celebrating the creation of the Territory of Nunavut (as well as her mother and child design for a \$200 gold coin issued in 2000). Photo by Richard Chase; print owned by M. Fischer; reprinted with permission of Germaine Arnaktauyok.

In a brilliant commentary and transformation, Lévi-Strauss would juxtapose a Cuna healer’s technique to that of Freudian talk therapy: in the one case an ostensive personal life history would be elicited from the patient and recoded into a collective myth (e.g., Oedipus), in the other case a collective myth would be told to an individual to get him or her to identify his or her pain with the characters and movement of a collective story (Lévi-Strauss 1963a). Lévi-Strauss’s analysis would provide the basic form of many anthropological accounts of healing rituals. The ambiguity of whether Freud’s techniques were cultural or universal would be explored by many anthropologists in the 1930s who not only had themselves analyzed, but would also take Rorschach and other tests to the field to test whether an analyst not familiar with the culture would come up with the same analysis as one familiar with the culture, and whether the range of results would fall within universal patterns or needed to be standardized in each culture locally (Du Bois 1944; Kardiner et al. 1945). There was also an ambiguity about the degree to which patterns found among individuals could also function on the collective level (as in Freud’s speculative late essay on *Moses and Monotheism*, and in a different more functionalist fashion, the anthropologist Melford Spiro’s elaboration of cultural defense mechanisms (1967).

### Culture, Social Structure, and Personhood

Methodological functionalism, the obligation on an investigator to ask how changes in one part of a social system affect other parts became a fieldwork guide for a generation of British social anthropologists trained by Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, and in intellectual dialogue with Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss's journal *L'anne sociologique*. Mauss's 1925 canonic work *Essai sur le don* (*The Gift* [1954]; see Figure 1), which continues to generate commentaries, draws on Malinowski's fieldwork on the Kula ring in Melanesia to develop the notion of total prestations and total social facts, showing how ceremonial trade circuits not only carry along ordinary trade, but also stimulate production, require ritual, organize politics, elicit competitive agonism, and generate elaborate jural distinctions, typologies of gifts, and stages of gift giving (Malinowski 1922). The Kula ring provided an alternative account to Rousseau or Hobbes's notions of fictive social contracts as necessary to social order, showing how hierarchies of power, regional economies, and cosmologies could come into being through modalities of reciprocity. In Radcliffe-Brown's articulation of structural-functionalism, roles and statuses in a social structure were seen as tools for a comparative method that did not tear institutions out of their contexts. Such comparative work with societies ethnographically well studied were pursued in volumes on political systems and marriage systems (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1958, Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1958), as well as in Radcliffe-Brown's own efforts (1933, 1952) to show that emotions and joking relations were patterned by social structural relations (as Durkheim argued in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [1912]).

For Durkheimians and the British social anthropologists, the formation of personhood was likewise formed by social structure. Persons were partially socialized and partially unsocialized. The process of socialization and formation of cultural personhood operated not only through parenting but also through rituals and larger cultural forms. Malinowski's essay *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1937) provided a cultural and anthropological challenge to those interpretations of Freud that assumed the Oedipus complex to be universal. If one were to take seriously the Freudian argument that adult personality is crucially formed in early childhood and family dynamics, then in a matrilineal society, in which property and authority pass through the female line rather than the male line, dreams, crimes, and patterns of transgression should also be different than in bourgeois Vienna (Malinowski also sketched out a third pattern of Polish peasant family life that also contrasted with bourgeois Vienna). This line of Freudian attention to the cultural formation of personhood in different cultures and social structures was taken up by the Culture and Personality school of U.S. anthropology in the 1930s and 1940s (Margaret Mead, Mead and Metraux [1953], Ruth Benedict [1934, 1946], Cora Du Bois, A. I. "Pete" Hallowell, Clyde Kluckhohn,

etc.), and by later Freudian psychological anthropologists (Spiro, Anthony Wallace, Gananath Obeyesekere, Robert A. LeVine, Robert Levy, Waude Krache, etc.).

The Culture and Personality school experimented with statistical distributions of personality types selected by a culture. Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) and *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) contributed popular understandings that norms of child rearing and gender roles were variable across cultures and could be reformed at home. The later generation of Freudian psychological anthropologists introduced a series of new conceptual tools: Anthony Wallace (1969) reworked the notion of distributions of personality type into a general recognition that individuals participate in, but do not necessarily share, culture. His notions of maze ways and revitalization cults argued that the Seneca, under pressure, might be seen as using ritual processes to rework their psychological orientations, using reports of their dreams as pieces of evidence. In similar fashion, Gananath Obeyesekere used Freudian analytic clues to interrogate case histories of nine ecstatic priests, who were part of the formation of a new Buddhist–Hindu cult in Sri Lanka. He was able to use Freudian suggestions to generate hypotheses and see if they were confirmed or not in the lives of these priests (Obeyesekere 1981). He then also attempted a wider cultural analysis of South Indian and Sri Lankan Hindu psychology through the cult of the Goddess Pattini (Obeyesekere 1984). Waude Krache (1978) uses dreams and small group dynamics to explore the psychology of a band of South American Indians. And LeVine (1973), more generally, building on child-rearing studies, attempted to create a field of cultural psychology.

There is now a third “generation” of psychoanalytic approaches in anthropology utilizing Lacan's rereadings of Freud, proceeding via linguistics and topology, Foucault's notions of subjectivation, and Žižek's interpretations of contemporary politics (particularly in the postcommunist Balkans and Eastern Europe, but also in U.S. popular culture). Two recent collections reflecting some of this anthropological work are Biehl et al. (in press) and Good et al. (in press).

### **Culture and the Comparative Method**

The understanding that cultures and societies need to be understood structurally, hermeneutically, and in context presented challenges for comparative research. Max Weber, even more than Marx before him, cast his comparative net globally. Marx had been interested in the expansion of capitalism and imperialism into the colonial world, the resistances in semimonetized settings (Asia, Russia), but had mainly confined his detailed work to Western Europe. Weber's detailed comparative investigations into the stability of states, political economies (*Economy and Society* [1968]), religious systems of legitimation (*Sociology of Religion*), and status and cultural formations (mandarins,

feudal estates vs. capitalist classes, sociology of music, rationalization of cultural forms) extended from China and India to the Middle East, North America, and Europe. Although much of his work on the ancient religions of India, China, and Judaism have been superseded by more recent ethnographic and social historical work, his work on bureaucracies, taxation systems, empires, and modern nation-states remains part of the contemporary tool kit. The Durkheimian tradition, in tandem with British social anthropology, also ranged across the globe, albeit initially with more empirical attention to “small scale” societies in aboriginal Australia, Melanesia, Africa, and South Asia, but with equal concern for the implications for France, England, and Europe. Durkheim’s own major works included comparative work on suicide rates as indexes of more pathological or healthier social structures, the effects of the division of labor and the destruction of middle level political organization by the French revolution on penal systems and the *conscience collective*.

Weber’s concern with religious and cultural systems of legitimation would lead in the 1960s to such studies as Clifford Geertz’s *Religion of Java* (1960) and Robert Bellah’s *Tokugawa Religion* (1957), both placing cultural questions at the center of modernization theory and what later would be called alternative modernities. Durkheim and Mauss’s work would provide one source of French structuralism in the 1960s, but also in British and U.S. anthropology would lead to work on the powerful effects of ritual and symbols in local contexts (Victor Turner) as well as (via Parsons) to a notion of cultural systems as principles that structure social action, and to ethnosociologies (such as David Schneider’s [1968] accounts of U.S. kinship as a peculiar mixing of ideologies of blood and code for conduct, and McKim Marriot’s accounts of the transactional logics of purity and auspiciousness that structure the India caste system).

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The crisis of the 1930s—reactions to the trauma of WWI, to the global economic depression, and to the growth of mass politics, advertising, and the culture industry—elicited a powerful set of revisions of the methodologies for the study of culture. Of these, enduring contributions were made by (4.1) Ernst Cassirer’s *Kulturwissenschaften* (rather than *Geisteswissenschaften*), (4.2) the dialectic between documentary realism and surrealism, and (4.3) the Frankfurt School’s reworking of Marx and Freud in its study of the culture industry and modern media.

### **The Logic of Symbolic Forms**

Cassirer,<sup>16</sup> an important influence on Clifford Geertz and 1960s symbolic and interpretive cultural anthropologies, addressed the crises of knowledge—the

separation of knowledge into epistemologies of mathematical physics and those of the historical sciences—by examining the common logical structure of concepts at work in both, and by undertaking a phenomenology of perception. The notion of mediation via symbolic forms is key. As earlier argued by Vico, Herder, and Simmel, perception is constituted as objective through language and art, neither of which merely “copies” pre-given reality. The expression of the “I” is an act of discovery, not just one of alienation. By externalizing itself, the “I” or self establishes itself through the mirror of its work. In the *Myth of the State*, Cassirer criticizes the philosophies of Spengler and Heidegger as having enfeebled the forces that could have resisted modern political myths.<sup>17</sup> By constructing decline and *Geworfenheit* (lit., “thrown-downness,” the accidents of existence) as the logic of our time, they abandon the active, continuous construction and reconstruction of cultural life. More helpful, but still requiring correction, are the later Husserl’s *Lebensphilosophie* with its focus on “lifeworlds” and production of the good life, and Henri Bergson’s phenomenology, which, although suspicious of symbolic forms as life-denying reifications, directs attention to embodied perception. For Cassirer, the self perceives the resistance (*Widerstand*) of the world, of the alterity of the object (*Gegenstand*) against which the “I” arises; so too language, art, and religion are tangible for us only in the monuments we create through these symbolic forms—the tokens, memorials, or reminders of the reciprocal processes of continuous reanimation of self, cultural object, and context (and of physical existence, objective representation, and personal expression).

Cassirer, Alfred Schutz (1967), Kenneth Burke (1941, 1945, 1950, 1968), and Susanne Langer (1942, 1967–82) form an important set of precursors to 1960s cultural anthropology, with Schutz extending the phenomenological method in a sociological direction, Burke stressing the performativity of rhetorical, symbolic, and cultural forms, and Langer, both a translator of Cassirer and a best-selling philosopher of symbolic forms in logic, art, and ethnopsychology in her own right.

### **Realism and Surrealism**

Close documentary realism, especially through photography and the projects of the Works Projects Administration, but also in the tradition of community studies in anthropology and sociology, was one response to the crises of the 1930s. Particularly through the photographic documentation of the Great Depression (but also in newsreels, theater, painting, dance, and fiction) we now have, *ex post facto*, a visual imagery not available to people at the time (Agee and Evans 1941; Lange and Taylor 1939; MacLeish 1937; Marcus and Fischer 1999; Stott 1973). There was a hunger for reliable information at the time, suspicion that newspapers were manipulating the news, and that government officials denied problems in hopes of boosting business confidence.

The Chicago School's Community Studies was imbued with the documentary spirit and established the groundwork for investigations of social mobility, neighborhood patterns of succession, local community organization, processes of immigration from Europe and from the South into the industrial cities, and symbolic arenas of competition for cultural hegemony and control. Warner's *Yankee City* studies, W. F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943), and the various studies of Chicago by Wirth, Park, Burgess, McKenzie, and their associates were important ethnographic beginnings. Warner's studies of the tercentennial parade in Yankee City, of the strikes and political campaigns, and of church and voluntary organization affiliations as cultural markers of class and status remain exemplary.

Margaret Mead's studies of child rearing, sex roles, and emotions in Samoa and New Guinea to analyze U.S. patterns and call for their modification was a mode of cultural critique by juxtaposing a foreign perspective, gained from firsthand and long-term community studies. One can read British social anthropology and its development of the ethnographic monograph of communities as providing a similar kind of cultural critique. Malinowski engaged in social policy debates based on the comparative archive built up by in-depth fieldwork focused on the functional interconnections among social processes and institutions. The comparative volumes on political structure and kinship, although couched in more theoretical terms, were intended to provide new foundations for the understanding of moral authority (Fortes and Evans-Prichard 1958; Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1958; Schneider and Gough 1961). Audrey Richards (1939), Godfrey and Monica Wilson and the work of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in the 1930s and 1940s probed the failures of the colonial system in agriculture and mining by showing their detailed workings via community studies documentation. Later studies by this generation of anthropologists and their progeny would probe the dysfunctions of resettlement policies and underdevelopment.

Whereas documentary realism and comparative juxtaposition was one set of responses to the crises of the 1930s, surrealism was another way of interrogating the present by exploring alternatives potentials. In France, surrealism attracted both artists and some anthropologists as a way of breaking open and liberating the reified institutions of society (Clifford 1981), by connecting signs in a new urban world and reenchanting the worlds of science and technology, and by operating in contrast to Jean-Paul Sartre's anthropology based on man as a project-making animal (powerfully motivated by his experience in the Resistance to the Nazi occupation, making meaning out of a moral and cultural crisis), cultivating an anthropology based on a divided self of unease (Bürger 2002). If the condition of modernity is of living in two worlds simultaneously (traditional and modern, rural and urban, craft and commodity

[Hegel, Marx, Walter Benjamin, Marshall Berman 1982, etc.]), the rise of fascism and Nazism elicited Artaud, Breton, and Bataille to focus on the double worlds of reason and madness as also the condition of modernity. Nazi race theory was recognized by cultural analysts as a delusional force: asserting that race is defining of an essence yet knowing that it is constructed (Göring's "I define who is a Jew," and the training of Czech, French, and Polish young men in Napola paramilitary schools to strengthen "the race"; see Bürger 2002). Nazi followers indulged in harmony with the Führer and the power of the party while recognizing themselves as insignificant and dependent on an unreal world of signs (Bürger 2002). For Bataille, the Nazis represented a Teutonic military order that was able to create a mythic spirit of strength. He wanted to create an equally powerful spirit based in premodern sacrifice and expenditure.

The legacies of surrealism continue to reverberate into the present, part of the stream of French attention to the body, sensuality, immediacy, and that which escapes language and reason, but which structures cultural fantasy, advertising appeal, dream worlds and imaginaries; and the work of anthropologists such as Michael T. Taussig (1987, 1992, 1993, 1997, 2003; also heavily influenced by Walter Benjamin) on violence, fantasy, and the magic of the state.

### **The Culture Industry: The Politics and Poetics of Culture**

For the generation of 1968, perhaps the most important predecessor in cultural analysis was the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory.<sup>18</sup> Combining Marxist and Freudian questions, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno reanalyzed the dynamics of the Oedipus complex and family structure, and like Freud found roots of the "authoritarian personality" in the replacement of the father by a political leader or movie star. Unlike agrarian families where sons received both land and skills from the father, in modern society sons were more likely to learn skills of livelihood in school and teach them to an increasingly out-of-date father. Rather than watching parents struggle to make pragmatic decisions, young people paid attention either to perfect role models disseminated through the media or to their peer group, forming thereby more rigid, brittle, personalities, less able to deal with ambiguity and adversity. Adorno was particularly concerned with the formation of a culture industry that increasingly shaped the superego through lowest common denominator, largest revenue generating, music and commodities, reifying and mind deadening the critical faculties. Although some of Adorno's dismissals of jazz and other popular forms was elitist, Eurocentric, and uncomprehending, his concerns with the way media transform thought, and the possibilities for self-reflection, critique, and political subjugation remain intensely salient in our multimediated world.

More optimistic about the democratizing potentials of the new media, Walter Benjamin after 1924 found his subject in the new industrial arts, architecture, photography, mass culture, and new avant-garde cultural forms in France and Russia. He became celebrated posthumously through the work of commentators such as Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem, and in the 1970s and 1980s Martin Jay (1973) and Susan Buck-Morss (1991), who in turn stimulated what is now an increasing flood of work (including in the anthropology of Michael Taussig and Michael M. J. Fischer). His notion of dialectical images which flash up in charged moments was a way of reading advertising and commodity displays by juxtaposing the utopian hopes originally invested in them together with their later commodity banalization was a way of reigniting the aspirations to make the world otherwise. It was a tactic not unlike Adorno's aesthetic theories for the avant-garde arts and the sociology of music, seeing art as a form of negative dialectics with which to see the world as it is and yet otherwise, abstracted and reconfigured.

Others of the Frankfurt School worked on the sociology of penal systems (Otto Kirchheimer, who inspired Foucault), the political economy of money (Friedrich Pollack), the sociology of irrigation societies (Karl Wittfogel), the sociology of literature (Leo Lowenthal), and psychoanalysis (Erich Fromm). Among the first intellectual circles to be shut down when Hitler became Chancellor, most Frankfurt School members emigrated to the United States, where Adorno worked with Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia on the study of propaganda and the authoritarian personality. After the war, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Pollack returned to Germany to rebuild critical thought there. Herbert Marcuse stayed in the United States, becoming a guru to the students of the 1968 generation, as did less flamboyantly Leo Lowenthal. Others associated with the school or publishing in their journal (*Zeitschrift für Sozialwissenschaft*) included such figures as Hannah Arendt, Raymond Aron, Bruno Bettelheim, Bertolt Brecht, Siegfried Krackauer, Georg Luckas, Karl Mannheim, and Gershom Scholem. Intense concern with the psychology of cultural forms, their instrumentalization by the culture industry of propaganda, advertising, movies and popular culture, and their social force in competition with other forms, were common concerns of these theorists.

The mix of concerns about the destruction of the public sphere by mass advertising and propaganda, the power of the market to direct what cultural and commodity objects would circulate, and the psychodynamics of ideology was a heady blend of ideas for the 1968 generation, which saw in the Vietnam War, the resistance to the civil rights movement, the conservatism of the universities, and the restrictiveness of social codes a parallel to the oppressions of the 1930s.



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Cultural Studies, (post)structuralism, and symbolic or interpretive anthropology transformed cultural analysis in the 1970s, along with feminism, media and performance studies, new historicism, and early studies of decolonization and new nations.

*Symbolic anthropology* drew on the quacybernetic paradigm of Harvard's Social Relations Department under Parsons, semiotics (C. S. Pierce, Ray Birdwhistle, Thomas Sebeok), structural linguistics (field linguistics classes became training grounds to learn systematic methods of elicitation and analysis of cultural units), and generative grammars (Noam Chomsky). The core course in the anthropology graduate program at the University of Chicago was organized into Cultural Systems, Social Systems, and Psychological Systems. David Schneider (founder of the Society for Cultural Anthropology, and senior editor of the reader *Symbolic Anthropology* [Dolgin et al. 1977]) argued that the cultural system provided the principles of organization for the social system; Clifford Geertz argued that the cultural system was logico-meaningfully integrated, the social system functionally integrated, and the psychological system psychodynamically integrated. Geertz thus wrote essays on religion, ideology, common sense, art, and moral thinking as "cultural systems."

Spiro provided a foundation in Freudian psychoanalytic approaches, with a strong anti-Malinowskian insistence on the universality of psychoanalytic concepts (Spiro 1982); he smuggled culture back in, however, in the form of cultural defense mechanisms. (He then founded an anthropology department at the University of California, San Diego, with strength in psychoanalytic approaches, recruiting Gananath Obeyesekere and Robert Levy). Schneider argued that the distinction between etic and emic could not be sustained,<sup>19</sup> thereby making all systems of thought, native and scientific, merely variant modes of cultural accounting. Victor Turner analyzed the Ndembu "forest of symbols" with a widely imitated combination of structural-functional (Durkheim, van Gennep [1960]) analysis of mythic charters and ritual process, with Freudian fusions of corporeal-emotive and cognitive-symbolic poles in symbol formation, and Kenneth Burke's performative notions of motives and rhetoric.

The turn toward *interpretive anthropology* led by Geertz (1973b) and Turner (1967, 1974) followed from the instability of the emic-etic and the social system-cultural system distinctions, and drew on the hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions of Dilthey, Weber, Freud, Schutz, Paul Ricoeur (who also taught at Chicago), and Mircea Eliade (also at Chicago).

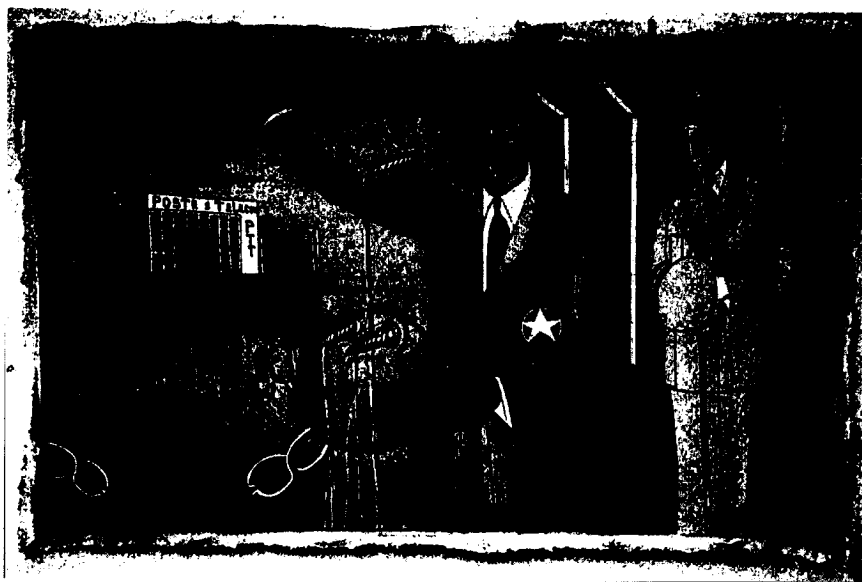
Meanwhile in fall 1966, structuralism and poststructuralism arrived simultaneously in the United States via "The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Science of Man" (Macksey and Donato 1972) conference at the Johns Hopkins University with Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, Lacan, and others; an event that would lead to a dominant strand of cultural analysis of the next generation. In France, structuralism and poststructuralism were modalities of French response to the traumas of WWII, Americanization, and the influx of North Africans after the Algerian War of Independence. Lévi-Strauss brought together the enthusiasm of postwar thinking about set theory, linguistics, and cybernetics with an elegy and reconstructive method for aboriginal cultures destroyed by colonialism in Australia and North and South America (Lévi-Strauss 1963b, 1966, 1969 [esp. the set theory appendix], 1969–81, 1981). He and fellow structuralists (Georges Dumezil, Jean-Paul Vernant, Michel Detienne, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, etc.) transformed the study of Greek mythology and myth studies in general. No longer could anyone identify deities with single virtues (god of wisdom) without considering that deity's structural position vis-à-vis others; no longer could one version of a myth be privileged without considering the entire set of transformations that a mythic structure makes possible. Lévi-Strauss seemed at the time to vanquish (in favor of deep, pervasive, regenerative mythic, and social structures) the attempt of Jean-Paul Sartre to fuse voluntaristic, politically engaged existentialism with the inertial forces of history understood through Marxist lenses (albeit the charismatic force of Sartre's position arose from the moral crisis of sense making during the Resistance against the Nazi occupation; Lévi-Strauss 1966). Lacan, the early Foucault, and Bourdieu were received in the United States as elaborations of this culturalist structuralism.

Structuralism and poststructuralism were influential moves away from behaviorist and symbolist models of communication.<sup>20</sup> Behaviorist models take words and symbols to be unproblematic tokens, combined and rearranged in meaningful chains of sentences or utterances, done in turn-taking, stimulus–response sequences. Analysts can thus build up models of culture based on sets of belief statements made by actors. Symbolist models recognize that symbols are not univocal simple tokens but have fans of meanings, and that more is exchanged in any speech act than either speaker or receiver comprehends. Nonetheless, in symbolist models, symbols are still but more complex sign tokens—like overly full bouquets or pockets of fertile sediment—richly polysemic yet discrete. Indeed, the richest symbols are like black holes: the entire culture is said to be condensed there. Symbolist analysts organize their models of culture around key symbols, symbol clusters, and nodes of semantic networks, somewhat like a crystal structure. There is a reassuring sense of relative stasis or stability of the symbolic system.

Structuralist, and particularly poststructuralist, models decompose symbols and metaphors into chains of metonyms or associations that play out into disseminating, ramifying, transmuting dynamics, attempting to model, in the structuralist case, the semantic-symbolic parameters of variation and transformation, and in the poststructuralist case, the transmuting ambivalences of meaning that keep texts and communication labile (unless forcibly controlled, in which case poststructuralist deconstructive sensibilities highlight the tensions and pressures of alternative meanings subversive to those intended and authorized by the controls).

Foucault's insights into disciplinary power and the birth of the clinic may have had something to do with a kind of Freudian *nachträglich* [post facto] recognition of his experiences as an adolescent: the reformatory to instill heterosexual codes, and watching compliance to the Nazis in his native Poitiers ("we all have a fascism in our heads" [Carton 2004:25]; see also Agamben 1998, 1999, 2005; Bernauer 2004; Raber 2004). Derrida and Lyotard were more explicit about the legacies of WWII. Lyotard's 1979 *The Postmodern Condition* (1984), Carton points out, "turns—between chapter 9, 'Narratives of the Legitimation of Knowledge,' and chapter 10, 'Deligitimation'—on a paragraph devoted to Heidegger's notorious 1933 Rector's Address, . . . and the new chapter begins, 'In contemporary society . . . [where] the grand narrative has lost its credibility,'" (2004:24). The essay is about the coming of the computer and information age in which local language games and performativities will have more force than past universalist ideologies for mass mobilization (in the name of History, Reason, or Progress), and where incommensurabilities among language games and value systems will challenge two centuries of standardized linguistic, religious, educational nation-building (as France copes with Muslim North African immigrants). Similarly, Derrida from his first major work (*Of Grammatology*) takes on the "ethnocentrism which everywhere and always, had controlled the concept of writing . . . from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger" (1974:3) and introduces the image of ashes that would grow as a motif in his corpus, quoting Edmund Jabes, "Ou est le centre? Sous la cendre" [Where is the center? Under ashes] (Carton 2004:24; see also Agamben 1998).

The question of Vichy France, the Nazi occupation, and the haunted, hidden collaborations of that period continue in the 1980s and 1990s slowly to be worked through as a challenge to cultural analysis that would treat culture as merely communicative, symbolic, and openly political, "you get what you see," uncompromised by hidden meanings, displacements, and self-deceptions. Indeed, here is one of the roots, or at least, resonances of the continuing intense interest in psychoanalytic approaches to subjectivities and subjectivation (Foucault 2005), rhetoric (Derrida 1998), feminism (Cixous 2004; Kristeva 1989, 1995), technology (Ronell 1989, 2005), and ideology (Rickels 1991, 2002; Žižek 1991). But France and Europe are not the only places



**FIGURE 2.** "Lumumba Makes His Famous Speech," 1973–74, Tshibumba Kanda Matulu. Both in artistic style and content, popular genre paintings of the 1970s provide popular culture histories and cultural critiques of colonial rule and the period of decolonization and postcolonial struggles. Tshibumba Kanda Matulu's painting of Patrice Lumumba, on the day after Zaire's Declaration of Independence and his appointment as Prime Minister, shows him cursing Belgian King Baudoin for the slavery of colonialism and demanding that all whites leave. The screws and chains of African subjugation are broken. The public plaza, microphone, and PTT communication media are in new hands. The painting is part of a series of one hundred and two paintings with commentary by Tshibumba Kanda Matulu in 1973–74, collected by Johannes Fabian (1996, 1998). The original painting is now at the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam. Image courtesy J. Fabian.

Photo by Richard Chase.

to have experienced such histories of violence, cruelty, and oppression embedded in cultural topologies amenable to this sort of analysis (see Figure 2), as anthropologists have explored in Japan (Ivy 1995), Indonesia (Siegel 1997, 1998), Sri Lanka (Daniel 1997), and Thailand (Morris 2000), among refugees (Daniel and Knudsen 1996), and some literary critics are exploring for China (B. Wang 2004; D. Wang 2004).

The stress in interpretive anthropology and poststructuralism on culture as contested meanings created, negotiated, and performed in locally polyvocal contexts dovetailed also with the rise of Cultural Studies. In Britain, Cultural Studies arose at Birmingham University from literary studies, branching out under the leadership of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall into youth and popular culture, ethnicity, hybridity, race, and class cultures. In the United States, Cultural Studies grew out of American Studies redirected by anthropologists and folklorists (initially at the University of Pennsylvania), and from labor and social history as in the work of George Lipsitz (1990, 2001). For a period, Centers for Cultural Studies sprang up to create interdisciplinary work between the humanities and social sciences, until the field was eventually

reimperialized by English departments, losing not only its ethnographic and social science edge, but its fledgling efforts to work in languages other than English, ironically the language of most writing about postcolonialism (but see, e.g., Mitchell 1988 for an effort to explore Arabic-language perceptions, and Foucauldian-like recognitions, of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt).<sup>21</sup>

**CULTURE IS (1) that relational (CA. 1848), (2) complex whole . . . (1870s), (3) whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts (CA. 1914), (4) mediated through powerful and power-laden symbolic forms (1930s), (5) whose multiplicities and performatively negotiated character (1960s), (6) is transformed by alternative positions, organizational forms, and leveraging of symbolic systems (1980s) . . .**

The 1980s produced revised modes of cultural analysis, followed in the 1990s by changing infrastructures (media, environment, biotechnology, and violence) with powerful cultural salience.

The 1980s revisions included new efforts to use ethnography to investigate and map the changing nature of cultural and social forms at the end of the 20th century (*Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* [1986]); inquiries into the multiple disciplinary tools that could be employed in making cultural analysis more trenchant and revealing (*Writing Culture* [Clifford and Marcus 1986]); the incorporation of transdisciplinary approaches (feminism, deconstruction, film and media studies, new historicism, science and technology studies, cyborg anthropology); the efforts to revive area and global studies with fresher ideas about how to do multisited ethnographies of mutually dependent activities in dispersed parts of larger systems or networks; and inquiries into second-order modernization and risk society (Beck 1992, 2000, 2005; Brown and Mikkelson 1990; Epstein 1996; Fortun 2001; George 2001; Harr 1995; Petryna 2002; Reich 1991). New journals propelled these initiatives: *Cultural Anthropology* (1[1], 1986), *Public Culture* (1[1], 1988), *Positions* (1, 1992), *Visual Anthropology* (1987), *Subaltern Studies* (1, 1982), *Representations* (1983), and the eight-volume annual *Late Editions* (1993–2000).

In the 1990s, a new experimental, recombinant, mode of cultural thought, writing and visualization took material shape, through the combination of commercial biotechnologies (shaped by post-1980 legal, financial, and technological infrastructures) and information technologies (particularly after the World Wide Web in 1994 and linked databases made the Internet an everyday medium). Lyotard's speculations on the *Postmodern Condition* (1984) and the role of the computer in making information available suddenly seemed both quaint and prescient—quaint in failing to foresee many-to-many communication uses, the way just-in-time accounting would

reorganize the business world, and the way e-mail would speed up the pace of work and introduce new stratifications; yet prescient in the apperception of the significance of new local language games and formats, including increased communicative reach through flows, codes, and performativity rather than single propositions or arguments (viz., Gregory Ulmer's efforts to think Derrida through electronic media [1985, 1989, 1994]; Derrida's own speculations on religion and the global media (1996, 2001) and Fischer's response (2001); Avital Ronell's rereadings of telephony in Alexander Graham Bell's United States vs. the place of technology in Heidegger's Germany [1989]; Friedrich Kittler's contrast between the cultural formations carried by standardized German in 1800 and the grammophone, film, and typewriter in 1900 [1985, 1986]; Mark Poster's efforts to rethink the oral vs. literate cultures debate [Goody 1977; Ong 1982] for new electronic modes of communication [1990, 2001]); and Henry Jenkins's work on media flows and modifications in U.S. popular culture (2006).

As restratification processes proceeded in the aftermath of the implosion of the Soviet Union and the decline of the bipolar world, violence and religious legitimations repackaged themselves. Derrida (1996, 2001) suggested that "globalatinization" through capital concentration and mergers of transnational media conglomerates would make Islamic and other "fundamentalist" resistance movements at first appropriate, only to be undone by new media, like a kind of autoimmune disease—intense, virulent, and violent. "Globalatinization" is about the Christian or Western formatting of publicity: it is an argument about the nature of the current media and how it sets the theatrical format, enforcing a frenzy of position taking to maintain visibility. Although the use of the latest media (Internet, web, and video) helps extend the propaganda reach, it at the same time reformats that propaganda into a new modality. The constant need for new positioning is exhausting and generates its own opposition among both traditionalist and modernist forces; hence the metaphor: autoimmune disease. AIDS, one of the key plagues of these years also gave rise to new modes of cultural work, with activists pushing for changes in drug approval processes (Epstein 1996), using the Internet to challenge the hierarchical relations between doctors and patients, insurance companies and beneficiaries, and the entire health care system. In the 1990s, globalatinization, AIDS (and SARS, multidrug resistant tuberculosis, mad cow disease, and other viruses such as Ebola and the H5N1 Avian flu), financial crises moving rapidly across the globe from East Asia to South America, and worries about climate warming all made the 1980s constructs of alternative modernities seem, if not quaint, more relational than ever, differentially connected to a global patchwork of political and cultural economies. Ethnic and religious warfare intensified and led to renewed analyses of the limits and weaknesses of constitutional forms of governance

and the lack of local rootedness of human rights and global humanitarian industries (Agamben 1998, 1999, 2005; Fassin 2002, 2003; James 2004; Pandolfi 2002, 2006).

**CULTURE IS (1) that relational (CA. 1848), (2) complex whole . . . (1870s), (3) whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts (CA. 1914), (4) mediated through powerful and power-laden symbolic forms (1930s), (5) whose multiplicities and performatively negotiated character (1960s), (6) is transformed by alternative positions, organizational forms, and leveraging of symbolic systems (1980s), (7) as well as by emergent new technosciences, media, and biotechnical relations (CA. 2007) . . .**

Cultural vocabularies and social understandings increasingly draw analogies from the new technosciences of the 1990s and 2000s—especially the life and information sciences—instead of the mechanical, physical, and physiological sciences, which provided much of the “functionalist” and “structuralist” imagery of the early 20th century. Symbiogenesis and bacterial or viral abilities to shift genetic material among species offer enticing sources of new metaphors for reconceptualizing social interaction and cultural hybridization. As with immunological systems (which expose the conceptual inaccuracy of identifying diseases as fixed entities), so too it seems often fruitful to think of cultural and social patterns as emergent out of mutations, assemblages, viral transitivity, rhizomic growth, wetwares and softwares, disciplinary discourses transmuting into even more pervasive and infrastructurally embedded codes and flows.<sup>22</sup> Cultural and social theorists have turned to the technologies and technosciences around which contemporary societies construct themselves for useful metaphors with which to describe, explore, compare, and contrast these societies with one another and with their predecessors. As Kim Fortun puts it in a review of the second edition of *Anthropology as Cultural Critique*, “Anthropology is at its best when understood to be operating *within* an open system, *as* an open system, and as the study and production *of* open systems” (2003:172). Moreover, she notes, because scientists must learn to be open to interdisciplinary inputs with their cultural differences of language, assumptions, and protocols, the practices and experimental imaginary of scientists becomes a rich reference point for ethnographies of contemporary cultural worlds: Circa 2007, then, three key areas of cultural change have become foregrounded: (7.1) morphing media environments and culturing connectivities; (7.2) cultural double-entry accounting amidst social traumatization and reconstruction after warfare and structural violence; (7.3) transformations in the life sciences, technosciences, and cultural life, involving overwhelming flows of data, new modes of visualization, new forms of collaboration, and intense commercialization.

**“Experimental systems, graphematic spaces”** Experimental systems are the working units a scientist or a group of scientists deal with. They are simultaneously local, social, institutional, technical, instrumental and, above all, epistemic units. [A]n experimental system [is] a unit of research designed to give answers to questions we are not yet able to ask clearly. In the typical case, it is, as Francois Jacob has put it, “a machine for making the future.” It is a device that not only generates answers; at the same time, and as a prerequisite, it shapes the questions to be answered. An experimental system is a device to materialize questions. It cogenerates, so to speak, the phenomena or material entities and the concepts they come to embody. An experimental system can be compared to a labyrinth whose walls, in the course of being erected, simultaneously blind and guide the experimenter. The construction principle of a labyrinth consists in that the existing walls limit the space and the direction of the walls to be added. It cannot be planned. It forces one to move by means of checking out, of groping, of tatonnement. The development of such a system depends on eliciting differences without destroying its reproductive coherence. Together, this makes up its differential reproduction. The articulation, dislocation, and reorientation of an experimental system appears to be governed by a movement that has been described [by Jacob] as a play of possibilities (*jeu des possibles*). With Derrida, we might also speak of a “game” of difference. It is precisely the characteristic of “fall(ing) prey to its own work” that brings the scientific enterprise to what Derrida calls “the enterprise of deconstruction.”

—Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (1998:287–288, 291)

### **Morphing Media, Culturing Connectivities, Soft Infrastructures**

One might call new information technology and media environments “culturing new connectivities” after the way biologists learn to culture tissue, to grow immortal cell lines, use recombinant DNA techniques to grow knock-out mice for cancer research, and generally, as Rheinberger says, learn to “write with biology” rather than discover it, creating tools, molecules and tissues that did not previously exist in “nature” (Landecker 2007; Rheinberger 1998). The Internet, networked data banks, visual icons, video clips, film, animation, streams, and repetition of information flows are repositioning and enveloping older cultural media (orality, literacy), reshaping the public sphere (changing power relations, as in doctor–patient–insurer relations; mobilizing money and attention in electoral campaigns; and drawing attention to alternative geopolitical narratives, as in Al-Jazeera’s transformation of the Arab public sphere) and producing new lively languages that—in interesting recursive loops—continually reference the morphing media and new infrastructures of life from which they emerge

The move “from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0” collaborative tools is a metaphor for continuing efforts (beginning with the uncommercialized electronic frontier of the mid-1990s Web) to move from Diderot’s encyclopedia to *Wikipedia*: from slowly produced, rigidly formatted, bureaucratically controlled, authoritative knowledge to platforms for quickly produced, flexibly formatted, and easily reassembled, distributed intelligences and information cascades. These informatics tools that harness many



individuals working at “the edge of [their] competence on purpose” to expand creativity and knowledge frontiers are but one small niche that promises “butterfly effects” of new cultural itches.<sup>23</sup>

China provides some of the most dramatic current examples, if only because of the massive nature of Chinese demographics. Only about 37 million of China’s one billion people are Internet users, and only six to eight percent of these are bloggers, but that constitutes approximately two million bloggers. Blogging has exploded in China in the last two years, driven by the more than 100 firms that are Internet providers, by venture capital, and by the money to be made through ads. Delightfully, the characters for blogger mean “learned guest.” Although China has instituted filtering, censorship, and panoptic controls,<sup>24</sup> and although most blogs are about trivial matters, and although the most linked-to blogs are those of celebrities, still the nature of the conversational, citational, and linking can have cascading effects. Xiao Qiang, the editor of the China Digital Times Project at the University of California, Berkeley, has been collecting examples. He notes that the CEO of [www.sina.com](http://www.sina.com), China’s largest and most prominent site promoting blogs, is married to the daughter of one of China’s political leaders. It is thus the closest of providers to China’s power center and its efforts to control the media. Not only is the site connected to the Communist Party but it also has the power to select what blogs to put on its front page, and it is a node of economic power (via ads attracted to the most linked-to blogs).

Yet, one blog that appeared on the front page was by Fei Tei, who wrote innocuously about recipes for tomato soup, mentioning in passing that a particular Chinese herb makes the soup especially delicious. It is grown in Western China where it destroys the environment, but it is highly valued in Hong Kong where its sales generate huge profits. As the shaggy dog story evolved, with its further links to information, it became a bit of investigative journalism on environmental degradation. As Fei Tei commented on his fortieth birthday, he has an urge to “bite” society, but actually he only scratches it where it itches, and he wondered, “Am I making a difference?”

Another blog—by returned-from-the West celebrity artist Ai Weiwei—refunctioned a minor news story about a medical researcher whose laptop was stolen and who lashed out at the laxness of the police in repressing the criminality of homeless urban migrants. Ai Weiwei chided the researcher for indulging in a shameless attack on human rights. The blog attracted 80,000 hits with further commentaries, setting off a storm of discussion about discrimination and the treatment of rural–urban migrant workers.

What is happening, Xio Qiang says, is that the government is losing control of the narrative that only the Communist Party can lead and control economic growth. More obvious ways of undermining the government narrative include simple linking

to official statements, such as “There are no bloggers in jail,” and recirculating these with only the comment “Did you know?” or “Here’s some news!” (Iranian blogs often use poetry in similar ways.<sup>25</sup>) The point, Xio Qiang suggests, is not that these themselves constitute a public sphere, but rather that they create the soft infrastructure for a future one by becoming rapidly circulating and widely disseminated information cascades that can set media agendas and provide space for emerging voices, so that when social movements do emerge, the most credible of these bloggers can emerge as leaders.

Soft infrastructures, here, are changing cultural norms and thereby contributing to emergent forms of life. In a useful heuristic, the constitutional and Internet lawyer Lawrence Lessig (1999) suggests that there are four main tools for building our cultural and information infrastructure through the Net: the law, the market, the code or architecture (or engineering), and *cultural* norms. The outcomes of battles over the future norms and forms of cultural life are by no means predetermined. It is crucial to continually debate and air in the public sphere precisely the cultural values being encoded through software code, market, and law to prevent unwanted shifts of ownership of information, barriers to access, and other infrastructural decisions, and to track shifting cultural norms. Such questions as, does information want to be free?; does commercialization stimulate innovation or channel innovation away from desirable lines of development?; is privacy impossible in an information society?; are speed bumps that slow information flow important protections against corrosive effects of commercialization?; can the balance between public domain and intellectual property rules be open to continual readjustment rather than locked in?; and other questions, are not just legal, economic, and software decisions but are also cultural switching points, values and choices that make a difference to the directions of cultural life (power-laden, performative, and negotiated, but constitutive, symbolic systems in the language of 1970s anthropology; shifting relations between forces and relations of production or consumption, and of legitimation, in the earlier languages of Marx and Weber). Reciprocally, cultural critique needs an analytics that is sophisticated about the workings of the infrastructural modalities through which culture is institutionalized and temporarily “hardened.”

### **Double-Entry Cultural Accounting and Cultural Infrastructures in Zones of Violence and after Social Trauma**

It has long been recognized that culture is not primordial but continually reconstructed and reworked after massive disruption, both intended (nation-building projects, modernity ideologies as breaks with the past both in Europe and elsewhere), and unintended (disease decimations of indigenous populations, wars of conquest, civil wars, world wars, wars of independence, disorder after the collapse of command

economies and authoritarian regimes, and massive migrations). In the late 20th century and early 21st century, violence (physical warfare, structural violence, and suffering and psychic reorganization through new modes of subjectivation) has again come to the fore in the moral and political debates over cultural ideals. Cultural analysis has a critical role to play as norms, justifications, and principles are renegotiated over multiculturalism, sovereignty, prevention of ethnic cleansing, human rights, cultural survival, humanitarianism, environmental use, and physical and mental health. The very conceptual categories relied on in these negotiations are increasingly undergoing cultural morphing.

Warfare and armies, for instance, are morphing into (often self-conflicted or internally contradictory, although legitimated as “flexible”) dual capacity fighting and policing forces that (thirdly) occasionally provide humanitarian and development aid. These functions are often mutually incompatible, although they are legitimated as being on the road to “smart,” flexible organizational forms. Resistance organizations (whether political movements, or black market “mafias”) become equally (and in mirrored self-contradictory ways) guerilla and social welfare organizations building cultural legitimacy through their infrastructural as well as ideological cultural claims. As the eagle and the mole again compete, the battlefield becomes ever more airborne with “precision” bombing that does not see the enemy up close and “regrets collateral damage,” continuing the process of displacing into media projections older cultural notions of heroism and tests of virtue.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, guerilla forces hide among and target civilians, hoping to leverage terror and images of dying bodies with appeals to humanitarian and human rights values to win through the media, public opinion, and diplomacy what cannot be won on the battlefield.<sup>27</sup> Complicity inserts itself everywhere, as does the media, as does dual-capacity, double entry, flexibility, adaptability, networking, mobility, interoperability, camouflage, gaming, mimesis, parasiting, infecting, symbiosis, delayed reaction, testing, and experimentation. These are our ever more insistent cultural self-characterizations of at least some of our emerging forms of life, contested, underdetermined, and turbulent.

We live in an age, for instance, in which the very institutions of humanitarian intervention are suspected of complicity, when the humanitarian industry all too often follows military intervention, like brigades of prostitutes and merchants in the wake of the armies of History, providing jobs and succor, but destroying local initiative and creating new vortices of power and intrigue before moving on to the next urgent call, the next crisis, the next firestorm of emotion and outrage fanned by a telemedia machine that turns its theater lights and thundering program music from the elections in Poland to Tiananmen Square in Beijing, from Bosnia to Gaza, Rwanda to Chechnya, Colombia to Kashmir.<sup>28</sup>

Iraq joins Kosovo, Albania, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Palestine as exemplars of the late 1990s shift from pre-1970s cultural paradigms of state-led modernization (Western, socialist, and Third World variations; and their dependency theory critiques as well) to less explicit, and less culturally justified, global regimes of North–South governance through networks of NGOs, donor governments, military establishments, private companies, and mercenaries. In various accounts of these shifts a contrast is drawn between the cultural terms of understanding of the North with its increasing density of economic, technological, political, and military interactions among North–North networks (with evolving transnational moral codes of conduct, such as refusing even democratically elected regimes with explicit or barely concealed racist ideologies as in the case of Austria in 1999–2000) and the cultural terms for dealing with the South through international humanitarian aid and riot control in North–South networks in what are conceived of as failed or corrupted states, or terrains of gated development and sacrifice zones of crisis (Castells 1996, 1998; Duffield 2001; Fassin 2002; Malkki 1995; Mbembe 2001; Pandolfi 2002).

Among the key features of these shifts, according to Duffield, are: (1) a logic of consolidation and exclusion (rather than expansion and inclusion); (2) “black holes” of the excluded generating innovative and networked global criminal economies; (3) increased competition for resources, including control of the state by utilizing older ethnic and tribal cleavages, banditry, and genocide; (4) transformation of the nation-state from buffer between domestic and external economies to agency for adapting domestic economies to the global economy; (5) selective incorporation in the South of populations that need to show themselves fit for consideration by meeting accounting criteria for economic aid, such as by passing tests of not harboring “terrorists,” by compliance accounting for medical programs, and the like (Duffield 2001). There is a dovetailing between the First World governments’ insistence that security is now more endangered by underdevelopment than by interstate conflict, and the humanitarian aid organizations’ increasing focus on conflict resolution, social reconstruction, and transformation of societies into liberal political economies. “In studying the new wars,” writes Mark Duffield in his survey of the merging of development and security based in part on his long experience with the Sudan, “one is largely reliant on the contribution of political economy *and anthropology*” (2001:6; emphasis added).

Anthropology here is the ethnography of social context and of cultural webs of meaning in which subjectivities must be rethought—not just in terms of the individual or self versus the collectivity or conscience collective but also in terms of the conditions of possibility for forms of subjectivity. Attention must be given to the forms and forces (or knowledge and power, as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze put it) that turn back on themselves in new folds of “subjectivation,” including new psychic complexes,

hauntings, and post-traumatic stress syndromes that more and more are invoked as popular culture metaphors for the contemporary condition.<sup>29</sup>

### Life Sciences, Technosciences, and Cultural Life

At issue both here and in the sciences are transformed terms for figuring out what is to be made to live, who is to be let die, what is the good cultural life, and how it is to be lived. These are moral struggles over new medical technologies (stem cell research, global clinical trials, provision of drugs for AIDS and multidrug resistant tuberculosis, research for the world's largest killers such as malaria, which no longer garner concern in the governments of First World nations), and moral struggles over migration, what Stuart Hall called the "joker in the globalization pack, the subterranean circuit connecting the crisis of one part of the global system with the growth rates and living standards of the other" (Tunstall 2006:3). Articulating these moral struggles as a cultural analyst, Giorgio Agamben writes of "bare life," "states of exception," and changing forms of sovereignty and subjectivation, updating Michel Foucault's notions of biopower,<sup>30</sup> Adorno and Heidegger's pre-WWII discussions of hyperrationality and culture,<sup>31</sup> and Husserl and Bergson's discussions of the life world and of the closed and open worlds of tradition and science.

In 1935, Edmund Husserl gave a lecture (later expanded into his last book) to the Vienna Cultural Society entitled "Philosophy in the Crisis of European Mankind." A few years later, my father (fleeing Vienna), on board a ship between the Old and New Worlds (sunk on its return trip by a Nazi submarine), wrote his first English-language book, *The Passing of the European Age* (Fischer 1943).<sup>32</sup> Husserl and his almost exact contemporary, Henri Bergson, were concerned with reconnecting the procedures of the natural sciences with the goals of the human sciences. Husserl's language was that of intentionality (anthropologists might call it a proto-sociolinguistic understanding that concepts are always concepts for someone) and the lifeworld; Bergson's language was that of the need for a dynamic interplay between closed (traditional) and open (scientific) worlds, the first providing emotions of security and well-being, the second feelings of joy (Smith 2006). Concern with the relationship between the natural and human sciences is again prominent today.

Changes in the life sciences, in particular, offer a heady mix of utopian promises and dystopian fears that call for cultural analysis and critique. New, often overwhelming flows of information, new modes of visualization, new forms of collaboration and intense commercialization in the sciences deserve attention, as does the way patients, too, mobilize the Internet and other information technologies to force accountability on the institutions of science (Dumit 2004, in press; Jasanoff 2005; Kuo 2006; Sunder Rajan 2006; Petryna et al. 2006). Life, it seems, for almost all disciplines and

specialties, has outrun the pedagogies in which we were trained, and we must work anew to forge new concepts, new forms of cultural understanding, and new trackings of networks across scales and locations of cultural fabrics.

Genomics is one of several life sciences that has already begun to transform basic cultural constructs. Our understanding of illness (as Ludwik Fleck might have predicted) has changed from being a deviation from health toward instead being the recognition that we are all carriers of defective genes with variable predispositions for disease under the appropriate conditions. We are all “patients in waiting”<sup>33</sup> and thus are compelled to examine the cultural logics of our condition both negatively and positively. Positively, genomics and other information biosciences provide critical metaphors for cultural understanding, drawing out the creative possibilities of the virtual, symbiotic, morphing, and experimental.

Negatively, or with pragmatic precaution, we are all (as subjects, not just external analysts) probing the logics of life and death that the technoscientifically intense life sciences have produced. Medicine has, as Byron Good, points out (1994) a soteriological dimension involving daily moral struggles of life and death in the clinic or hospital along with what can be called a procedural dimension, illustrated by cases where regimes to test new therapies exist in places where “standards of care” do not match “best practices” and where participation in clinical trials is often the only means of access to any care. Medicine’s “biotechnical embrace” (or the pressure to do whatever is technically possible), as Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good argues, can be at the expense of the good death or other humane values in First World settings (1996, 1998), and deserves cultural analysis. The contradictions of high-tech medicine in countries where infectious disease and primary care are still the principal public health priorities also deserve attention, exemplifying how the struggle between the positivist sciences and appropriate human sciences highlighted by Husserl remains in play today.

The cultural creativity that comes from these difficult social circumstances should not itself be pathologized. The lotus can arise from the mud, although the analytic demands are often intense in the often fast-paced, contradictory or double-edged space that has emerged around the contemporary life sciences. As cultural analysts, we need to see (and construct) scientists as creative cultural producers, and to account for the ways the tools and material infrastructures of science shape what we understand, perceive, and conceptualize (and what is thereby occluded, repressed, and pushed backstage). Because most real world problems in the life sciences involve multiple disciplines (with their different protocols, ways of seeing, and cultural formats), the spaces of interactions among these technosciences become particularly complex and interesting sites for cultural analysis—not only for understanding emergent technologies

themselves but also, more importantly, for tracking implications carried over into culture at large.

These sites are increasingly “ethical plateaus” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), terrains in which decisions about life and death, what matters and what is triaged as less important, are made not just for individuals but also with ramifications “downstream” for later turns in decision making. Just as the new fields of synthetic and systems biology, and regenerative medicine, are attempting experimentally to develop new understandings of biological interactions, so too emergent cultural models must handle similar complex relations, transcending simplistic oppositions such as hype versus truth (e.g., accommodating “promising” as a third term, a kind of feedback loop both for raising the necessary funds for experimental exploration, and as legally protected and disciplined against injurious deployment).<sup>34</sup> Similarly, just as today’s informatics intensive life sciences are a key site for developing ways of understanding and establishing complex causalities (K. Fortun 2004, in press; M. Fortun in press), so too cultural analysts need to continue the development of the rich tradition of dealing with causality begun by Marx (the feedback loops of commodity fetishism), Weber (multicausal factors at historical conjunctures), and Freud (layered and interacting narratives with different temporal connectivities). Spencer put it nicely in the 19th century: “Causation, should not be denied because it is hard to determine, but to put its isolation into the forefront of the endeavor, as if we were operating in old fashioned mechanics, is naïve.”

### OPEN ENDINGS

Just as, Lyotard might say, there is no Jew and we are all Jews (female, queer, normalized, neurotic, vulnerable, struggling for recognition, autonomy, rights, community, place, or citizenship), so there is no culture, and all we do is cultural. Culture is not a variable; culture is relational, it is elsewhere or in passage, it is where meaning is woven and renewed, often through gaps and silences, and forces beyond the conscious control of individuals, and yet serves as the space where individual and institutional social responsibility and ethical struggle take place.

At issue are not just better methods, but a return to some of the most fundamental moral and cultural issues that anthropology and cultural analysis have addressed over the past century and a half (see Figure 3): issues of class differences, culture wars, social warrants, social reform, and social justice (viz., the August 2006 special issue on U.S. culture and social warrants, *Cultural Anthropology*); of individual rights, human rights, cultural tolerance, multicultural ethics (viz., the journal *Cultural Survival*; Allen 2003; Engle 2001; Povinelli 2002; Ramos 1995, 1998); of mental health and subjectivation (Biehl et al. in press; Good et al. in press; Kleinman et al. 1997); of democratic checks

and balances, institutions of ethical debate, regulation, and the slow negotiation of international law (Fassin 2006; Jasanoff 2005; Kuo 2006; Masco 2006; Pandolfi 2002, 2006); and of access to information and the formation of new kinds of public spheres (Dumit in press; Fortun 2001; M. Fortun in press, Kelty in press). As Ann-Belinda Preis says, "in the years to come, some of the most crucial intellectual, moral and ideological battles about human rights issues are likely to turn on their cross-cultural intelligibility and justifiability, a radically new and far more dynamic approach to culture is needed" (1996:286).

It is to remind ourselves of the work that anthropologists have been doing over the past century to create such a layered and dynamic approach to cultural analysis that this article has been written. Cultural analysis has become increasingly relational, plural, and aware of its own historicity: its openness to the historical moments in which it is put to work makes it capable, like experimental systems, of creating new epistemic things. It is the jeweler's eye for ethnographic detailing and conceptual experimentation that often provides insight into (1) the excruciating, impassioned, and conflicted local crucibles of cultural conflict; and (2) the multisited detailing of networks and transduction from localities to transnational players, testing and contesting the efforts to assert canonic universal formulations by those players or by philosophers and literary critics (e.g., on multiculturalism and the politics of recognition Okin 1999; Taylor et al. 1992; but also such anthropological accounts as Povinelli 2002).

Karen Engle (2001), in a review of formal statements of the AAA since 1947, argues that one of the most troubling issues is the charge of cultural relativism, which is often said to lead to moral nihilism and the inability to defend the principles of the Enlightenment and of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and other ethics conventions from Nuremburg to Helsinki. But this is a fundamental misunderstanding of "methodological relativism," of the social conflicts involved in negotiating political and legal regimes, and of the cultural resources in any society for claiming and contesting legitimacy. Methodological relativism obligates an investigator first to explore the "native point of view" (Malinowski), the motivations, intentions, and understandings of the actors (Weber), as well as native models (Lévi-Strauss), modes of cultural accounting (Schneider), and models of and models for social action (Geertz). Methodological relativism includes exploring cultural contestations within societies (Fischer 1980, 1982, 1986, 2004), struggles to form public spheres in different sociopolitical contexts and historical horizons (Anderson 1983; Appadurai 2006; Fortun 2001; Habermas 1989; Lynch 2006), and cross-cultural and cross-nation-state networks and alliances, including efforts to negotiate across "enunciatory communities" (Fortun 2001) and civic epistemologies (Jasanoff 2005).





**FIGURE 3.** “About Finger,” 2002, oil, sand, and acrylic on paper. Entang Wiharso’s (2003) post-Soharto, Reformasi paintings express the fears and anxieties of running amuck, cultural suffering, and psychic reorganization in the aftermath of political repression. Here, rumors swirl amidst the yellow Golkar politics of the state, the red violence of transition, sliced sands of time, a detached up-pointing finger with parallel down-pointing ice-pick, and a detached ear inserted with a siphon-blade. The red neck, mouth, and ear of a businessman in coat and tie is running blood as a white screaming figure witnesses. A graduate of the prestigious Indonesia Art Institute of Yogyakarta, Wiharso hails from Tegal on Java’s north coast, and from lower-class migrant life in Jakarta, where his parents had a warteg (cheap food stall open 18 hours a day, seven days a week). His paintings emerge from and evoke flows of contending signs and objects from Japanese and U.S. media worlds, Islamic and secular worlds, and a split life between Indonesia and the United States. His work is described and analyzed, with further artwork, by Good and Good (in press). Image courtesy Entang Wiharso, with thanks to Mary-Jo and Byron Good.

Increasingly, methodological relativism entails efforts to renegotiate what Donna Haraway (1997) has called “material-semiotic objects” (such as genetically engineered organisms, both animals and plant; or the potential in synthetic biology to build organisms directly from biochemicals), which reorganize conceptual relationships and expose through copyright, trademark, and patent, new genders or marks of ownership and power.<sup>35</sup>

Methodological relativism, and recognition of crosscutting complicities in social relations, raise the bar on descriptive precision. They indeed can disrupt conventional moral claims, making inconvenient demands on understanding. But without such understanding, one cannot build the social legitimacy to propose or sustain change. It does not follow that understanding means agreement.<sup>36</sup>

Cultural analysis of the sort that is alive to the multiple discourses that compose cultural fabrics will find alternative possibilities for alliances and coalitions where it might have been thought there was only dichotomy and opposition. Iranian dissident leaders in the fight for human rights and democratic freedoms, such as Akbar Ganji or Fatimeh Haghighatjoo,<sup>37</sup> for example, have little sympathy left for immanent critique, using the cultural resources of Islam to reform Iran's political system. Instead they appeal to Karl Popper's negative utilitarianism,<sup>38</sup> and to secular constitutionalism (separation of religion and state), and insist on the breaks of modernity: that the UN Declaration of Human Rights introduced a new concept, that women's rights are a modern concept, and that it is impossible today to derive such ideas with reference to the Qur'an. One can understand (recognizing similar fights in 19th-century Britain and elsewhere) and yet wonder how a movement is to form if one rejects the language, the cultural resources—including the debate traditions of Islam, the histories of Sufi and philosophical dissidents—of a large percentage of the population, not to mention the century-long tradition of democratic struggles. Whichever of the more than two sides one chooses, or happens, to be on, it is ethnographically enlightening and politically crucial, to understand how different parties analyze the state of play. Indeed these confrontations and politics are not only front stage in Iran, but also increasingly (once again) so in the United States as well.

Cultural analysis involves the work of interpretation. It requires charitable readings to get the "native point of view" in a form that natives recognize as "right," and to elicit the context for the work of analysts (native or otherwise). It also contributes to the poetics and politics of the living growth of cultural understandings. Anthropologists are among many who make such contributions. It may be useful to compare their work to that of advertising creatives who often judge their own work as borrowing from popular culture and returning to it leveraged formulations, which when successful, resonates, amplifies, and ramifies throughout the popular culture. Anthropologists hope not just to amplify and leverage popular culture but also to juxtapose different cultures (be they vocational, scientific or religious cultures, cultures of secularism, or national cultures) in ways that bring a critical, comparative perspective. It is increasingly a perspective that helps make transparent, visible, or accountable the network of transductions and changes that cultural assumptions and recognitions undergo as they scale or travel up and down, across, around, over, and through networks.

Lively languages animated by metaphors of local cultures and references, carried by cultural analysts to other contexts and frameworks may help make these transductions audible, visible, perceptible, and even, sometimes, democratically subject to accountability.<sup>39</sup>

*Culture*, then, is one of the names of the anthropological form of knowledge that grounds human beings' self-understandings (from Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [2006] on, but is empirically embodied, as in Kroeber's 1948 *Anthropology*). It is a form of knowledge inflected by warm engagement with people and oriented by a jeweler's eye for detail and precision. It is a form of knowledge characterized by the openness and joy that Bergson identified with science. It is a form of knowledge, ever evolving, urgently needed in today's world.<sup>40</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*Arguing that without a differentiated and relational notion of the cultural, the social sciences would be crippled, reducing social action to notions of pure instrumentality, in this article, I trace the growth of cultural analysis from the beginnings of modern anthropology to the present as a layered set of experimental systems whose differential lenses create epistemic objects with increasing precision and differential focus and resolution. Arguing that culture is not a variable—culture is relational, it is elsewhere or in passage, it is where meaning is woven and renewed, often through gaps and silences, and forces beyond the conscious control of individuals, and yet the space where individual and institutional social responsibility and ethical struggle take place—I name culture as a set of central anthropological forms of knowledge grounding human beings' self-understandings. The challenge of cultural analysis is to develop translation and mediation tools for helping make visible the differences of interests, access, power, needs, desires, and philosophical perspective. In particular, as we begin to face new kinds of ethical dilemmas stemming from developments in biotechnologies, expansive information and image databases, and ecological interactions, we are challenged to develop differentiated cultural analyses that can help articulate new social institutions for an evolving civil society.*

**Keywords:** [culture, cultural analysis, science, history of anthropology]

### NOTES

1. Parts of this and the following introductory paragraphs and parts of sections 5–7 have been excerpted under “Culture and Cultural Analysis” in *Problematizing Global Knowledge: Special Issue of Theory, Culture and Society*, March–May 2006, 23(2–3):360–364.
2. There have often been suggestions that the culture concept is exhausted, is used too thinly by nonanthropologists, or is so misused that it should be abandoned by anthropologists. “Cultural thinness” was an idea proposed by Robert Levy in his study of Tahitian culture (1973) as a way of characterizing certain of its cultural accounting procedures in contrast to cultures that did such accounting in more complicated and detailed ways. This comparative contrast was similar to the contrast that Terence Turner described between his frustrating experience talking to the Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon and that of Victor Turner holding rich “seminars” on symbolism with his Ndembu informants. George Marcus would much later adopt the usage “thin ethnography” to characterize strategies of rapid ethnography in business schools, among Cultural Studies writers

claiming to do "ethnography," or the many others who think doing a few interviews is what anthropologists mean by ethnography. These have their uses, but they are usually instrumental ones that are rather different from traditional *thick description* (Geertz's term) or in depth ethnography that seeks to get at webs of meaning and interconnections among institutions. Multilocal or multisited ethnography (Marcus and Fischer 1999) often requires a strategic mix of thin and thick ethnographic modalities to characterize large globally distributed processes that work themselves locally in different ways.

Abu-Lughod (1991) suggested we drop the term "culture" because it has been misused to stereotype Arabs and others; and indeed my phrasing here is meant to cover not just this but locutions of the sort that ascribe special aptitude for "soul," "spirit," ecological wisdom, and other markers of romantic, less-alienated, "culture" as if compensation for lack of wealth and power, reason, and hegemony. For a recent example of the effort to immobilize culture into variables and scales of universal measures of achievement-orientation in a revival of 1950s modernization theory, see the book, *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* by Lawrence Harrison, Samuel Huntington, and others (2000). Although claiming to be scientific, these often fall into similar pejorative tactics (as well as misrepresentations of earlier social theorists cited as foundational, particularly in this case of Max Weber). For a more interesting debate on the uses of culture in the worlds of commerce, business management, organizational behavior, and anthropology in corporations, also revolving around whether culture can be approximated for practical purposes as fixed variables or needs to be more relational, see Cefkin in press and Ortlieb in press.

For an older debate about the utility of the term "culture" and the scientific nature of anthropology, one might look again at Alfred L. Kroeber's *The Nature of Culture* (1952), Kroeber and Kluckhohn's *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952), as well as Radcliffe-Brown's arguments about the nature of theory (1952). It has been popular to simply dismiss these awkward discussions, but they can be read today as halting attempts toward an interpretive or symbolic anthropology in Kroeber's case, and toward structuralism in Radcliffe-Brown's case, but with many other interests that cannot simply be collapsed into those later "paradigms." Kroeber, while invoking Spencer, Tarde, and Durkheim, strikes a stance of pragmatic empiricism. He likes the notion of emergence, and recognizes culture as its own level of organization, for which he used Herbert Spencer's awkward label, the "superorganic," and that he says grows historically and contextually, concluding, "Causation should not be denied because it is hard to determine, but to put its isolation into the forefront of the endeavor, as if we were operating in old fashioned mechanics, is naïve." Leslie White, reviewing Kroeber's *Configurations of Culture Growth in American Anthropologist* in 1946, thought Kroeber had no place for individuals, whereas inversely Kroeber's teacher, Franz Boas, had no "vision of a science of culture" and so elevated the individual to supreme importance. This is a crude and unfair reading of both, but it reflects the reductive polemics of the time posing the individual versus society.

Meanwhile Radcliffe-Brown in his "Introduction" to a set of his collected essays, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), went back to Montesquieu as the first to formulate the notion of a *social system*, defined as a "set of relations," and August Comte for distinguishing social statics versus social dynamics. Like Kroeber, he too goes back to consider Spencer's theory of social evolution (while distancing himself from the specifics of Spencer's speculations), but drawing a distinction among social structures (composed of roles), social processes, and social functions. He begins a tradition of recognizing that there can be differences between individual purposes and system requirements, a tradition that would be elaborated by E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1937, 1940) and the Manchester School (Max Gluckman, Victor Turner, and Abner Cohen). In concluding, he notes that he no longer uses the term *culture* as he did in many of his earlier essays ("as a general term for a way of life, including the way of thought, of a particular locally defined social group") but that he wants to create a theory from the concepts process, structure and function, in the 200-year-old cultural tradition of Montesquieu, Comte, Spencer, and Durkheim. Following Radcliffe-Brown, British social anthropology would privilege the terminology of the *social* whereas U.S. cultural anthropology would privilege the word *cultural*, but meaning by these terms quite overlapping endeavors (particularly once the University of Chicago had become colonized by Radcliffe-Brown).

3. The "Second World" or socialist block was more explicitly interested in changing identities, and sharply breaking with the past: forging a "New Socialist Man," a rationalized, industrial,

and welfare society, and a socialist-modernist culture, with hostility toward religion, kinship relations, and other modes of social and cultural tradition. Even where concessions were made to nationalities, for example, in Muslim Central Asia, the Arabic alphabet was replaced with Cyrillic specifically to break historical ties, and family clan and lineage structures were broken up to foster socialized production. Nonetheless, new Soviet cultural forms (civic rituals, socialist realism in the arts) as well as pursuit of high artistic forms (such as ballet and philharmonic music), valorizing engineering and the sciences, and development of mass culture forms from propaganda to input-output national planning models, large-scale agriculture, and industrial organization—all these were fostered in a complicated dialectical relationship with the First World in which catching up as well as alternative modernity ideas played key roles. Indeed, debates before and immediately after the Bolshevik revolution revolved around blockages to creating socialism in one country and in a semimonetized economy, apart from the industrialized First World, which was supposed to lead the revolution according to earlier Marxist models of how new social formations would arise out of accumulations of contradictions between social relations (property ownership laws or class conflicts) and forces of production (including science and technology).

4. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917) is known for his articulation of the anthropological notion of culture, for a celebrated article on the comparative method that blocked easy claims of evolutionary progress, and for his efforts to make anthropology a tool for social reform (part of the social reform acts and debates of the 19th century in England, led by the increasing political strength of the entrepreneurial middle classes and dissenting sects). Remembered for his lines, “Theologians to expose, ‘Tis the mission of primitive man” (which he contributed to Andrew Lang’s “Double Ballad of a Primitive Man”), Tylor’s “omnibus” definition of culture opens his 1871 two-volume work, *Primitive Culture: Researches in the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, toward the end of which he reaffirmed that anthropology was “essentially a reformer’s science” (vol. 2:410).

Tylor’s concept of culture is often contrasted with that of Mathew Arnold (*Culture and Anarchy*, originally published as essays in 1867–68 in *The Cornhill Magazine*), and the pair are often seen as founders of the difference between literary accounts of high Culture (with a capital “C,” as it were) versus anthropological understandings of culture. George Stocking (1968:ch. 4) makes a case for a general commonality between Arnold and Tylor of Victorian notions of evolutionary progress, but even he acknowledges that Arnold could never have written a book entitled *Primitive Culture* (which would have been a contradiction in terms for Arnold). Arnold, as Stocking also acknowledges, was alienated from the liberal, nonconformist middle classes, with which the Quaker Tylor was identified. Tylor could not go to “Arnold’s Oxford” (not being of the established Anglican church), although eventually, thanks to the liberal reforms gained by the ascendant middle classes and dissenting sects, he taught there rising from Keeper of the University Museum, to reader, and eventually professor, becoming a member of the Royal Society in 1871 and was knighted in 1912. Central for Tylor’s generation of comparativist ethnologists was the struggle for a systematic understanding of cultural development that could become a guide for such reforms as the British public was debating through the course of the 19th century, involving not just extension of suffrage, but marriage reform, penal codes, and whether religion and its dogmas could still be sustained as the basis for scientific investigation.

Tylor’s most important methodological article, “On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions Applied to the Laws of Marriage and Descent” (1889) was an effort to use statistical correlations to establish functional relations for instance between exogamous dual organization and classificatory terminologies of kinship, or between parent-in-law taboos and matrilineal residence. One thing, he caustically noted, was that no index of moral progress among nations could be established beyond arbitrarily putting ourselves at the top. Kroeber could still cite this article with admiration in 1935 in his article “History and Science in Anthropology” in the *American Anthropologist*. Couched in the now archaic terms of “adhesions” and efforts to distinguish between cultural diffusion and endogenous development, one can easily dismiss this as only of historical interest. Alternatively, one might recognize here the beginnings of what would become a “methodological functionalism,” the obligation to ask if one thing changes in a culture or society, what else changes (the systems or ecological rule: “you cannot change only one thing”).

Tylor was one of a generation of remarkable comparativists, including Sir Henry Maine (1822–1888), a scholar of comparative jurisprudence (*Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early*

*History of Society, and Its Relation to Modern Ideas* [1861]), who also worked in India on land settlement in the Punjab, civil marriage codes, and became a Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University; Louis Henry Morgan (1818–81), who worked with the Seneca in New York state (*The League of the Iroquois* [1851]), and pioneered the comparative study of classificatory kinship systems and their jural import (*Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* [1868–70]; *Ancient Society* [1877]) on which Marx and Engels drew; Max Müller (1823–1900), the German comparative philologist and religion scholar (editor and translator of some of the 50-volume *Sacred Books of the East* [1879–1910]); Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904), the German human geographer, who wrote about urbanism, habitat, Lebensraum, and the critical importance of physical geography; William H. R. Rivers (1864–1922), experimental psychologist and ethnographer who went on the Torres Straits Expedition in 1898, and during WWI became a psychiatrist at Craiglockhart Military Hospital to the shell shocked, including the poet Siegfried Sassoon; William Robertson-Smith (1846–94), Scottish Semitic languages and comparative religion scholar, who was dismissed from his chair at the Free Church College in Aberdeen for his writings in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, eventually becoming professor of Arabic at Cambridge and editor of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (*Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* [1885]; *Religion of the Semites* [1889]); Wilhelm “Pater” Schmidt, the Viennese comparative linguist, ethnologist, and student of Australian aboriginal languages (who earned Freud’s jealous hostility); Charles Gabriel Seligman (1873–1940), ethnologist on the Torres Straits expedition in 1898, and on expeditions to New Guinea (1904), Ceylon (1906–08), and the Sudan (1909–12 and 1921–22), and chair of ethnology at the University of London, 1913–34; Edward Westermarck (1862–1939), Finnish ethnographer of Morocco who taught at the London School of Economics 1907–30.

Although one can dismiss this generation as too Eurocentrically evolutionist, they offered not only a wealth of comparative materials that were made available to challenge European and Christian parochialisms but also a rich history of social and political struggle over self-governance and social policy both for the creation of modern nation-states and for the construction of colonial empires (of which Maine and the Utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill are obvious examples, as are missionary ethnologists and explorers, but that becomes more fine grained in the next generation of anthropologists trained for the administrative service).

5. Anthropologists conventionally cite *The Persian Letters* (1721) of Montesquieu, or even Herodotus’s *Histories* (440 B.C.E.) as examples of the rhetoric of critiquing one’s own society by reference to other cultures, using an anthropological trope of first-person witnessing. French literature scholar Michele Longino, analogously argues in *Orientalism in French Classical Drama* (2002) that Oriental others, especially Ottomans, were important figures for the public theatrical construction of French nationalism both at the time of its formation and in continuing interpretations of such plays, suggesting why some versions of these stories became canonical whereas others did not. Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) is a similar argument about the construction of colonial era discourses and their legacies in the present. Henry Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor: The Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Cannot Work, and Will Not Work* (1861) was often cited by early 20th-century anthropologists as a parallel rhetoric of distinguishing the cultured classes from the world of the poor. In all these examples, the social scientists argued, what escapes is the in situ social and cultural organizations, perspectives, knowledges, and self-representations of the peoples ostensibly being described, represented, or deployed.
6. An integrated history has yet to be written, although fragments of labor histories, constitutional and legal histories, urban planning, and religious and social reform movements do exist. Less well mapped are the circulation, reinterpretation, adaptation, and refunctioning of ideas, and of course reform and institutional development. Hindu and Buddhist ideas were common among European Romantics and U.S. Protestant Transcendentalists, informing for instance the public service ideology and asceticism of New England savants, elites, and philanthropists, such as Emerson and Alfred Harlow Avery, an important benefactor of Syracuse and Boston Universities. Inversely, leaders of reform movements in India adapted European Enlightenment, utilitarian and social reform ideals as part of nationalist and anticolonialist struggles. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Ph.D. Columbia University, father of the Indian constitution, and leader of the Buddhist movement among dalits, tribals, and untouchables) is a contemporary of Malinowski: both intervened in domestic debates about what is reformable in the cultural assumptions of societies as different as

- England, Russia, and India. On two centuries of Islamic modernisms and reform movements in the Muslim world, see Fischer 1982.
7. The notion of experimental systems has taken on renewed saliency in recent years, especially in science studies, and especially the notion that what at one point is an unstable and experimental object to be discovered can be stabilized and turned into a tool for the construction of further experiments and surprises (Rheinberger 1997; see also in *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, the double genealogy we draw on from the sciences and the avant-garde in the arts). Various notions of “systems,” as will be traced in this article, have played important roles in both general intellectual thought and the social sciences over the past 150 years, from machines and large scale or networked technological systems (Graham 1998 on large technological projects; Hughes 1983, 1998 on railroads and electrification, respectively; Marx on machines), structure and function in the early 20th century (linguistics, biology, and social anthropology, but also the interest in models, both how their elements can be varied and how they change as they scale, and in anthropology with the recognition that actors might operate with cultural models that do not conform to reality, native models vs. analysts models, competence vs. performance in speech, lineage models that are stable whereas actual genealogies are adjusted to fit) to more information and cybernetic notions in midcentury (open and closed systems; Parsons and Schneider and Geertz’s cultural systems), to more targeted experimental systems (*Drosophila*, yeast, *C. elegans*, knock-out mice, and tools such as pcr). See also “Four Haplotype Genealogical Tests for an Anthropology of Science and Technology for the Twenty-First Century” (Fischer 2006b).
  8. Thompson retrieves the contending strategies and perspectives of working-men’s groups and their struggles against industrial discipline and for political reform, seeing them as actors and cultural formulators, not just social categories. Nimitz, similarly, while focusing on Marx’s career, situates Marx’s efforts at political organizing and strategizing against the contemporary array of movements in England, France, and Germany. Sewell reminds us that although the French Revolution of 1789 created a system of private property, the struggles of 1830 and 1848 were under the banner of demands that labor be recognized as property, as a basis of wealth production, and of protection in national workshops, even creating in the Luxembourg palace a parallel body to the National Assembly that was for four months in effect a kind of workers’ social republic.
  9. Ringer provides an account of Max Weber’s generation, elaborating the cultural social markers of the German educational and class system (learning Greek and Latin for instance as higher status than vocational skills, not dissimilar to England where training in the classics was also a social badge that allowed entry to the administrative elite whether in the home, foreign, or colonial offices. Readings, writing almost two centuries after Fichte, describes a new transformation of the educational system owing to the breakdown of the cultural markers of the nation-state that were codified in canons of national language literatures as the basis for a common state culture. Wolf Lepinies has recently revived the discussion of the role of *Bildung* in Germany as the locus of a trust for Germans that the state itself does not possess, and he argues, in Germany never in the past possessed. Culture as a shield against slipping back into savagery in some ways is reminiscent of Geertz’s 1966 account of Balinese decorum (“Person, Time and Conduct in Bali” [1973a]), and indeed the latter essay is mediated by Alfred Schutz’s phenomenological sociology, an effort to extend Max Weber’s “interpretive sociology.” Norbert Elias’s *The Civilizing Process* (1969) traces how forms of sensibility and cultural behavioral norms have changed over cultural–historical time, of which the German *Bildung* is a particular bourgeois and philosophical formation. *Bildung* generates in German an important array of forms that have shaped thinking about culture: Geertz’s “models of and models for,” for instance, comes from Simmel’s *Nachbild und Vorbild*. a weaving of meaning by constructing concepts to fit social interactions as well as shaping those interactions to conform with cultural concepts.
  10. Habermas argued that in the 18th century, coffee houses became the locus of a public sphere, a space of rational argumentation, a space between the state and civil society from which public opinion could be organized and used to call the state to account. This public sphere was mediated by newspapers and face-to-face argumentation. In the course of the 19th and 20th centuries these public spheres came to be colonized and manipulated by industrial and political interests, via commodification, advertising, and other mechanisms of the culture industry. Gellner argued that literacy was a requirement for industrial labor forces, and industrialization policies for the consolidation of

- European and East European nation-states required literacy in national languages. Benedict Anderson made a similar argument for the rise of nationalism in colonial arenas, that newspapers and other print media allowed for readers to imagine themselves as part of an interconnected political arena.
11. Although the revolution of 1789 had introduced private property and abolished property held for the common good or given by the king for temporary use (capitalist relations replacing feudal ones in agriculture), it had led by 1848 to fragmentation and indebtedness. Both clerics and mayors (the parish and local administrative systems) were harnessed to Louis Bonaparte's (Napoleon III) "Party of Order" campaign. Urban working-class organizers had failed to organize peasants. Peasants had, Marx argues, no means of self-representation, and were thus persuaded to vote for Napoleon as their representative and protector against urban creditors. Marx consequently cites their structural situation as one of neither having class consciousness nor any means of organizing such a consciousness or alliance with urban artisans or wage laborers.
  12. A school of Indian historians formed around Ranajit Guha and the annual series, *Subaltern Studies*, which attempted to read against the grain of the colonial archives to recover the voices, motivations, and organizations of the workers, peasants, and others. Among the contributors are: Shahid Amin, Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyandra Pandey, and Sumit Sarkar. Gayatri Spivak provides a useful introduction in the volume of *Selected Subaltern Studies*, which she edited with Ranajit Guha (Guha and Spivak 1988).
  13. The dangers of such scapegoating hardly need to be spelled out for Germany in the period leading up to the Nazi period, but they hold also for mercantile groups elsewhere in the world, as with the Chinese in Southeast Asia, or Jains, Marwaris, and Chettiars in India and East Africa. Werner Sombart's *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (2001) intended to engage Weber's thesis. Received at the time as too philo-Semitic by the right and too anti-Semitic by many Jews and liberals, Sombart himself moved from a left-wing identity as an interpreter of Marx to ultimately a right-wing nationalist association with the Nazis. Weber's thesis has generated a rich literature of both criticism and elaboration, both via Ernst Troeltsch (1931), sparking a rich literature on the sociology of Protestant sectarianism, and via R. H. Tawney (1936) and R. K. Merton, a rich literature on rationalization, science, and capitalism.
  14. See Laura Snyder's recent account (2006) of the debates over utilitarianism between John Stuart Mill and William Whewell, in which Mill modified "the greatest good for the greatest number" by recognizing that the "good" is differentiated by qualities of pleasure and cultural character, and that knowledge of moral truth progressively expands. In this he follows Plato's *Republic* in which Socrates distinguishes between lovers of wisdom, lovers of honor, and lovers of gain, and gives the highest regard to the first.
  15. Meaningful sounds in a language (phonemes) are generated by *binary distinctions* (voiced vs. unvoiced) at particular points in the oral cavity (bilabial or lips, the tongue at the top of the palate, near the glottis). Different languages use different sets of distinctions (have different phonemic systems or meaningful sounds selected out of the possible range of sounds, phonetics, the human voice can in principle make). Some similar sound segments occur in mutually exclusive environments: where one occurs, the other never occurs (this is called *complementary distribution*). In similar fashion, as F. de Saussure formulated it, semantic meaning is generated through a system of differences, again contrasts between the members of a lexicon or semantic field. Thus French mouton does not have the same value, is not an exact equivalent of its English cognate "mutton", because "mouton" also means sheep. So too, more generally, information theory uses a binary logic or coding.
  16. Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) was a philosopher of the cultural sciences born in the German town of Breslau (now the Polish town of Wrocław). Turning down a job at Harvard, he was professor of philosophy at Hamburg until 1933 when he fled the Nazis, subsequently teaching at Oxford, Goteburg, Yale, and Columbia. He is best known for his three-volume *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1953), to which the *Essay on Man* (1944) was both a summary introduction and a sketch for a fourth volume inspired by the urgency of combating the ideas that had facilitated the Nazis. Already in 1929, Cassirer debated Heidegger in what was seen as a debate between historical humanism and ahistorical phenomenology. Cassirer warned that Heidegger's approach could be easily used by political leaders. And in *The Myth of the State* (1946) he would make this criticism even stronger.
  17. Oswald Spengler (1880–1936) was a German philosopher best known for his book *The Decline of the West* (1926), which combined a cyclical conception of the rise and decline of civilizations



with a cultural pessimism. Although he voted for the Nazis in 1932 and hung a swastika flag on his house, and although the Nazis took him as a precursor, he refused the Nazi racial ideology, thought Hitler vulgar, and finally his *Hour of Decision* got him expelled from the party. His name is often used as an iconic marker for cultural pessimism.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) was a philosopher in Germany who became entangled in Nazi politics. Even before the Nazi rise to power, his thought was criticized by humanists (such as Cassirer), the Vienna Circle (Neurath, Carnap), the Frankfurt School (Adorno, and after the war by Habermas), and surrealists such as Bataille and Breton (e.g., Bataille [2006], Geroulanos 2006) as irrational and easily appropriable for political mischief. Apparently a mesmerizing teacher, he claimed to refound philosophy on “ontology” rather than metaphysics and epistemology. His first major work was on “Being” (*Sein und Zeit* 1927) and his later work was on framing (*Gestell*) and the poetics of thought (*Dichtung*). After WWII, French intellectuals incorporated him as a major predecessor, although much of their work using his attentiveness to poetics serves as a sharp critique of his work. He was appointed Rector of Freiburg University by the Nazis in 1933, during which time there were book burnings and forced resignations of Jewish professors. His inaugural address continues to draw negative comment. He resigned a year later, but he never resigned from the Nazi party. His views on modernity and technology are fairly standard reactionary conservatism, but were given some heightened notoriety after the war by his analogizing the gas chambers to industrial agriculture, by which, of course, he meant to criticize the latter, but the context was his continued refusal to in any way apologize for his role in the Nazi period. Some people find his notion that nature is turned by technological society into a “standing reserve” that can be appropriated by mathematizing calculation innovative rather than fairly obvious or a standard antimodernist complaint. His removal of the dedication of *Sein und Zeit* to his teacher, Husserl, who, as a Jew, was forced to resign from Freiburg, was in part reciprocated by Husserl’s late work on *The Crisis in the European Sciences*. In it Husserl introduced a concept of the “life world” (later picked up and elaborated by the French phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty) as a counter to Heidegger’s ahistoricism.

18. Two of the best introductions to the Frankfurt School still remain Martin Jay (1973) and David Held (1980). (For the post–WWII period when Adorno returned to Germany hosting the famous conferences on Max Weber and on the logic of scientific discovery, see Müller-Doohm 2005). One often makes a distinction between the prewar Frankfurt School (closed immediately by the Nazis when Hitler came to power), the dispersal of that group of scholars mainly to the United States, the postwar return of Adorno, and his troubled relationship with the radical students of Germany’s New Left, on the one hand, and the postwar generation of scholars led and influenced by Habermas, who proved a strong voice for open democracy and against normalizing the Nazi period, on the other hand.
19. *Emic* and *etic* were short-hand terms introduced by the linguist Kenneth Pike from the linguistic terms phoneme and phonetics. Phonemes are the sounds selected in a given language as meaningful sounds, from the range of phonetic sounds that the human voice could make. Thus /bit/ and /pit/ are differentiated in English by the phonemes /b/us/p/, whereas the German phoneme “ch” (*Ich*) is not recognized and is hard for many English speakers to say. Analogously then, it was proposed that there might be many semantic fields in which there was an objective natural grid against which cultural terms could be measured and compared across languages, such as colors against the spectrum.
20. I take this paragraph from chapter 6 of my *Emergent Forms of Life*, where I use it to explore ethnic autobiographies and multiple alternatives that narrators such as Maxine Hong Kingston explore in efforts to articulate the fragments of “talk stories” that go into the formation of their “identities.”
21. For a moment, the interest in James Joyce by Lacan, Derrida, and others in France seemed to dovetail with the explosion of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and the use of a linguistic style that expanded English with elements from other languages, cultural perspectives, and presuppositions. Similar expansions were happening to other world languages, including Arabic. But this potential as a vehicle for multilingual Cultural Studies waned, although there was talk about starting journals that would simultaneously publish in, say, Chinese, Japanese, and English to draw their audiences into the possibilities of enriched cross-cultural discourses.
22. The allusions here are to Fleck (1979) and Emily Martin (1994) on immunology, and to Foucault and Deleuze’s notions of modernist disciplinary societies (constructed around sites such as

schools, clinics, penitentiaries, and around discourses—particularly the foundational disciplines of linguistics, economics, and biology, or language, labor, and life that Foucault argues are characteristic of the modern era) now being transformed into more diffusely and pervasively forms organized by codes and flows (Deleuze and Guattari 1992). The liquidity created by derivatives and similar financial instruments is a powerful concrete example of flows that depend on the mathematical abstraction of different kinds of risk and classificatory processes.

23. *Wikipedia* and *Web 2.0* refer to tools that allow collaboration and sharing of information. Ward Cunningham, the inventor of the wiki, which was a constituent tool used to create *Wikipedia* is credited with pushing the idea of “moving to the edge of your competence on purpose.” (On the evolution of *Wikipedia* toward registration and passwords for authors and on the study by *Nature* magazine of the reliability as compared with the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, see *Wikipedia* n.d.) Derek Powazek uses the metaphor of company towns for Web 1.0 sites such as the Well, Salon, and such gaming-derived sites as BuildingBuzz (on which you spend buzz bucks). In contrast, Web 2.0 sites such as Technorati (for which he used to be creative director), Boing Boing, Flickr, MySpace, YouTube, blogads.com, and sina.com aggregate and rank links and use robot spiders and crawlers as accountants. They thereby can position themselves as “thought leaders” or places to which people come to find other links or services.

The “butterfly effect” is the popular tag for the feature of dynamical systems that occurs when initial conditions are slightly changed, and the subsequent large effects can be propagated over generations (the flap of a butterfly wing or a seagull’s wing in China or Mexico can affect a weather pattern). The tag is associated with Edward Lorenz, although the idea is older, and is now important in chaos theory and the study of complex systems. It includes what is now called the Lorenz attractor, which derived from atmospheric convection equations, takes the shape, under certain values, when the plots are drawn of butterfly wings, or under some values of a torus knot.

24. China is the most interesting country to watch (followed by Iran) for its attempts both to have and to control the Internet, a veritable test bed of hardware and software innovations. China is attempting to install an ambitious new system of controls by leaving behind the failing “Great Wall of China” strategy and building a “Golden Shield” (launched in Beijing in 2000). The massive upgrade, CN2 or China Next Carrying Network, is supposed to incorporate next generation routers in a three tier system that combines Internet surveillance with smart cards, credit records, speech and face recognition, and close-circuit television capabilities. ISPs in 2004 were supposed to have installed monitoring devices that track individual e-mail accounts. The hardware upgrades are being supplied by Cisco, Juniper, Alcatel, and Huawei. The routers are supposed to make possible increased filtering, but also the tracking of e-mail message content. Various reports on Internet surveillance and censorship, as well as the cat-and-mouse games played by dissidents and others to avoid these controls, have been produced by the Rand Corporation (Chase and Mulverson 2002), Freedom House (Esarey 2006), Reporters without Borders annual reports by country ([http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php?id\\_rubrique=20](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php?id_rubrique=20)), and He Qinglian’s *Media Control in China* (2004).
25. Poetry brings with it historical contexts and analogies to the present. The classical poetry of Iran is rich with anticensorship contexts and meanings. “Night-letters” (*shabnameh*) of the Constitutional Revolution have become famous exemplars of modern poetry. The Persian Weblogistan is one of the most active languages on the Internet. Although used mostly for diaries and trivia, it is nonetheless a space both of cultural genre development in new language forms that mix written and spoken Persian, and that create new female genres of writing, as well as occasionally a space for real-time journalism of unfolding events, organizing tools, and a determined site of feminist solidarity and consciousness raising. (I thank Orkideh Behrouzan and Alireza Doostdar for their astute commentaries on Persian blogs.)
26. The introduction of the gun is often said to be a cultural destroyer of cultural ideals of heroic warriors in tests of honor because one does not see those one shoots (see Meeker 1979, on the transformation of Arabian battle poetry). The airplane gunner targeting through computerized imagery on a screen high above the ground is this process intensified.
27. Concerning the Algerian example, in which independence was won after the French had effectively won militarily, see Connelly (2002)

28. This and the next two paragraphs are taken from Fischer in press, which focuses on Palestine and Israel as one borderland site of these now almost paradigmatic situations of conflict and asymmetric struggle.
29. On this, see my "Cultural Critique with a Hammer, Gouge and Woodblock: Art and Medicine in the Age of Social Retraumatization" [Fischer 2003:ch. 4], the notion of "ethnographic psychotherapy" attributed to W. H. R. Rivers in his dealings with WWI "shell shock" by Kleinman [2006:214], and the history of PTSD as a *Harmony of Illusions* [Young 1995]). The section below also appears in the text in part.
30. Foucault, like Quetelet and Durkheim before him, looked at institutions and activities (like the collection of social statistics) that inculcate self-disciplining subjectivities and subjectivation as tools by which states could regulate populations and decide who should live and who should die, who should thrive and who should be restrained. Agamben updates these 18th- and 19-century technologies to make central moral issues addressed in the mid-20th century by Carl Schmidt (the challenges to liberal democracy from those who would use the ballot box to destroy it) and Walter Benjamin (the fantasies, ideologies, and haunted histories carried by industrial and commercial objects). Agamben makes central to the foundations of contemporary governance regimes, including liberal democracies, the exclusions of the camps (concentration camps initiated in the Boer Wars, reaching their full evil with the Nazis, becoming routinized in the long-term UNRWA camps for Palestinians, and the refugee and migrant camps in Southeast Asia, and Africa, and now used again as controls on immigration into Europe). Camps of those trying to get into Europe are now situated around the peripheries (North Africa, Eastern Europe, Canary Islands) as well as within Europe (Sangatte in France, Campsfield in Oxford, United Kingdom), just as there were camps, prisons, or holding areas in the United States for Central American and Haitian refugees, and their successors (these are the subject of work by anthropologists Didier Fassin, Mariella Pandolfi, and her students). Slums, banlieu, and ghettos are other forms of camps in which people are often treated as reserve labor and biopolitical subjects (kept alive but stripped of chances for equality).
31. Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972) is perhaps the best known of a series of discussions by the Frankfurt School on the ways in which hyperrationality can transform from liberatory to straitjacketing ideology if there are not countervailing checks. They had in mind the rise of fascism, mass party politics, and unfettered industrial and commercial rationalities. Heidegger too worried, in a more directly antimodernist mode, that science and technology were to blame for turning nature into a standing reserve for production, and the world into a "world picture" that could be exploited.
32. Eric Fischer was a historian of financial reconstruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and an innovator in introducing in Vienna the idea of the history of the United States as being distinct from Britain's history. Fischer argued on the basis of migration statistics, intermarriage, and reverse influences on Europe that regardless of which side won WWII, the centers of cultural creativity had already passed before the war outside the boundaries of Europe. In the revised edition in 1948 he found reason to confirm his earlier argument. It would, of course, soon become commonplace to speak of a U.S. century. But he also foresaw a growing influence from Latin America, especially Brazil.
33. Joe Dumit (in press) writes of "patients-in-waiting" as the global population that the pharmaceutical industry is attempting to recruit as consumers of its products through genomic individualized medicine, and prior to that by drugs taken for life prophylactically (such as Lipitor for cholesterol).
34. See Sunder Rajan 2006 and Mike Fortun in press on the legal protections (of entrepreneurs, of patients) in life science "promises," as for instance, those written into Security and Exchange Commission requirements for public disclosure in corporate documents.
35. See Sunder Rajan 2006 and Waldby and Mitchell 2006 on biocapital; and LiPuma and Lee [2004], Lepinay [n.d.a, n.d.b], and MacKenzie 2006 on new material-semiotic forms of derivatives that transform particular risks into liquidity, which in turn undermine national sovereignties, a process located in what LiPuma and Lee call "cultures of financial circulation" (2004:31) in which the mathematical physicists and statisticians who design the stochastic models and trading algorithms are quite separate from those who know about the substance of markets or commodities.
36. One of the most serious problems for liberal democracies that again has come to the fore is how to protect themselves from forces among their citizens (and other residents) who wish to

destroy them. Again, it does not follow that there should be no defense against the use of "one man, one vote" slogans when they would be used to elect dictatorships: liberal democracies are more than voting; they include division of powers and checks and balances. It is precisely against such simplistic reductionism of claims (and analyses of social and cultural systems, implications, consequences, and transductions) that anthropology arose in the first place. The UN Declaration of Human Rights is sometimes demeaned as grounded in Western Enlightenment ideas and Western individualism. But if one listens to the arguments by, say, Iranian Shi'ite intellectuals, one quickly realizes that their alternative calls for "social justice" rather than "individual rights" might be not so different from the arguments of 19th-century German intellectuals who claimed that the free trade economics propounded by the British was a tool to keep Germany in a subordinate position; and that the goal of social justice is hardly exterior to Enlightenment values. (See LiPuma and Lee 2004 for similar arguments about South Africa, Brazil, and Indonesia and the cultures of financial circulation as threats to nation-state sovereignty in general.)

37. Akbar Ganji, is a celebrated Iranian journalist, who began as a fundamentalist follower of Khomeini, but in the 1990s, particularly after a series of extra-judicial assassinations of intellectuals in Tehran, used his journalism to hold the state to account. He was jailed for six years, during which time he wrote two republican manifestos, and on his release he refused to remain silent. He is an associate of the philosopher Abdul Karim Soroush who, trained in the philosophy of science in London, became a disciple of Karl Popper and has since attempted to argue within Islamic terms for a separation of religion and politics. Haghghatjoo is a lawyer who was elected to the Iranian parliament, and while still a Majlis representative, was sentenced to prison for speaking out. The sentence was postponed, but still can be implemented. She now argues that the way the Islamic Republic's constitution has evolved, means it can no longer be reformed, but instead needs total rewriting, a position that Ganji also takes.
38. Negative utilitarianism, instead of "the greatest good for the greatest number" (which could easily be prejudicial to minorities), calls for reforms that harm the fewest.
39. Such scholars as Michel Serres, Donna Haraway, Jacques Derrida, and Avital Ronell are expert in deploying such lively languages, which at their best bring together different reference frames in illuminating ways. "Dead metaphors" are those that no longer cause listeners or speakers to attend to the gaps in meaning between the tenor and vehicle or in the carrying across fields of comparison and contrast. They become conventionalized and dead. "Lively metaphors," by contrast, are those that take on new meanings, and cause listeners and speakers to attend to the work they perform. In 1970s symbolic anthropology, much was made, in a similar vein, of key symbols, and constellations of symbols that were central to cultural codes and systems, and how they were kept alive and growing, or how they began to fade and die and lose vibrant connectivity.
40. *Editor's Note:* Over the last 20 years, *Cultural Anthropology* has published a number of articles that historicize and critically engage the culture concept. See, for example, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson's "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference" (1992), Anna Tsing's "From the Margins" (1994), Robert Brightman's "Forget Culture: Replacement, Transcendence, Relexification" (1995), and Richard Handler's "Raymond Williams, George Stocking, and Fin-de-Siècle U.S. Anthropology" (1998).

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