

# Culture

Section of the American Sociological Association

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**From the Chair:  
Whither Culture?**  
*Nicola Beisel, Northwestern*

My thanks to all of you for making culture day such a success. Our sessions were packed. Special thanks to Judith Balfe, Anne Bowling, Orville Lee, John Mohr, and Vera Zolberg for organizing sessions which generated interesting discussion, from which we left wiser than we came, and which showed how vibrant our section is and how broad interest in “culture” is in the ASA. I left Toronto excited about the section, renewed in my research, humbled at the honor of being elected to chair such a remarkable group—and a little perplexed about where it is we are collectively headed. I came home to ponder the question that Bob Wuthnow posed in the last issue of the culture newsletter—“Is Cultural Sociology Doomed?”. Is it possible that a section that keeps growing and generating such good work is headed for trouble?

The session on “The Return to Culture in American Sociology” convinced me that culture is growing by leaps and bounds in many sections other than our own—in studies of law, organizations and work, social movements, and gender, among others. I learned that I was not alone in having come to culture because models focusing on political economy were not providing satisfactory answers to the puzzles posed by my data. Scholars are using cultural analysis to address questions of power in ways that materialist models could not—it is through culture that we tackle the questions of agency, identity, and meaning. The strength of “culture” as a research endeavor will be in providing more satis-

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**Aesthetic Materials and Aesthetic Agency**  
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*Editor's note: This piece is the last of the “international series” begun two years ago. Previous articles in this series have included a piece by Hans-Peter Müller, on cultural sociology in Germany, and an analysis of trends in French social studies by Laurent Thévenot.*

What follows is intended to elaborate a version of arts sociology that, in our view as sociologists based in the UK, is in tune with current British social thought but perhaps less familiar to our American counterparts. Aesthetic matters are, in the UK and in Europe, linked with core sociological concepts such as order, agency, and self. Concerns with the aesthetic dimension of everyday life (Featherstone 1992), the institutional aspects of collective memory (Macdonald and Fyfe 1996), arts consumption and identity (Frith 1988; Martin 1995), aesthetics and the sociology of the body (Featherstone 1992; Featherstone, Hepworth, and Turner 1991), aesthetics and the cultural construction of subjectivity (Born 1995) are all examples of well-established topics that continue to be pursued by British-based scholars. British work in this area has been given considerable impetus by the founding of two major international journals (*Theory, Culture, and Society*; *Body and Society*) and the associated book series published by Sage.

In the following outline of a theory of what we refer to as “aesthetic agency” we allude to a project that attempts to make the study of the arts and aesthetic matters integral to

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**From the Outgoing Editor**

*Stephen Hart, SUNY–Buffalo*

In a future issue I will reflect on the issues in our field. For now, I just want to express my deep thanks to all of my section comrades—especially authors, officers and council members, network coordinators, and interested readers. This has been an exhilarating experience for me; I have not operated alone, but continually profited from the collective effervescence of our wonderful section. Nonetheless, after four years it is time to turn over the editorship.

I commend to you our new editor, Karen Cerulo. The original core constituency of this section was people doing

work on the arts and popular culture, and over the years to this has been added people whose work has more to do with general theories of cultural processes. I have tried to serve both constituencies, but I myself am of the second type, and I am pleased that your next editor will be a person who has done work specifically on the arts. She also brings a fresh and important theoretical perspective to the field, and she is an extremely organized and efficient person. We are fortunate indeed to have recruited her to be our next editor. □

**ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE . . .** Call for Papers and information on the program for San Francisco, back cover; *Books of Note*, p. 6; Prizes, p. 9; Minutes, p. 10; News, p. 11.

## Chair: Whither Culture?

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factory answers to the existing questions in various sub-disciplines of sociology.

So what is the downside of being so successful? What will it mean for our section that so many sociologists who do not identify themselves as cultural sociologists are doing cultural analysis? Can we draw upon this strength while avoiding the potential pitfalls of being a hot (our detractors would say “trendy”) area?

In thinking about what can go right or wrong with intellectual endeavors I find it most useful to think in terms of comparisons—in this case, with other sub-disciplines. Let’s take gender as the optimistic scenario—it is the largest section of the ASA, and work on gender is thriving both inside and outside of our discipline. While the 1970s and early 1980s witnessed discussions among gender scholars that they feared being in a “gender ghetto” in the discipline, gender scholarship has been enormously successful in two regards. First, there is a lot of work on gender being done in a number of sub-disciplines—on work, reproduction, health, law, organizations, and class and state formation. Indeed, if there is a problem it is in identifying the area’s core issues. But perhaps that is a virtue. Work on gender is not accountable to a limited number of questions deemed important by whomever. The second great strength of gender scholarship is that, increasingly, gender is seen as a fundamental social category. One simply must consider it, because increasingly we understand that people are gendered actors.

What does that mean for our future as a section? I think we will realize our potential as a section when scholars are spread across the discipline showing their colleagues that if they fail to think about culture they fail to understand the empirical problems they find important. The goal here is not to replace all existing work in sociology with cultural analysis (cultural imperialism of the worst sort!), but to show that one can better think about the questions that are fundamental to sociology—for example, the reproduction of social inequality, the creation of social conflict or consensus, the process of decision-making in various types of organizations—if one takes culture (or cultures) into account. This does not mean that we need be shy about our claims. The most brilliant work in gender shows that an area in which gender was considered irrelevant has failed to perceive a factor crucial to answering its central questions. (The examples I have in mind are Julia Adams’s work on state formation, and, in history, Joan Scott’s work on class conflict). Cultural analysis should walk hand-in-hand with material analysis. I think Sewell and Giddens showed the way in thinking about culture as an aspect of social structure and an indispensable component of social change. One important task we face as culture scholars is to show empirically how this process works.

So what would the advantages and disadvantages be of following this strategy? The clear advantage is that there

will be more room in sociology—and in sociology departments—for us. Such an approach would allay the problem of a department thinking they have “enough” culture scholars, which would be tantamount to saying that they have enough sociologists. It would mean that cultural studies in sociology would embrace many empirical questions. It would prevent cultural analysis from being seen merely as a method (which is how historical sociology is sometimes discussed, albeit inappropriately).

The strategy of moving cultural analysis into many sub-disciplines might be good for our careers, but what would it mean for us as a section? Would we cease to be necessary? I think not. First, if the section on the sociology of sex and gender is an example, it seems a section can thrive even as it becomes more dispersed. Gender scholars may not be working on the same empirical questions, but they share some common intellectual concerns. We do, too. We do not share one intellectual question, but most of us are thinking about culture in one of three ways: as meaning systems, as ways of life, or (if it is fair to classify the arts and popular culture this way) as representations. We will continue to have much to say to each other, and to our colleagues, about how to think about and study culture as an aspect of social life and sociological analysis.

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## Aesthetic Materials & Agency

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mainstream sociological concerns. It should be read as representing a shift away from a concern with explaining the social provenance of art works and a move toward a concern with how aesthetic materials are implicated in the construction of social life. The theoretical matters we discuss below underpin our own ongoing work in cultural sociology at Exeter, and the work of our postgraduate students (Belcher 1997).

With notable exceptions, sociology has not taken aesthetic materials seriously, though recent trends in the sociology of the arts have called for a return to the art work itself. As sociologists whose work focuses primarily on “arts” topics, we are trying to redress this matter. We propose that an explicit focus on aesthetic materials and their relationship to social action is one of the best ways in to the problem of culture’s so-called “causal” properties (see the articles in the Spring/Summer 1996 issue of this newsletter).

In our view, such a project begins with a focus on social agency and the process of its configuration. By agency we do not mean the antithesis of “structure,” but rather, a social capacity or readiness for meaningfully oriented behavior. In this paper, we are interested in how social actors configure themselves and others as agents in a variety of more and less defined scenes, occasions, events and settings. We are specifically concerned with “aesthetic agency,” an affective preparedness for specific types of action.

An aesthetic agent is an actor readied to participate in feeling-forms with their characteristic styles of energy expenditure. Being a wholehearted social agent in any capacity, involves the mobilization of scene-specific and “appropriate” aesthetic materials (Witkin 1974, 1990, 1995)—discourse registers, imagery, tempo, narrative, comportment, dress, gesture, artifacts, and aspects of the built environment. These things provide a medium for an affectively charged and designed mode of being through which the subject negotiates the enclaves of modern social living.

Aesthetic agency here is intended to indicate something far more robust than Goffmanian “presentation” and even beyond what Garfinkel terms “passing activity”. To shape one’s self up as an aesthetic agent—to be replete with aesthetic agency—is to construct an “inside” of action; it is to produce one’s self as a feeling/being subject. The study of aesthetic agency, therefore, is simultaneously the study of the construction and micro-politics of subjectivity. It is concerned with how culture “gets into” action and “into” subjects. These concerns push cultural sociology beyond the issue of “representations” into the issue of how actors and their social scenes are shaped up in and through reference to aesthetic media. Such a concern would of necessity make reference to the circulation, social distribution and adaptation of aesthetic materials and their uptake (see in particular, Lash and Urry 1995).

In what follows, we draw upon a social-psychological theory of perception and affect (Witkin 1974, 1995) to pursue these issues. Our aim is to develop an account of how aesthetic materials as *vocative symbols* ‘work’ to generate forms of aesthetic agency in social life. We are interested in what we take to be a dynamic interrelationship between vocative symbols and affect, and the ways this interrelationship produces aesthetic agency.

We use the term “vocative symbols” to indicate materials that are linked with ‘patterned affect’—socially articulated patterns of subject-being. Vocative symbols offer (potentially contradictory) representations or ‘likenesses’ of subject-being. Think for example, of physical “love,” depicted in classical ballet versus modern dance (Thomas 1993), or “mothering” depicted in the paintings of Mary Cassat versus the poetry of Sylvia Plath (Kaplan 1992). Representative media allude to patterns of feeling and conduct (emotions and their associated gestures, paces/sequencings, and social relatednesses). We use the term ‘vocative’ to index the way in which aesthetic materials may evoke or ‘call out’ the semiotic possibilities—socially recognized and affectively charged modes and dimensions of being—from within subjects. One may, for example, “dress for success” in such a way that the clothes worn call out new characteristics, behavior patterns, and associated affects in the wearer. One may find, when traveling abroad or speaking a foreign language, that one takes on a “new” persona. As social actors we make typically unconscious links between vocative symbols—as analogues of feeling modes—and modes of being; vocative symbols thus provide tacit resources that

actors may draw upon in order to produce themselves as feeling-being agents and, conversely, actors who find themselves juxtaposed with certain vocative symbols may find themselves aesthetically enlisted.

We suggest that it is in and through vocative symboling that the social patterns of affect—and thus of affective agency—are constituted; that is, the *sensuous* patterning of affect is cultivated in and through the process of constructing its likeness, of bringing together its associated aesthetic media. Ethnomethodology has rightly emphasised the nature of action as skillful accomplishment and has focused upon the practises of actors in accomplishing or bringing off action, such as “passing” or sense-making. However, a vital subset of skills involved in action is that through which actors construct the agency with which action is accomplished; that is, the skills through which the actor configures his or her energies as an actor with a definite set of capacities, present at the scene of action. This subset of skills is integrally bound up with aesthetic processes.

Our point, then, is that the configuration of aesthetic agency involves a high degree of practical and often tacit skill, and that it is crucial to micro-political issues of identity and representation. Central to this skill is the mobilization of aesthetic media for the configuration of subject-being. The question of how aesthetic materials feature in the constitution of a variety of lifeworlds and their associated agencies is therefore central to sociological investigations of all kinds; it should by no means be confined to the “sub” discipline of arts sociology.

We now illustrate these points with two examples, drawn from our research, where actors can be seen to use aesthetic media in ways that are linked to their configuration as aesthetic agents. These media, we argue, are both vocative symbols and affordance structures; they are active ingredients in the production of actors as particular type of aesthetic agents, with varying degrees of resistance.

### *Ravel’s Bolero*

Our first example is drawn from a study of how actors employ music in the context of erotic activity (DeNora 1997). As a type of aesthetic material, music can be used by actors to configure themselves as sexual-aesthetic agents. Music may “call out” parameters (such as partial pre-designs or stylistic signals) for the organization of erotic interaction. Musical materials can be referred to as models of feeling and activity structures (DeNora 1995).

The musical example here consists of a heterosexual British couple, in their early twenties, engaging in sexual intercourse for the first time. The male partner chose Ravel’s *Bolero* as “background” music to the event.

Composed in 1928, *Bolero* became, as Donald Grout observes (1973: 658), “the musical equivalent of a best-seller.” After the 1979 film “10” (and the British ice-skating duo Jane Torvill and Christopher Dean who skated to *Bolero* in the 1984 Olympic games—drawing the largest television audience in Britain to date), the choice may ap-

pear hackneyed, but this is precisely why it can also seem correct. *Bolero*'s highly publicized sexual and frankly coital associations (as established by its media publicity) foregrounded what might otherwise have served as "background music"; instead, the piece played an overt role in the process of occasioning.

*Bolero* begins quietly, sustains a regularly repeated pulse throughout and rises steadily to a crescendo. It lasts about fifteen minutes. The melody is reiterated throughout and is stated initially by solo flute. An upper-range instrument, the tone colour of the flute is often described as "pure" and "open." It is also an instrument typically used to register the "feminine" in music—the silvery gurgling of water, as in the opening of Smetana's *Moldau*; or a delicate bird song, as in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*; or langour, as in Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*. The melody is played in the flute's (and flutist's) most relaxed lower register, in the key of c, beginning on the c above middle c and ending on middle c, the instrument's lowest note. Ravel intended the piece to sound like a pipe organ, growing steadily louder as stops are pulled out. The lower brass instruments are the last to enter and the glissando-ing (tonal sliding) of the upper-register trombone plays a special role close to the climax of the piece. (Glissandi are construed within the discourse of "classical" music as "dirty"—that is, as part of different and "less tasteful" musical discourses such as jazz—so at the climax of this piece preferred and dispreferred discourses meld together. The piece paves the way for this liminality by employing the saxophone, an instrument outside the traditional "classical music" orchestra.) The work ends abruptly after its tonal apex is reached.

If *Bolero* as an expressive form provides a model for the calling out of affect, and thus the configuration of aesthetic agency, what is the quality and shape of that agency? What kind of "textual reality" is placed on offer as a feeling structure to its hearer/users, and what kind of affordance structure does this aesthetic material imply?

The piece sets an implicitly proposed tone, pacing, and duration for real time sexual events. These parameters are not without politics. For example, the work lasts about fifteen minutes and its narrative structure is about ascendancy, and the accumulation of tension for fifteen minutes. Is this kind of sexual epoch "afforded" by both partners? For example, the "ineluctable" quality of the work suggests a narrative of sexual activity that "must complete." While the data from which this case is drawn was intended for heuristic purposes only (a full-scale study of musical agency at Exeter is currently underway, DeNora in progress), questions may be asked here about the politics of aesthetic agency and sexual politics—and they may be best framed in terms of what the partners, respectively, would "afford" and the ways in which the expressive form of *Bolero* as vocative symbol overlapped with these affordance structures and their attendant "sexual politics."

### *The Room at Unilever*

Simmel (1950) noticed at the turn of the century that the 'metropolitan' type of man or woman was a 'cognitive' rather than an 'affective' or 'emotionally expressive' type, that s/he learned to value incisiveness, impersonality, rationality and objectivity, that s/he was calculative and instrumental (Simmel). Organizational sociologists acknowledge the powerful aesthetic discipline exerted by modern corporations upon their members (Witkin 1990), imposing constraints and expectations in respect of dress and personal presentation, in modes of address and in office manners. Aesthetic discipline can also be observed in the design of buildings, furniture and furnishings, in the organisation of physical space, in the use of colour and texture and in organisational artifacts of all kinds.

The visual environment and the aesthetic aspects of dress are an integral aspect of agency. A man or woman who wears the normative dark suit, devoid of texture and with contrasting shirt or blouse will experience a set or tension, an incipient readiness, for certain kinds of encounters rather than others. The same man or woman, dressed in casual clothes that, in contrast, have colour and texture and move with and express the body, will usually experience an incipient readiness for encounters of a somewhat different kind (this empirical claim is made on the basis of interviews with staff in financial service organizations; some such claim was frequently made in response to questions about dress codes). Moreover, this discipline concerning dress codes emphasises the radical disjunction between the two spheres in which identities are made, the personal and domestic life, on the one hand and that of the world of work, on the other. Aesthetic values in the work-place, the dress codes and the organizational environment and organizational artifacts, are integral to the process by which organisational identities get constructed and action is generated. Physical artifacts are integral to the design of situations in organisations and they play an important part in calling out appropriate attitudes and responses in the members of such organizations. Most conspicuous in the aesthetic of the modern organisation is the dominance of simple geometry. It is clearly expressed in a quotation from an early design periodical *Le Rappel à l'Ordre* cited by Reyner Banham (1960):

If we go indoors to work ... the office is square, the desk is square and cubic, and everything on it is at right angles (the paper, the envelopes, the correspondence baskets with their geometrical weave, the files, the folders, the registers, etc.)... the hours of the day are spent amid a geometrical spectacle, our eyes are subject to a constant commerce with forms that are almost all geometry.

The following is a description of a room at the offices of Unilever in Milan which one of us (Witkin) visited in 1986.

The room was rectangular in shape and the walls were smooth and white. On three sides of the room, there were windows shaded with two sets of blinds—wide grey vertical strips of material and horizontal narrow strips (Venetian blinds), white in colour. From the wall facing the window, there was a large rectangular projection in which were set two small rectangular grilles for air conditioning. The long table at which we were sitting was white in colour and rectangular in shape. In fact it was several smaller rectangular tables bolted together. At the head of the table behind where I was sitting were two flip charts, white in colour, rectangular in shape. The floor consisted of a hard simulation of dark stone and the chairs, rectangular in shape and black in colour appeared hard to the eye but were soft (vinyl) to the touch. The only curves in the room that I could detect were those of a metal coat stand of modern design in the far corner. The metal cirlet for holding umbrellas looked sharp enough to cut you and the curves for hanging coats were attenuated and spiky. The chunky ash trays on the table were round in shape and these appeared, in the context of the room, to be anomalous. It was as though the room had been purged of volume, of texture and of colour. It was filled with rectilinear planes which visually flattened the entire space. The men and women there were dressed as business people traditionally are. That is, the men wore dark suits, plain in colour, smooth and devoid of texture. They wore contrasting shirts, light coloured, mostly white and a contrasting tie. Colour was largely restricted to this last item. The strong figure ground contrast created at the neck by the suit, shirt, and tie sets off the head in a distinctive way and draws attention to it while the lack of texture and the darkness of the suits suppresses the body, flattening it out and restricting its possibilities for expression.

This was a room for encounters between heads rather than bodies. The aesthetic of the room—and it is not untypical of many organisations—abstracted the head from the body. The absence of colour and texture in both the design of such rooms as well as in the design of office uniform, performs the same kind of abstraction. More precisely, it creates a habitus for rational and impersonal or calculative discourse that minimizes the possibilities for the sensuous expression of the personal life. The organisation indicates aesthetically what kinds of encounters and relations among people it is paying for and what kind of encounters and relations it wants left at home. Its aesthetic control of the environment is an important part of the development of a corporate social being, one that is centred on the rational-technical and calculative values of organisational life and (in part) through this aesthetic discipline, this corporate being can be continuously ‘brought to mind’ in the day to day encounters among members of the organisation.

### *Aesthetic Power*

In the two examples, aesthetic means were employed to configure social agency and its settings. In the case of

*Bolero*, one actor made a definite choice concerning the construction of the aesthetic environment—that is, Ravel’s *Bolero*—in ways that had implications for the aesthetic agency of both partners. In the second example, actors enter into a partially pre-fabricated aesthetic environment, one that provides an aesthetic ground for social action. In neither of these cases would we claim that choices about aesthetic media are exercised with full consciousness about the ways in which aesthetic materials will work. Rather, we would suggest that actors often “sense” their need for a particular aesthetic effect without necessarily knowing at a cognitive level why this is essential to agency or the details of how it works.

The purpose of this paper has been to illustrate how aesthetics play an active role in the configuration of agency in everyday life. We have illustrated what we mean by aesthetically configured agency with reference to examples from the arts and interior design. But we would wish to extend our point to the aesthetic dimension of the (ostensibly) non-aesthetic materials of everyday life. In this regard, our project connects with recent discussions concerning artifacts and technologies, in particular the concern with technologically inscribed agents. So far, however, these discussions have not addressed the aesthetic dimension of technologies and the ways that tools, machines and devices reconfigure the aesthetic features of social settings. This is to say that the aesthetic agent is much more than a technology “user.” As our examples indicate, aesthetic aspects of environments are not simply a luxury or a matter of sensuous pleasure. They are integral to the construction of social action and to the management of interaction.

In any argument such as ours which asserts the active role of aesthetic materials in the configuration of agency, it is necessary to confront the question as to whether action can proceed *without* reference to the aesthetic dimension. Surely rational and impersonal administrative work can be performed whatever colour the walls are painted and however the actors dressed? We would not want to assert that such action is not possible under such circumstances, but would point out that the aesthetic demands of specific types of performance prescribe and presuppose the aesthetic construction of an environment that affords them. If, for example, when dressed in jeans and sweatshirt, actors interact with the kind of prescribed formality and modes of address which are typical of very different types of environment from the one they are in, then the role of the aesthetic habitus in maintaining such performances is taken over by the imagination and the subject acts “as-if.” Moreover, the aesthetic tension and organisation through which agency is configured, becomes increasingly difficult to sustain for an extended period of time by such means. Deprived of the *resonance* between the imaginative control of aesthetic tension at the heart of an actors performance and the aesthetic construction of the environment in which the action is performed, the actor may lose the control necessary for ac-

complished performance. It seems to us that the resonance between the aesthetic construction of action and the aesthetic construction of environments is key to the launching of social “performances” of all kinds.

#### NOTE

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#### Books of Note

Richard A. Peterson, Vanderbilt University

*Editor's note: Are you unhappy that your book hasn't been mentioned in Books of Note? If we haven't heard of it, we can't cover it. Send information to Richard Peterson at Dept. of Sociology, Box 1635, Station B, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville TN 37235; [petersra@ctrvax.vanderbilt.edu](mailto:petersra@ctrvax.vanderbilt.edu)*

Haskell, Thomas, and Richard Teichgraber, editors. *The Culture of the Market*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. These thirteen historical essays explore the emergence of market regimes, entrepreneurship, and high culture; and how market mentalities influence social theory. They suggest the potential in seeing the changing idea of market as a cultural system.

Stokker, Kathleen. *Folklore Fights the Nazis: Humor in Occupied Norway, 1940–1945*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. Working from four “joke notebooks” kept by Norwegian women during the German occupation, Stokker shows how seemingly frivolous humor contributed to the development of anti-Nazi resistance.

Mieder, Wolfgang. *The Politics of Proverbs: From Traditional Wisdom to Proverbial Stereotypes*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. By exposing the function of proverbs in the political rhetoric of Harry S. Truman, Adolph Hitler, and Winston Churchill, and by exploring proverbial ethnic slurs, Mieder exposes the expressive power of these far from quaint sayings.

Leslie, Paul, editor. *The Gulf War as Popular Entertainment: An Analysis of the Military-Industrial Media Complex*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press. The authors present a wondrous compounding of “war in a post-modernist era,” “war as a post-modernist activity,” and the “war of post-modernists with each other.”

Wong, K. Scott, and Sucheng Chan, editors. *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities during the Exclusion Era*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. The seven essays richly explore the mix of integrationist and ethnic exclusivist sentiments expressed by Chinese American between the 1880s and the 1930s.

Dyson, Anne Haas. *Writing Superheroes: Contemporary Childhood, Popular Culture, and Classroom Literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press. Based on an ethnographic study in an urban classroom of 7 to 9-year olds, Dyson examines how young children use superhero stories and other elements of popular culture in their school-yard play, and in their classroom essays.

Jensen, Carl, and Project Censored. *20 Years of Censored News*. New York: Seven Stories Press. The authors present the ten leading censored news stories of the twenty years from 1976 to 1995. The patterns reveal the institutions that have the power to talk and to suppress the expressions of others.

Schechter, Danny. *The More You Watch, The Less You Know: NewsWars/[sub]Merged Hopes/Media Adventures*. New York: Seven Stories Press. Citing numerous examples from personal experience, Schechter, formerly a 20/20 and CNN program producer, shows how the news is clipped and tailored by the newsmakers.

Chadwick, Vernon, editor. *In Search of Elvis*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Every other literate person in the Western world having written on Elvis, the academics weigh in. The King would have been more interested in the next piece.

Williams, Rhys H., editor. *Cultural Wars in American Politics: Critical Reviews of a Popular Myth*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter. The authors offer a wide-ranging analysis of the contemporary myth that ideological and moral issues such as abortion rights, homosexuality, and gender relations have split American politics into a bi-polar "culture war."

Berger, Peter. *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter. Berger reflects on the nature of comedy in contemporary society, finding its function to be profoundly religious.

### *Three from SUNY Press*

Pinedo, Isabel Cristina. *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing*. Reading 600 horror films, Pinedo seeks the fascination of the genre for young women. She finds that the films speak to the cultural need to express rage and terror in contemporary society.

Prus, Robert. *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research*. This is a closely argued critique of the dynamics of intersubjectivity in field work.

Chambers, Erve, editor. *Tourism and Culture: An Applied Perspective*. The authors show how the lure of tourists' dollars and yen changes the cultures they wish to observe, transforming major blocks of the world into cultural zoos.

### *A Baker's Dozen from the University of Chicago Press*

Becker, Howard S. *Tricks of the Trade*. Reaffirming his devotion to inspiring insight in others, Becker richly illustrates the techniques he has found for sociology in practice.

Swartz, David. *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Swartz tries to render comprehensible to American scholars Pierre Bourdieu's basic insights by seeing their roots in the work of the classical European sociologists.

Weintraub, Jeff, and Krishan Kumar, editors. *Public and Private in Thought and Practice*. This diverse set of theoretical and empirical essays explores the importance of privacy in an increasingly intrusive world and the importance of collective identities in the wake of the pervasive attempts to privatize the public good.

Peterson, Richard A. *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity*. The author traces the institutionalization in the 1923–1953 period of authenticity as the basis of country music, a project that was completed with the tragic death and transfiguration of Hank Wil-

liams as the icon of the authentic. Showing that to fans "authentic" connotes "original," he suggests the structural requisites for a twenty-first century authentic country music.

Goertzen, Chris. *Fiddling for Norway: Revival and Identity*. This is a close ethnographic study of the cultural politics of the recent Norwegian folk music revival, in which much that never was is "restored to its proper place."

Cormack, Lesley B. *Charting an Empire*. Showing that geography became institutionalized in the English university curriculum between 1580 and 1620, Cormack argues that the field taught rising generations of English leaders to see their small island home in global context, creating an ideology of Empire and paving the way for the empire-building that followed.

Van Deburg, William L. *Black Camelot: African-American Culture Heroes in Their Times, 1960–1980*. Van Deburg sketches the explosion of black heroes in and following the Kennedy years. He finds in their diversity a grand empowering vision: a multiracial society in which an individual's intrinsic worth can be recognized along with their unique ethnic identity.

Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. The advertising media, Frank argues, not only galvanized the cheerful conformist family of the 1950s but also coopted the revolutionary urges of the 1960s, turning them into empty gestures of style.

Turow, Joseph. *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the New Media World*. Media advertisers, who were once excoriated for reducing all diversity to one common denominator, are now shown to be dividing the country up into numerous delimited target markets, thus decomposing social cohesion.

Jasper, James. *The Art of Moral Protest*. At a time when schools, politicians, the media, and religious institutions, offer little guidance for moral judgments, protest movements have

### *Books of Notes (continued)*

become a central source of ethical sensitivity and social change.

Parsons, Neil. *King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White Queen: Victorian Britain through African Eyes*. The Chiefs had gone to England to persuade Queen Victoria to curb the ruthless depredations of Cecil Rhodes. Spurned by the queen, the chiefs toured England and successfully mobilized middle-class support for their cause.

Cracraft, James. *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Imagery*. The author shows the impact of Peter the Great's program of Europeanization on Russian visual arts.

Tarlo, Emma. *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*. Tarlo shows how modernization is experienced by people in an essentially rural society.

#### *Four Sage Books*

Tester, Keith. *Moral Culture*. From post-modernism to chapters on "Duty," "Guilt," and "Virtue," clearly the notion of monolithic values has returned. How long till they twist the old aphorism to read, "Who now doesn't read Talcott Parsons?"

Mellor, Philip A., and Chris Shilling. *Re-forming the Body: Religion, Community and Modernity*. The authors trace the deeply ambivalent attitude to the body in religious thought and how these tensions help shape the structure of society.

Lear, Dana. *Sex and Sexuality: Risk and Relationships in the Age of AIDS*. An ethnographic study among college graduates. It's a whole new ball game for men when sex puts *them* at mortal risk.

Dean, Jodi, editor. *Feminism and the New Democracy*. The authors trace the changes in national and interpersonal politics when women bring power to the table.

#### *Three from Popular Press*

Hooker, Clarence. *Life in the Shadows of the Crystal Palace, 1910-1927: Ford*

*Workers in the Model T Era*. Hooker shows the impact of the "scientific management" and "assembly line" mind sets of Ford management on their relationships with workers and the Highland Park community in which they lived.

Carr, Duane. *A Question of Class: The Redneck Stereotype in Southern Fiction*. Carr traces back into the antebellum South the stereotyping of Southern poor whites, their exploitation, and their emergence as the only "ethnic" group that can be ridiculed with impunity in this era of political correctness.

Cusic, Don. *Music in the Market*. Here is a detailed overview of the business of commercial music by a scholar who has worked in the industry.

#### *Thirteen from the University of Minnesota Press*

Looser, Devoney, and E. Ann Kaplan, editors. *Generations: Academic Feminists in Dialogue*. The contributors examine the debates between the earlier generation of feminists and their often irreverent successors.

Decker, Jeffrey Louis. *Made in America: Self-Styled Success from Horatio Alger to Oprah Winfrey*. Decker traces the emergence of the new style entrepreneur of personality and image exemplified in Oprah Winfrey.

Sakai, Naoki. *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism*. Sakai explores the cultural politics inherent in the process of the translation of one language into another.

Hilmes, Michele. *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922-1952*. Hilmes shows how radio humor and situation comedies reflected the tensions over mass immigration, the Great Depression, and World War II and helped shape the understanding of these events.

Gray, Herman. *Watching Race: Television and the Struggle for "Blackness"*. Gray does not take the easy path but rather provides an insightful discussion of the complex racial politics of contemporary television.

Gordon, Avery F. and Christopher Newfield, editors. *Mapping Multiculturalism*. This work represents the entire range of multicultural studies that demarcate contemporary cultural politics.

Finkelstein, Norman G. *The Rise and Fall of Palestine: A Personal Account of the Intifada Years*. Finkelstein chronicles the revolt against Israeli occupation and what he calls the bitter defeat of the Palestinians.

Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Avery shows how, as in the case of religion and other myth systems, belief in ghosts appeals to the past and to the otherworldly to make sense out of current events.

Virilio, Paul. *The Art of the Motor*. Virilio shows how technology has shaped contemporary world-views.

Leap, William L. *Word's Out: Gay Men's English*. Leap tells how gay men's English is different from straight English and how the discourse is used in situations ranging from erotic negotiations in locker rooms to conversations about AIDS.

Bloom, John. *A House of Cards: Baseball Card Collecting and Popular Culture*. Bloom traces the evolution of baseball cards as promotional devices for consumer products to a huge industry in its own right. In the process he provides an account of male fan culture, and how white men of the baby boom generation view themselves, masculinity, and culture at large.

Adams, Bluford. *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture*. Adams suggests not only that Barnum was one of the creators of modern show business but that he was also instrumental in cultivating middle-class sensibilities in his audience.

Burgoyne, Robert. *Film Nation: Hollywood Looks at U.S. History*. Focusing on five films from "Glory" to "Forrest Gump," Burgoyne shows the cinematic making and remaking of American history.

**Section Prizes:**  
*And the winner is . . .*

**Student Prize (Chair: Rick Fantasia, Smith)**

Wayne Brekhus of Rutgers University won the 1997 Culture Section best student paper award for his article, "Social Marking and the Mental Coloring of Identity: Sexual Identity Construction and Maintenance in the United States" (*Sociological Forum* 11(3): 497-522, 1996). The paper offers a unique multidimensional model of sexual identity inside a highly specified theoretical framework that enriches our understanding of cognitive classification and attribution.

**Best Book (Chair: Richard Lachmann, SUNY-Albany)**

The Culture Section awards its 1997 prize for Best Book to Sharon Hays (Virginia) for *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. The section also bestows honorable mentions to Paul Lichterman (Wisconsin) for *The Search for Political Community* and to Richard Biernacki (UC-San Diego) for *The Fabrication of Labor*. The committee considered 22 books. The high quality of the three books honored and of a number of the others are gratifying testimony to the vibrancy of discipline of sociology of culture. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (Yale University Press, 1996) traces the evolution of ideologies of "intensive mothering." Hays book is simply, clearly and colorfully written. She offers a lucid and pointed account of the growing array of demands made upon mothers to ensure the emotional, intellectual, and physical development of their offspring. Such demands, presented in advice literature and in the expectations mothers hold for themselves and one another, have grown even as an increasing majority of mothers engage in paid labor. Hays locates the ideologies and practices of motherhood in a larger context of ideas about social obligations and self-interest in contemporary capitalist America. Hays demonstrates that mothers assume an ever heavier mantle of responsibilities for their children in part as an implicit critique of the self-interested ideologies and practices of the market which they encounter as workers and consumers. This book demonstrates the power of careful cultural analysis, built upon sensitive interviews and sophisticated readings of advice texts, to elucidate the ways in which maternal actions are grounded in beliefs about social identities. This work is a model of how cultural sociology should be done, and offers a vision of what such work can reveal. *The Search for Political Community* explains how Americans who value the ideal and practice of individuality and personal fulfillment are able to create "cultures of commitment" to engage in public-spirited political action. Lichterman's participant-observation of four environmental organizations allows him to compare an older style of community-centered politics in an African-American group with the personalized politics of suburban middle class environmental activists and radical Greens. Lichterman's study

reveals the complex interplay between individual activists' desires for personal fulfillment through group action and the ways in which their social commitments sustain political organization; the comparison of different commitment styles challenges common views on individualism in public life. *The Fabrication of Labor* compares the changing conceptions and practices of work in Germany and Britain from the seventeenth century to the eve of World War I. Biernacki shows that work was defined, measured, and valued differently in Britain and Germany and that those differences were formed in the early development of capitalism. Biernacki's core comparison of nineteenth century wool textile mills allows him to trace how cultural conceptions shaped industrial class relations and the organization of work in the two countries. Biernacki's focus on the point of production allows him to show how workers themselves conceived of their exploitation and selected tactics for resistance.

**Best Article (Chair: John Boli, Emory)**

There were 15 papers nominated (9 by the authors). The committee chose two of these as co-winners: Bonnie Erickson, Toronto, "Culture, Class, and Connections," *AJS* July 1996; and Margaret Somers, Michigan, "The 'misteries' of property: Relationality, rural-industrialization, and community in Chartist narratives of political rights," in *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, edited by John Brewer and Susan Staves (Routledge, 1995). The Erickson article is an informed and appreciative critique of Bourdieu's work on class and culture, with effective counter-theorizing that emphasizes the importance of including social networks and work-related culture in cultural-capital analysis. The article combines clear and careful theoretical work with an imaginative empirical analysis of the cultural repertoires of owners, managers, and employees in private security companies in Toronto. The results run counter to the expectations derived from Bourdieu's work but fit well with Erickson's theoretical frame. The article thereby advances our understanding of the nature and uses of cultural capital and the mechanisms by which class-related cultural distinctions are applied in routine working situations. The Somers piece develops a carefully composed understanding of the cultural outlook of the Chartist movement in the context of the rural-industrialization thesis that has dominated interpretations of early industrialization in England. Through a penetrating analysis of the cultural construction of apprenticeship as a form of highly regulated property, Somers argues that rural proto-industrial producers were much better able to resist downward pressure on wages than is usually assumed, thus challenging the belief that rural-industrial entrepreneurs could easily amass capital. Fully immersed in the historical materials, fully attuned to the issues of the structuration of culture and the mechanisms for its maintenance, Somers provides important insights into the background from which the Chartist movement emerged and thereby improves our understanding of Chartism's goals, ideology, and ultimate failure. □

**Minutes:**  
**Culture Section Business Meeting**  
**Toronto, 11 August 1997**  
*Lyn Spillman, Secretary (Notre Dame)*

The meeting was opened at 1:35 by Bob Wuthnow, with approximately 100 members attending.

*Nominations Committee 1996-97.* Pete Peterson reported as chair of the nominations committee that the work of the committee had been smooth and produced a good slate of candidates. Michael Schudson is chairperson-elect and John Mohr and Vicky Alexander were elected to council. The winner of the Graduate Student Prize is the new student member. Thanks went to all those willing to stand.

*Section Prizes.* Winners of culture section prizes for scholarly research were announced. The award for best student paper went to Wayne Breckhus of Rutgers. Bonnie Erickson and Margaret Somers shared the best article award. The award for best book went to Sharon Hays, with honorable mentions to Paul Lichterman and Rick Biernacki.

*Membership.* Bob Wuthnow reported for Tim Dowd, chair of the membership committee, that membership of the section remained high. Membership increased from last year: it was currently at 867 members with no likelihood that this would decline before the final membership tally in September. Thus, allocation of panels to the section at the 1998 meetings would remain the same. Tim Dowd thanked Elizabeth Czepiel for her help in his work. Thanks went to Tim Dowd for his efforts in contacting all those whose membership had lapsed and encouraging them to renew.

*Newsletter.* Steve Hart reported a number of innovative feature articles in three newsletter issues this year, and noted with pleasure debates generated by newsletter pieces. He outlined plans for fall and the future. Karen Cerulo is incoming newsletter editor, working with Steve on the Fall issue. Steve commended Karen's editorial skills, knowledgeability, and fresh perspective, and concluded by reflecting with thanks on the support of all his colleagues. Bob Wuthnow thanked Steve on behalf of the Section for his invaluable work, and Lyn Spillman presented a token of thanks from the section. Karen Cerulo reported that she planned to continue along the lines of Steve's successful model in her work as editor and encouraged new submissions.

*Treasurer.* Noting that section finances remained healthy thanks to royalties carried over from previous section publications, Lyn Spillman submitted the following budget for 1996-97:

Net Assets Carried Over .....	2408.12
Revenue	
Dues Income .....	1028.00
Royalty Income .....	267.29
Other Income .....	250.00
Total Revenue .....	3953.41
Expenses	
Annual Meeting 1996 .....	392.26
Other Meeting .....	0.00
Newsletter .....	773.23
Other Publications .....	0.00
Awards .....	300.00
Other .....	237.50
Total Expenses .....	1702.99
Net Assets at end of year .....	2250.42

*Nominations Committee 1997-98.* In the first item of new business, Bob Wuthnow called for nominations from the floor for members of the nominations committee. Pete Peterson, Orville Lee, Nancy Weiss Hanrahan, Jacqueline Gibbons, and Sharon Hays were elected unanimously.

*Research Networks.* Karen Cerulo announced a new effort to coordinating the place of the research networks in the section, and volunteered to act as network coordinator. Issues such as the organization of meeting times for networks will be addressed by Karen and a volunteer committee from council during the coming year, and she invited input from network members.

*Program Report.* Nicola Beisel reported on the section program in progress at the Toronto meetings. All sessions so far had been remarkably well attended, with standing room only at an 8:30 panel on history and culture and an estimated 150 attendees at section roundtables. Nicki drew attention to remaining panels, especially a panel on "Culture in American Sociology" planned for the next day.

As current chair of the section, Nicki reminded members that even though membership was extremely healthy, increasing numbers to 1000 would provide extra room on the program of ASA meetings and that this was a feasible target if only a small proportion of members encouraged one other person to join. Finally, she expressed her thanks for all the help members had offered as she organized the program in the preceding year.

*Other Business.* The chairperson-elect of the section, Michael Schudson, was introduced, and he thanked members for their confidence and asked for suggestions for the coming year.

Vera Zolberg pointed out that the current practice of scheduling Theory Section and Culture Section events on the same day created difficulties for the many members whose interests encompassed both. She suggested that possibilities for improving scheduling should be investigated. Discussion from the floor focused on how better scheduling might be achieved. □

## Cultural News Beyond the Section: Two Calls for Papers

Crossroads in Cultural Studies—  
Second International Conference  
Tampere, Finland, June 28–July 1, 1998

In the midst of all virtual communities and realities with abstract bodyless persons, we still need to meet each other in flesh and blood. The great success of the first *Crossroads* conference in 1996, with over 500 participants from all continents, proved that a meeting point like that is greatly needed in international cultural studies. Let us therefore invite you to the Second International Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference!

The special theme of the conference will be borders and border-crossings, but we also provide an open forum for all topics that interest the diverse international cultural studies community; to make contacts, exchange views and gain inspiration from each other. This time there will be more parallel sessions, which allows a little more time for discussion in the sessions. We encourage international participation from different countries, disciplines and cultural backgrounds, and from a wide range of research areas.

We assume that concepts such as gender; ethnicity; identity; body; otherness; age; media; power and knowledge; traditions today; nation-states; globalization; culture and economy; centre and periphery; and new information technology will be tackled in the sessions and plenaries, but again it is up to you to make this a conference that will show where cultural studies is going next.

To make sure you'll receive the registration form, please fax (+358 3 2156 080) or mail (Crossroads in Cultural Studies, University of Tampere, PO Box 607, 33101 Tampere, Finland) us a note with your contact information or, preferably, enter our website [www.uta.fi/crossroads](http://www.uta.fi/crossroads), fill in the reply form, and also find more information about the conference.

### Articles for an Annual:

#### *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*

*Current Perspectives in Social Theory* invites submissions for the 1999 volume. This is an annual journal dedicated to publishing articles across the spectrum of perspectives within social theory, conceived of in a broad and interdisciplinary sense. To submit, send 5 copies and an abstract to Jennifer Lehmann at Sociology Dept., Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln NE 68588-0324. Deadline for receipt of mss: Apr. 1.

## Section Structure: Leaders and Networks

### Section Officers

*Chair* Nicola Beisel, Northwestern, [nbeisel@nwu.edu](mailto:nbeisel@nwu.edu); *past chair* Robert Wuthnow, Princeton, [wuthnow@princeton.edu](mailto:wuthnow@princeton.edu); *chair elect and program chair* Michael Schudson, UC-San Diego, [mschudso@weber.ucsd.edu](mailto:mschudso@weber.ucsd.edu); *secretary-treasurer* Lyn Spillman, Lynette.PSpillman.1@nd.edu; *outgoing newsletter editor* Stephen Hart, SUNY-Buffalo, [sahart@acsu.buffalo.edu](mailto:sahart@acsu.buffalo.edu); *incoming newsletter editor* Karen Cerulo, Rutgers, [cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu).

### Section Council

Craig Calhoun, NYU, [calhoun@is4.nyu.edu](mailto:calhoun@is4.nyu.edu); Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, CUNY, [cepstein@email.gc.cuny.edu](mailto:cepstein@email.gc.cuny.edu); Andrea Press, UI-Urbana (Communications), [press@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu](mailto:press@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu); Barry Schwartz, Georgia; John Mohr, UCSB, [mohr@sscf.ucsb.edu](mailto:mohr@sscf.ucsb.edu); Victoria Alexander, Surrey (UK), [vda@soc.surrey.ac.uk](mailto:vda@soc.surrey.ac.uk); and Wayne Breckhus, Rutgers (student member). *Culture Online* is edited by Rita Melendex and William Holt, Yale, [Rita.Melendez@yale.edu](mailto:Rita.Melendez@yale.edu) or [William.Holt@yale.edu](mailto:William.Holt@yale.edu).

### Networks and Their Coordinators

*Culture and theory* Orville Lee, [oil120@nwu.edu](mailto:oil120@nwu.edu) and Anne Bowler [abowler@udel.edu](mailto:abowler@udel.edu); *Culture and History* Jeff Olick (Columbia) and Ewa Morawski, [emorawsk@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:emorawsk@sas.upenn.edu); *Culture and Religion* Rhys Willims, [willrhys@siucvmb.siu.edu](mailto:willrhys@siucvmb.siu.edu); *Culture and Ethnicity* Craig Watkins, [swatkins@jeeves.la.utexas.edu](mailto:swatkins@jeeves.la.utexas.edu); *Culture and Gender*: Sharon Hays, [sh2q@uva.pcmail.virginia.edu](mailto:sh2q@uva.pcmail.virginia.edu); *Political Culture* Paul Lichterman, [lichterm@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:lichterm@ssc.wisc.edu), Nina Eliasoph, [eliasoph@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:eliasoph@ssc.wisc.edu), and Andrea Press, [press@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu](mailto:press@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu); *Meaning and Measurement* Ann Swidler, [swidler@uclink2.berkeley.edu](mailto:swidler@uclink2.berkeley.edu); *Symbolic Boundaries* Michèle Lamont, [mlamont@princeton.edu](mailto:mlamont@princeton.edu); *Identity Construction* Karen Cerulo, [cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu).

## Newsletter Submissions

*Deadline for Winter issue*: Dec. 20. Unsolicited contributions welcome. Submission to *Culture* constitutes permission for abstracting and indexing in *Sociological Abstracts*. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions. Editor effective January 1998: Karen Cerulo (Rutgers), e-mail [cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu), phone 908/317-9727. Submissions should consist of a hard copy accompanied by disk readable by MS-Word/Win, and be sent to 343 Spruce Ave., Garwood, NJ 07027.

## Call For Papers—Culture Section Sessions for the 1998 Meetings in San Francisco *Michael Schudson, University of California–San Diego, Program Chair*

### *Introduction by the Program Chair*

I am pleased to announce the “Culture” sessions for the 1998 A.S.A. meetings and I am grateful to all who agreed to organize them. My aim, in cooperation with the organizers, has been to create session topics that cut across the most obvious subfields in the sociology of culture and identify problem areas that may be common to people who study religion, art, science, or mass media. If this works well, it will lead to sessions in which the different papers genuinely speak to one another. (If it works badly, my sympathies to the discussants in their efforts to pretend that the papers speak to one another!)

Please note, then, not only the session’s title but the further explanatory remarks organizers have provided. I encourage you to submit papers (to the organizers listed below) and to remind your colleagues and best students to submit papers, and I look forward to seeing you in San Francisco.

### *Audiences*

Increasing attention has been paid to the role of audiences in cultural production, but this has raised questions about the changing meaning and character of an “audience” itself. This session is open to any papers about audiences but especially those that, along the way, question received understandings of the audience. Organizer: Joshua Gamson, Department of Sociology, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520, [joshua.gamson@yale.edu](mailto:joshua.gamson@yale.edu).

### *Political Culture*

This session will be focused on empirical studies of political culture, both historical and contemporary. Particularly welcome are papers that discuss how ordinary citizens make sense of the political domain (politics, the state, government, and themselves as citizens) as a way of re-entering the debate on democracy that sociology has neglected in recent years. Organizer: Magali Sarfatti Larson, 511 Woodland Terrace, Philadelphia, PA 19104, [magalisl@astro.ocis.temple.edu](mailto:magalisl@astro.ocis.temple.edu).

### *Hierarchies of Culture: Evaluating and Rating Cultural Forms*

Sociological work on hierarchies of culture tends to focus on the high culture/popular culture divide. This session goes beyond such debates by examining culture hierarchies more broadly—the social processes that create them, the forms they take, and their impact on and embeddedness in larger systems of social relations. Pa-

pers on a wide range of questions and from a variety of theoretical perspectives are welcome. Questions might include: What are the historical circumstances under which cultural forms move up or down the hierarchy of culture? How is the movement of things related to the movement and placement of people? What conditions make cultural hierarchies fluid or rigid, inclusive or exclusionary, tall and narrow or short and broad? Organizers: Sarah Corse and Sharon Hays, Department of Sociology, 539 Cabell Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903; [sh2q@uva.pcmail.virginia.edu](mailto:sh2q@uva.pcmail.virginia.edu) for Sharon Hays, [smc65@virginia.edu](mailto:smc65@virginia.edu) for Sarah Corse.

### *Territory and Meaning: Region, Nation, Globe*

What are some of the cultural dynamics of the ways different groups have claimed and disputed territories? How is “the land” influential (or not) in group boundary formation and political process? What are the key social and historical differences in meanings associated with territory? This session will explore the cultural processes and political consequences of ways of imagining territory. Papers are especially welcome which bring studies of a broad range of different groups, and from local to transnational arenas, to bear on the topic of the cultural construction of territory. Organizer: Lynn Spillman, Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556 to mid-December; thereafter Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia, [Lynette.PSpillman.1@nd.edu](mailto:Lynette.PSpillman.1@nd.edu).

### *The Future of Identity Studies in Sociology*

In the past twenty years, the sociology of identity has changed. Work has shifted from concerns with personal identity to collective identity. Many scholars have focused on discourse more than the systematic scrutiny of behavior. Some now approach identity as a source of mobilization rather than a product of it. Virtual identities now compete with those established in the co-present world. As we approach the century’s close, what issues and debates deserve primary attention? Upon what ground should a synthesis of ideas ensue? Where does sociology fit relative to the broader field of cultural studies? Organizer: Karen Cerulo, 343 Spruce Ave., Garwood, NJ 07027, [cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:cerulo@rci.rutgers.edu).

### *Culture Section Refereed Roundtables*

Organizer: Robert Dunn, Department of Sociology, California State University–Hayward, Hayward, CA 94542, [rdunn@haywire.csuhayward.edu](mailto:rdunn@haywire.csuhayward.edu). □