

Chair's Report

Gary Alan Fine, Chair 1989-1990

The Sociology of Culture section continues to grow and mature. As of July 15th, 1990, the section had 570 members, with a target goal of 600 well within striking range. We will succeed! This will increase the number of sessions that the section can organize at our annual meetings to four. We hope and expect that we will be able to reach this figure by September 30th.

In addition, this year for the first time the section awarded a book prize and a student paper prize. Both are announced elsewhere in this newsletter. Together they demonstrated the amount and range of fine papers and books that are being written in the area.

Further, throughout the year, we had a long, fruitful, and continuing discussion about publication plans for the section. The year began with the discussion of the possibility of the section sponsoring a Handbook on the Sociology of Culture. Vigorous arguments, both pro and con, were put forward, and by the end of the year, the Section Council determined that the handbook should not be pursued at this time by the section as an official publication. Instead, a committee was formed to discuss the possibility of other publications, including the establishment

of a journal. No doubt this plan, too, will cause debate, with the ultimate result being a better understanding of the needs of the section and the direction of the research area.

Finally, the Sociology of Culture section, in conjunction with the ASA Lesbian and Gay Caucus and other groups, presented a resolution to the ASA Business Meeting, which deplored the indictment of the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati on obscenity charges for displaying photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe. The meeting unanimously passed the resolution and the ASA has agreed to hold a Special Session during its 1991 meeting in Cincinnati on the topic of censorship. Our section is currently exploring holding a reception at the Contemporary Arts Center, as a show of support. I also understand that there will be a display of Mapplethorpe's photographs at the convention. Bring bail money. The section owes Steven Dubin a debt of gratitude for bringing this important matter to our attention.

I leave office with confidence in the future of this section in the hands of our current Chair, Muriel Cantor, and Chair-elect Diana Crane.

A Tasty Call (for papers)

For a special of *Theory and Society* devoted to food, cooking, and cuisine, we invite submission of papers examining the ideology and aesthetics of food preparation, experiences and places of consumption, and various stages of food production and exchange. Priority will be given to papers that present new empirical analysis (historical, ethnographic, interview, literary) in a significant theoretical framework. Manuscripts should be 20-50 pages in length and follow the journal's format. They will be

reviewed by the issue editors and anonymously, by editors of the journal. Submitted papers must not have been published previously. Please send manuscripts by June, 1991 to: Prof. Rick Fantasia, Department of Sociology, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063; Prof. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027; and Professor Sharon Zukin, Department of Sociology, City University Graduate Center, 33 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036.

Resolution on Censorship

Concerned with the increasing frequency with which artists and arts institutions are attacked by conservative and religious groups, Steven Dubin presented the following resolution (as amended) which was passed at the ASA business meeting in Washington. Dubin's resolution had been endorsed previously at the Sociology of Culture business meeting:

WHEREAS freedom of expression is essential to academic life;

WHEREAS various conservative religious and political leaders recently have launched a series of attacks aimed at sexual, racial and ethnic minorities, thereby limiting multicultural freedom of expression;

WHEREAS such assaults have targeted artists, cultural institutions, and the National Endowment for the Arts and have violated their creative freedom;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The American Sociological Association reaffirms its commitment to the principle of free inquiry without the fear of economic or political pressure to exclude unpopular or discomforting topics;

The American Sociological Association deplores the indictment of the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and its director Dennis Barrie on obscenity charges for displaying photographs by the late Robert Mapplethorpe, and will so notify the mayor, the president of the City Council; and

The American Sociological Association will hold a session during the 1991 Annual Meeting in Cincinnati address the topic of censorship.

How many surrealists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Three.

One to hold the giraffe.....

AAUP Statement on Academic Freedom and Artistic Expression

The following is a concluding statement by the participants in the 100-Wolf Trap Conference on Academic Freedom and Artistic Expression, sponsored by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and the Wolf Trap Foundation. The statement was endorsed by AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure and by its Council at their meetings in June 1990. It is reprinted here with permission.

Attempts to curtail artistic presentations at academic institutions on grounds that the works are offensive to some members of the campus community and general public occur with disturbing frequency. Those who support restrictions argue that works presented to the public rather than in the classroom or other entirely intramural settings should conform to their view of the prevailing community standard rather than to standards of academic freedom. We believe that "essential as freedom is for the relation and judgment of facts, it is even more indispensable to the imagination" (Helen C. White, "Our most Urgent Professional Task," AAUP Bulletin 45 (March 1959), 282). In our judgement academic freedom in the creation and presentation of works in the visual and performing arts, by ensuring greater opportunity for imaginative exploration and expression, best serves the public and the academy.

The following proposed policies are designed to assist institutions to respond to the issues that may arise from the presentation of artistic works to the public in a manner which preserves academic freedom:

1) Academic Freedom in Artistic Expression. Faculty and students engaged in the creation and presentation of works of the visual and performing arts are engaged in pursuing the mission of the

university as much as those who write, teach, and study in other academic disciplines. Works of the visual and performing arts are important both in their own right and because they can enhance our experience and understanding of social institutions and the human condition. Artistic expression in the classroom,

Public funding for artistic presentations and for academic institutions does not diminish (and indeed may heighten) the responsibility of the university community to ensure academic freedom and of the public to respect the integrity of academic institutions. Government imposition on artistic expression of a test of propriety, ideology, or religion is an act of censorship which impermissibly denies the academic freedom to explore, teach, and learn.

studio, and workshop therefore merits the same assurance of academic freedom that is accorded to other scholarly and teaching activities. Since faculty and student artistic presentations to the public are integral to their teaching, learning, and scholarship, these presentations no less merit protection. Educational and artistic criteria should be used by all who participate in the selection and presentation of artistic works. Reasonable content-neutral regulation of the "time, place, and manner" of presentations should be developed and maintained. Academic institutions are obliged to ensure that regulations and procedures do not impair freedom of expression or discourage

creativity by subjecting work to tests of propriety or ideology.

2) Accountability. Academic institutions provide artistic performances and exhibits to encourage artistic creativity, expression, learning, and appreciation. The institutions do not thereby endorse the specific artistic presentations nor do the presentations necessarily represent the institution. This principle of institutional neutrality does not relieve institutions of general responsibility for maintaining professional and educational standards, but it does mean that institutions are not responsible for the views or attitudes expressed in specific artistic works any more than they would be for the content of other instruction, publication, or invited speeches. Correspondingly, those who present artistic work should not represent themselves or their work as speaking for the institution and should otherwise fulfill their educational and professional responsibilities.

3) The Audience. When academic institutions offer exhibitions or performances to the public, they should ensure that the rights of the presenters and the audience are not impaired by a "heckler's veto" from those who may be offended by the presentation. Academic institutions should ensure that those who choose to view or attend may do so without interference. Mere presentation in a public place does not create a "captive audience." Institutions may reasonably designate specific places as generally available or unavailable for exhibitions or performances.

4) Public Funding. Public funding for artistic presentations and for academic institutions does not diminish (and indeed may heighten) the responsibility of the university community to ensure academic freedom and of the public to respect the integrity of academic institutions. Government imposition on artistic expression of a test of propriety, ideology, or religion is an act of censorship which impermissibly denies the academic freedom to explore, teach, and learn.

Section Publishing Opportunities

Richard A. Peterson

"The Handbook is dead; long live the search for publication opportunities."

In a nutshell, this is the outcome of the Section meetings held during the recent ASA meetings in Washington, DC. As with royal death and renewal, the two events are connected, so it is useful to understand what happened to the Handbook idea before discussing the search for future publication prospects. In August 1989, our incoming section Chair, Gary Fine, established a committee to look into the prospects for a Sociology of Culture handbook created by the Section. Comments and suggestions were solicited from section members, and the committee had a lively exchange of ideas. It became clear, as reported in Volume 4, number 4 of this newsletter, that there was a wide diversity of opinions about the desirability and potential coverage of a handbook.

At its meeting in DC, the section Council discussed the issues at length. In the process, the handbook format itself became the focus of discussion. Pointing to the new Handbook of Sociology with its substantive division of the field and authoritative functionalist cast, several participants said it would not be useful to cut the sociology of culture into a set of substantive topics and also that it would be divisive, given the current state of development of our field, for any author, no matter how fair, to write definitively on such topics. Some argued that the collection wouldn't have to be like that, but when people began proposing chapters that should be included, their number quickly outgrew the bounds of even the largest handbook and could hardly be contained in a footlocker.

When it finally came to a show of hands, not a one was raised for going ahead with the Handbook idea. But there was a great deal of interest in having the section facilitate the exchange of ideas through publication. In the course of the earlier

discussion a number of publishing venues had been mentioned that might better meet the current need of the culture section to foster the rapid and widespread exchange of ideas on theory, methods, and a range of theoretical and substantive topics. It was voted to charge the Publications Committee to peruse alternative publication venues and report to the membership via the newsletter and orally in Cincinnati at the ASA meetings a year hence. Our new Chair, Muriel Cantor, has asked Barry Glassner, Michael Schudson, Ann Swidler, and Robert Weber to serve on the committee and has asked me to chair the effort.

The prime goal of the Committee will be to seek out one or more publication venues that will allow the rapid exchange of top quality work. In so far as possible, the form of the publication should be flexible and the price be held as low as possible. The manuscript review and editing should be of a high level so that publication in the proposed venue is considered a significant publication by academic review committees. Finally the venue should be capable of being linked into the standard library systems for referencing and citation.

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The fruits of this effort should be useful in teaching as well as in research. To facilitate the teaching function and to better inform potential publishers about marketing questions, it would be very helpful to gather information on culture-

on papers delivered at meetings. The model for this suggestion is the published symposia produced annually by the Theory Section of the ASA.

3) An edited volume devoted to highlighting culture's contrasting perspectives and current issues in the field.

4) Publication of a continually supplemented series of chapters that can be ordered singly or in groups of varying composition. Several text publishers have entered this field called "publication on demand." It might be possible to publish through less conventional publishing outlets as well.

5) Using computers and electronic networks, exchange papers, commentaries, and requests for resources.

Please help us in this all-important effort.

ooks of Note

raphy of the late enigmatic rockabilly crooner, Roy Orbison. His life as an oxymoron.

Williams, Lycrecia. *Still in Love with You*. Nashville: Routledge Hill Press. The story of the relationship between country music great, Hank Williams and his singer-wife, Audry, as told by Audry's daughter from a previous marriage. In other recountings, Audry is painted as a self-seeking bitch. Here she emerges as the sobering hand that got the Louisiana lush out of the dead-end honky-tonks long enough to pen several of the greatest lyrics ever written in the English Language.

Three from Random House

Strasser, Susan. *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the Mass Market*. The transformation from shopkeepers, traveling salesmen, and local manufacturers to chains, media commercials, and international corporations.

Schatz, Thomas. *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*. A detailed history of the film factory based on industry documents, notes, and personal correspondence.

Hertsgaard, Mark. *On Bended Knee: The Press and the Reagan Presidency*. Reagan's public relations staffers reveal how they gleefully manipulated the press corps. (The other take is that the media reported what was going on in the White House and the people didn't want to hear.)

Three From Teachers College Press

Eckert, Penelope. *Jocks and Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School*. This ethnographic study of

a Michigan highschool shows how the schools institutional environment fosters the formation of opposed class cultures among students which fosters a strong tracking system.

Farrell, Edwin. *Hanging In and Dropping Out: Voices of At-Risk High School Students*. Farrell et al. used students to collect interviews from their fellows about the exigencies of life in and around an urban high school.

Walker, Robert. *Musical Beliefs: Psychoacoustic, Mythical, and Educational Perspectives*. Western music is not, as is often taught, rooted in the laws of physics but is based in a belief system that, as in all societies, is based in learned conventions.

Eleven from the Popular Press

Rollin, Roger, ed. *The Americanization of the Global Village: Essays in Comparative Popular Culture*. Essays deal both with the consumption of American popular culture in various countries and with the nature of indigenous popular culture and its resistance to Globalization. Asks if popular culture is becoming the common ground of human discourse. "Like man, We are the World, Dude."

Hapke, Laura. *Girls Who Went Wrong: Prostitutes in American Fiction, 1885-1917*. Male writers exploiting this hot topic made prostitutes into heroines but grappled with the Victorian notion that women had an innate preference for chastity. Did the large numbers of prostitutes mean that women liked IT or that they were being victimized, and if so by whom?

Kooistra, Paul. *Criminals as Heroes: Structure, Power, and Identity*. While Robin Hood types always appeal to relatively powerless subgroups, criminals

Jasper, James M. *Nuclear Politics: Energy and the State in the United States, Sweden, and France*. New York: Princeton University Press. By exploring the differences in political culture and policy styles, Jaspers shows why the nuclear policy of these three nations which was similar at the time of the oil crisis of 1983 diverged sharply in the years following.

Haug, Wolfgang Fritz. *Commodity Aesthetics, Ideology & Culture*. New York: International General. A collection of 10 articles originally published in German between 1970 and 1984 by German Marxist philosopher, W. F. Haug. A theory of commodity aesthetics is set in the context of the contest between "culture from above" and "culture from below."

Clayson, Alan. *Only the Lonely*. New York: St. Martin's Press. A useful biog-