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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

TO: George

FR: Mike

RE: Proposal for Institute for/ Committee On/ Research Consortium on  
Cultural Studies: topics around which to organize (a)  
research agendas; (b) standing committees; (c) project  
umbrellas

- i) Social and historical contexts for literary and artistic productions, intellectual fashions, ideologies/theologies, cosmologies, epistemologies, and ethics;
- ii) Communicational grounds and media of cultural forms: e.g., epics, poetry, theater, and oral traditions; effects of different kinds of literacy; film and the electronic age; language as the grounds of cultural and epistemological ideas;
- iii) Psychology as cultural formations: historical and cross-cultural differences; rhetorical strategies and patterns in psychological description; notions of agency encoded in legal, economic and linguistic structures (including gender and age-grading);
- iv) Science as cultural formations with a focus on the differences between late twentieth century science and its predecessors in (a) practical stimuli given by changing technologies ("Science and Technology"), (b) assumptions and methods (Philosophy of Science & Modern Epistemologies); (c) metaphors used to link/expand narrow technical areas and to popularize (Science and Cosmology); (d) ethics and technology;
- v) America as a distinctive socio-cultural formation in explicit comparison with other post-industrial societies (legal structures, welfare structures, productivity structures, status systems, politics, regionalisms, ethnicities) and in explicit exploration of connections with less advanced societies that provide immigrants, economic resources (labor, inputs, markets, R&D) and cultural receptors/modifiers (e.g. film industry, music, dress, as part of ersatz ideologies operating within local and global political economies).

Each of the above needs an explicit mechanism to be inclusive of world regions apart from the Europe-America biases of the standard humanities. (Even topic v -- e.g. America as ideological image/tool in other societies, not simply as the exploited, but as source of ideas, counter-images (positive fantasy/ideal as well as negative/oppositional/other), revitalization from returnees, linkages generative of structural change). One way would be to create "seats" on each committee for each major region (not all seats would necessarily be always filled, but they would be there as markers to push reflection in comparative directions). Another might be to have an annual session in each committee to rethink the issues developed from perspectives of these other regions. Regions minimally: Europe, America, Latin America, Africa, Islamic World, South Asia, East Asia.