REFFERENDUM, ELECTIONS, WORK TO BE DONE
by Richard A. Peterson

VOTING Enclosed with this issue of the newsletter is the ballot for next year's officers. John Hall and his committee have done an excellent job of finding strong candidates. I just wish they all could serve. Do vote.

REFERENDUM You are also asked to cast your vote sanctioning the $2 raise in section dues. This was approved without dissent by the Board and at the Business Meeting in Chicago August, 1987 so another vote now might seem redundant. It does, however, deserve serious consideration because the ASA has changed the base on us. Dues have been $5 all of which is kept by the ASA. Their audit shows that it costs just over $8 to service each section membership and they want the very rapidly proliferating sections (which some see as rivaling allegiance to the ASA as such) to pay their own way. As it now stands, dues this coming year will be $8, all of which goes to the ASA. If, as we have already voted, we want $2 for the section to spend, dues will have to be raised to $10.

What do we need money for? Not for parties, not for prizes, not for fellowships, not to fly Board members to meetings, and such. Money is needed to expand the number of Newsletter pages (we get 20 pages for the year and have to pay for any more); to pay part of the cost of the teaching package and the annotated membership list the section is creating; to subsidize start-up cost of a proposed computer-based network linking Section members with each other and with members of the International Sociological Association's Art, Culture and Communication section members around the world; to defray phone costs associated with putting out the newsletter, organizing the Section sessions at the annual meetings, and creating the slate of candidates for section offices, and the like. To this point we have had to call on donations from our employers, solicited friends, and ourselves, sources on which we should not have to rely.

For some, raising does from $5 to $10 means more than to others. I suggest the option of $8 dues for students and $10 for the rest of section members. What say you?

BRIEFS Can you help with the annotated list of section members? Please send course outlines to Rosanne Martorella. Send requests for research resources and Newsletter contributions to Liah Greenfeld. Their addresses are listed at the left. Next issue, details of the Atlanta ASA meetings. Our section day is the next to last day: Saturday, August 27.
THE SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE AS A SUBFIELD

Jeffrey Goldfarb, New School for Social Research

In my judgement, the sociology of culture ought to be considered a subfield, not a perspective. The objects of our investigations should be the arts and sciences broadly understood, but not so broadly understood as to include ideology or mass entertainments. In focusing on the arts and sciences, culture should not be viewed as a reflection of society. Rather, culture is an autonomous sphere in the modern world, interrelated with other spheres of life, but developing significantly apart from them.

Cultural autonomy emerges from the independent conversations cultural agents have in their work with their predecessors and contemporaries, thus constituting living cultural traditions and cultural publics. The life of these traditions and publics appears within a matrix of interpretation. The study of the multiple interpretations of culture and of the politics of interpretations amongst creators, producers, distributors and consumers should be the primary subject of the sociology of culture.

Considering the arts and sciences as the "culture" in the "sociology of culture," obviously is not the only way to proceed. There are several alternatives. Cultural sociology can just as well be identified as a perspective -- the (Weberian?) cultural approach as opposed to the (Marxist?) materialist approach. Culture can be viewed as the set of human tools, or the ideas upon which the tools are based. It can be identified with ideology, and it can be subsumed under religion. For me, each of these viewpoints has much to offer, some of the best work in the social sciences, especially in anthropology, has followed these paths, yet they often offer too much.

The problems with these alternatives can be stated briefly. Conceived as a perspective, as our colleagues Clifford Geertz, Ann Swidler, and Liah Greenfield suggest in different ways, the cultural is everything. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, is it anything in particular? Conceived as a highly mediated or subtle ideology, in the fashion and traditions of Marx and Mannheim, culture can become nothing. The beauties of line in the graphic arts and sound in music and poetry, the elegance and subtlety of mind in science, become but facades of interests, not embodiments of human reach and distinctiveness. Finally, if culture is but a component of religious belief, an extension of normative concerns or serving normative transcendent ends, as Talcott Parsons and the older T.S. Elliot suggest, the whole modern project of enlightenment would be lost.

If instead we follow Weber's analysis of the separation of spheres, we can appreciate and analyze enlightenment as it exists in the artifacts and accomplishments of the arts and sciences on their own terms, and relate them to other spheres of society. The cultural can then be appreciated as a separate part of a differentiated modern world. The modern age then would be characterized in our research not only by the rise of capitalism, proletarianization and the emergence of the modern state, as the "new" comparative historical sociologists from Barrington Moore Jr. to Charles Tilly to Theda Skocpol tell us. It would be defined in our research as well by science separated from religious dogma, and art that does not simply seek to reveal religious truths. The cultural worlds in this sense are at the center of the sociological enterprise, not as the study of, or approach to, everything, but as a central subject matter, especially in a critical sociology.

CULTURE 2

As these statements by Goldfarb, Namenwirth and Weber attest, the Newsletter welcomes statements concerning the nature or culture and its measurement. In addition, statements citing relevant literature that detail recent developments in specific topics are welcomed. Submissions are subject to editorial review and pruning. Ed.
WHAT IS CULTURE AND WHAT ARE CULTURE INDICATORS?

J. Zvi Namewirth
Department of Sociology
University of Connecticut

and

Robert Philip Weber
Office of Information Technology
Harvard University

Students of culture disagree on three main issues: (1) Does culture consist of abstract systems of ideas or of concrete behavior? (2) Is culture real, or is it a convenient fiction indistinguishable from the sum of individual ideas or individual behavior? (3) Does cultural change cause change in society and other systems, or, does cultural change result from change in these same systems?

In our view (Dynamics of Culture, Winchester MA: Allen & Unwin, 1987), culture consists of systems of ideas rather than behavior or material artifacts. To be sure, ideas are imperfectly manifested in the dynamics of action systems such as society, polity, and economy, and in the behavior of individuals. Still, a fundamental premise here is the ontological distinction between ideas and action.

Our answer to the second question takes a realist rather than nominalist position. Specifically, culture is a system that has structure, an identity, and maintains boundaries. The dynamics of culture, moreover, are irreducible to the dynamics of subcultures and the ideas of individuals, e.g., opinions, beliefs, or attitudes. We maintain that cultural dynamics are the dynamics of culture as a whole and that both culture as a system and cultural dynamics exist apart from the cultures of its constituent elements.

This realist position does not imply the belief in cultural determinism, which holds that changes in culture determine changes in other realms. Rather, we find that changes in cultural themes sometimes are associated with political realignments, sometimes are caused by economic fluctuations, and that sometimes they intervene between changes in economic performance and political outcomes.

If culture consists of abstract systems of ideas, then what are the best indicators of culture? Culture indicators gauge the state of a culture allowing for a quantitative comparison of changes in that state over time or differences in states among cultures or parts thereof. Thus, culture indicators are time series which describe changing states of a cultural system—for example, moral values or political ideology—in contrast with social indicators are time series which describe changing states of a social system, e.g., changes in infant mortality rates or crime statistics.

However, our position is not now widely shared. Different conceptions of culture and society are the cause of the resulting disagreements. For example, Peterson and Horowitz, among others, include as culture indicators measures of culture production and consumption, statistics showing the quantity of plays, movies, books, dance, music and other art works produced or consumed within a society. Such statistics measure social and economic products (and thus might qualify as social or economic indicators of cultural activity) but they do not measure culture content, which in our view is the sine qua non of a culture indicator. Finally, the cultural statistics definition of culture indicators derives from a more restricted conception of culture. It equates culture with high art or with the popular arts.

New methods of measuring culture content drawing on recent developments in cognitive science and artificial intelligence may well replace current methods for generating culture indicators such as our technique of analyzing text content by counting words or other textual units. However, the current problem is not a dearth of measurement techniques. Rapid advances in culture indicators await greater precision in concept formation, maintaining distinctions among culture, society, the person, and charting their differing characteristics.
Thirteen new books from the University of Chicago Press

Eugene Rodenberg-Balston. Meaning and Modernity: Social Theory in the Pragmatic Attitude. Pragmatist writing with semantics is the answer, or rather the way of approaching how the problem of how we are "here"? You may find this wide-ranging rambling intellectual exercise.

Hugh Trevor-Roper. Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans. Seventeenth-Century Essays. Beyond Weber and Marten, here we have a careful historian's look at the intellectual and political movements that fueled the Protestant Revolution in England and Ireland.

Michael Kunn. Sighread to the Stake: A Tale of Witchcraft. It is 1600 and we trace the steps of a single Bavarian across a real landscape transformed by the belief in witchcraft. That we take to be real...

David Horner. Chicago '45. The Democratic Convention depicted in three realities: that of the Mobilization to End the War in Viet Nam, the Hippies, and Mayor Daley and the city police.

Svetlana Alpers. Rembrandt's Enterprises: The Studio and the Market. Score one for the production of culture perspective. Rembrandt's work as influenced by his modes of production and adaptation to market constraints. Is nothing sacred?

Wendy Stein. Pictures of Romance: Form against Content in Painting and Literature. The pictures tell stories and novels paint pictures in depicting romance.

Houston A. Baker, Jr. Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance. A lively search for the distinctly modernist black "sound" that emerged the Harlem Renaissance.


Judith Lynne Hans. Dance, Sex, and Gender: Signs of Identity, Domination, Defiance, and Dance. Dance art forms communicate sex stereotypes but women dancers protest with verbal dominance while gays and women dance with verbal dominance.

Virgil Guinnaley. Bad Guys Don't Have Birthdays: Fantasy Play at Four. Explores how kids fabricate beliefs to build and buttress a narrative order.

Jacques Derrida. The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond. With this deconstructionist at work, one is left with a floating circulation of text elements. Aristotelian says "No Birthday" for this "Bad Guy."

Seven new books from the Wayne State University Press

Jerry B. Berron. Universities and the Myth of Cultural Decline. The idea of "cultural decline" is seen as a myth fabricated by underemployed humanities, brave words for an un-assured Assistant Professor in a Department of English. The crisis is not in the world "out there" but in the irrelevance of the academy. Berron advocates a new cultural literacy based on an effective integration of information and experience.

Paul Mendes-Flohr. Divided Passages: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity. A series of essays exploring the contradictory tendencies of universalism and triibalism.

Daniel J. Kieser. People and Politics. Shows a synthesis of post-modern Jewish strengthenig community, association, political, and link ties.


Lynda J. King. Best Sellers by Design: Vicki Baus and the Books of Playboy. Shows techniques of promotion, marketing and distribution devised in the 1970s by the German publishing house. "Vicki Baus" is a best-selling author?

Constance Cappel. Reminiscing in Michigan. For what it's worth, Ernest Reminigay learned to drive in Ohio, hunt, fish, and design trade paper ads for the Motor City.

Evan Donald and Carl R. Paly. When You're Do Your In Alligators: More Urban Folklore from the Paperwork Machine. More urban verses of analysis, interpretation, or purported meaning.

Six new titles from Sage Publications, Inc.

James Lipp. ed. Popular Music and Communication. Focusing on artists, industry, and audiences, this is the most comprehensive study of popular music to date. Bringing together European and American researchers, no one perspective predominates.

Ronald Berman. How Television Tests Its Audiences: A Look at the Looking Glass. No data base in this is a provocative personal essay. Berman feels that TV both reflects and teaches.


David G. Bewley. ed. Calling from the Faith: Causes and Consequences of Religious Hostility. The numerous authors discuss disaffiliation from groups ranging from the Native American to the Roman Catholic Church.

Peter H. Nearing. Sensation and Fieldwork. A text in the qualitative research methods series, the book contrasts the formalism of sociology with the particularities of fieldwork and shows how they can productively be used together.

James W. Carey. ed. Media, Arts, and Narratives: Television and the Press. Features a number of careful studies in the sociology of mass media and in television and in newspapers. The process of mythmaking is focal is looking at newspapers. Television is seen as a mythifying product to be interpreted by the article's author or by differently situated viewers.

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Catherine L. Covert and John D. Stevens, eds. Race Media between the Pipes: Perceptions of African American Audiences, 1918-1941. Philadelphia: The Syracuse University Press. A mixed bag of topics from content analysis of hispanic stories and cigarette advertising to an analysis of the media's role in shaping public issues between the first two world wars.

Craig Reinard. American States of Mind: Political Beliefs and Behavior among Private and Public Workers. New York, CT: Yale University Press. Reinard interviewed black truck drivers and six white workers over a five-year period. Reinard finds strong support for the welfare and regulatory functions of the state combined with a perception from the present political climate.


David Vechtel. Cultural Policy and Socialist France. Westport, CT: Greenwood. Explores why the French Socialist party has entered the intellectual community and arts institutions to bolster its legitimacy. The impact of socialist support of theater, museums, music, and the visual arts.


Kathryn Glover, ed. Vision in America, 1500-1950. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press. Examine a class war. Seven scholars explore the creation of a distinctively middle-class elite, ritual, accomodation, furnishings, and architecture for the battle for the class distinction and compete with power structures.

Jacques Ellul. The Subjugation of Christianity. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. A fervent Dordotsean Ellul would convince you that the separation of church and state will take place at the Vatican's gate - in order to try it to the ground.

Emmanuel Levy. The History and Politics of the Oscar Reg hyper. New York: Ungar. Press. Examines the careers of all 600 players and 143 directors nominated for an Oscar, all 352 Best Picture nominations, and all Oscar-winning roles and female roles. What does it say about society about society?

Emmanuel Levy. John Wayne: Prophet of the American Way of Life. New Jersey: Scarecrow Press. John Wayne in his is a challenge. What if it had been John, not Ron?

Harvey J. Graff, ed. Growing Up In America. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press. A masterful selection of solid research articles on the struggle of post-war reproduction engulfed in chronological order from colonial times to the present.

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF NOTE

August 12-13. American Sociological Association Section meetings in Atlanta, GA.的


September 29-October 1. "Popular Music in Ethnic, Racial, and National Cultures" Conference sponsored by the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, Yale University. Contact Abe Garofolo or Petter Winkler, Dept. of Music, SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook 11794.

October 1-3. "Modernity: the City, the Street." Invited conference, Ulmierz, Kitchell by Petrol, Charineau. Invited to include Marshall Berman, Richard Sennett, Janet Wolff, Mary Jane, Nelson Polsby and David Harvey. For tickets write at once to Scott Lieb, Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Hall, London S1T-5KX.

October 20-30. Social Theory, Politics, and the Arts, 14th, annual conference at American University. Harry Seligson, Dept. of Anthropology. Call for papers is invited, "Politics and the arts, cultural economics, art worlds, cultural consumption, philanthropy and the arts, critical theory, arts administration, aesthetic education, etc." Send five copies of abstract by May 1 to Harry Seligson, Department of Performing Arts, American University, 4444 Mass. Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.

November 19-30. "Sociology, the Arts, and the Humanities" in the Southern Sociological Society program theme for 1989. John Fred of the University of North Carolina President-elect of the ISS and Catherine F. Harris of Wake Forest University Programming Chair, would appreciate any and all suggestions.