

Culture

Section of the American Sociological Association

A Message from the Chair

Barry Glassner
University of Southern California

It has been an honor for me to serve as chair of the section this year, and to have had the opportunity to devote this space in each issue of the *Newsletter* to a dialogue about important topics and current works in our field. I am particularly pleased to be able to devote the chair's space in this final issue during my chairship to a half dozen short essays by prominent junior and mid-career scholars from the Section, each responding to a section or two from an important new reference work edited by the editor of our *Newsletter*, Mark Jacobs, and his colleague at George Mason University, Nancy Weiss Hanrahan— *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture* (Blackwell, 2005).

I am grateful to Prudence Carter, Lynn Chancer, Timothy Dowd, Abigail Saguy, Olga Shevchenko, and Mitchell Stevens for their contributions to this exchange, and I encourage readers to continue the discussion at "CultureWeb Forum" on the Section's website (<http://www.ibiblio.org/culture/forum>)

From Black Smoke to White: Integrating Culture and Politics

Lynn Chancer, Fordham University

As I was perusing the first and last sections of the Blackwell volume (Parts I and VII), the news was reporting white smoke finally puffing out of the chimney above the Sistine Chapel: Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had just been selected to become the 265th pope in history, and had decided to call himself Pope Benedict XVI. I found myself wondering whether these sections' varied perspectives could illuminate aspects of this widely anticipated event that spoke not only to the ongoing power of

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Culture

Volume 19, No. 3 (Spring 2005)

Benjamin Franklin Ate Here

David Grazian
University of Pennsylvania

The rise of global capitalism has created its own cultural backlash in which local subcultures become valorized for their symbolic power as seemingly authentic sites of meaning and cultural vitality (Grazian 2003). As Griswold and Wright (2004) demonstrate, regional culture is not opposed to but is characteristic of global culture. The growing mobility of populations has created an emergent class of geographic newcomers seeking out the vestiges of local identity that long-time residents often take for granted. Griswold and Wright refer to these newcomers to a given place as "cowbirds," curious souls who soak up regional flavors through consuming the symbols of place, presumably because they cannot take their local identity for granted. In this manner, they maintain the consumer orientation of the tourist, an increasingly normative approach to experiencing our postmodern world (McCannell 1976).

In its efforts to win over these consumers of place, Philadelphia competes in the global cultural economy by hyping its local symbols of authenticity and myth. As the self-proclaimed birthplace of American democracy, the city relies most heavily on its revolutionary and (sometimes fictive) historic past as a means of drawing visitors as well as locals to its celebrated attractions: Independence Hall, the Betsy Ross House (which may not actually be the house of Betsy Ross, who may not have actually sewed the original American flag), and the Liberty Bell. These sites represent the hallowed ground of patriots, and their renovated cobblestone walks and resident horse-drawn carriages operate as theatrical set pieces. Throughout the downtown Center City district, totems of the city's real and imagined cultural past and present abound: Benjamin Franklin's stately Pennsylvania Hospital; Edgar Allan Poe's decrepit house; the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art where

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Editor's Note

Please let me know your ideas for submissions!

Mark D. Jacobs, Dept. of Sociology, George Mason Univ.
Fairfax, VA 22030
mjacobs@gmu.edu; 703/993-1434

religion but to back-and-forth cultural tugs between social actors and institutions, and among social movements and counter-movements with diverse political agendas.

Indeed, common to these interesting essays is an engagement with both culture and politics at the same time as culture's autonomy from institutions of the market and state is presumed and appreciated. But where these authors diverge is in their particular approaches to just how culture and politics interrelate. The writers in these sections — among them Margaret Archer, Nancy Hanrahan, Paul Lichterman, Jeffrey Goldfarb and Nancy Fraser — treat, at once differently and with analogous passion, how democratic participation in public life is made possible, or impeded, by contemporary issues that range from discrimination and authoritarianism to dilemmas posed by bioethics and religion.

Margaret Archer notes that while social theorists often refer to structure and agency existing in a dialectical relationship with one another, interactions between 'culture and agency' also exist and should be acknowledged when attempting to understand contemporary events. Seeking to refine our understanding in another way, Nancy Hanrahan urges sociologists to carefully delineate three levels on which cultural changes may, or may not, take place: the symbolic order, the institutional order, and within experience. Hanrahan uses this distinction to explain seemingly contradictory situations wherein, say, a social movement may have made inroads on one level but not another. Perhaps people appear to encounter fewer biases in their everyday lives at the same time laws continue to reflect systematic discriminations. Or the opposite may hold: laws may have become less discriminatory on the surface while, underneath, symbolic and experiential levels remain infused with biases.

Tapping case studies of a gay coalition and of religious volunteers in the U.S., Paul Lichterman's essay ends on a cautionary note about how cultural dynamics affect civil political participation. Lichterman looks to forge a critical sociology characterized not only by "demystifying ideology" (as has happened, sometimes mechanically, in the past), but by exploration of "group building customs" that have "practical, powerful consequences for a group's approach to public issues." As Lichterman shows, some civic groups have had the effect of narrowing rather than widening citizens' horizons and sense of commonality with one another (pp. 392 and 395). On the other hand Jeffrey Goldfarb's interests in the "politics of small things" suggests, on the basis of his study of alternative theater in Poland under Communism, liberatory possibilities that arise through art — the latter seen, in this obviously different setting, as a splendid testament to the autonomous powers of culture.

But whether urging caution about the political effects of cultural autonomy (as do Hanrahan and Lichterman) or expressing greater optimism (as in Goldfarb's work), most of these authors envision culture in a complex but dualistic relationship with 'structural' institutions of the economy and state. Nancy Fraser challenges this often taken-for-granted bifurcation. She argues that to counterpose culture and structure sets desires for recognition (a frequent goal of identity social movements like those centered on gender, sexuality and race) against desires for redistribution (a frequent goal of class-based movements). Alternatively, Fraser proposes a framework that avoids divisiveness by expressing goals of recognition and redistribu-

tion through the same conceptual apparatus. Why not, she suggests, reconceive the notion of 'status' — defining it not in a Weberian sense but in terms of whether parties can participate fully in a variety of public and private relationships, economic as well as personal?

Fraser's perspective resonates, provocatively, with contemporary debates in and outside the academy wherein race tends still to be played against class, and/or gender against race. Less immediately resonant to me, though, was John Evan's nonetheless intriguing essay about the role of explicit and implicit religious discourse in American public debates. Explicit religious discourse is just as it sounds: obvious. Implicit discourse hides its religious roots and loyalties at the same time it allows "thick" issues of ethics and morality to be discussed *en masse*. While therefore important, Evans contends that implicit religious discourse has been withering away on the American cultural landscape. But is this really the case? Here, I come back full circle to the point where I began — watching as millions around the world waited to learn the new pope's identity, and reflecting about whether these essays help to grasp the complex cultural ramifications (and rebellions) this would bode.

Certainly, when it comes to explicit religiosity, the church has been losing adherents in the American context; at the level of implicit discourse, though, haven't debates over abortion, stem cell research and bioethics been rendered far more contentious by the cultural influence of religiously-based conceptions? Even the Manichean "evil empire" language used by the Bush administration to justify war has been religiously inflected. Through the intermediary of implicit religious discourses, politics and culture seem to have become increasingly enmeshed over the last several decades of conservatism. Drawing on Archer's essay, this very religious/political enmeshment may indeed attest to the usefulness of granting 'culture' an influence on individuals that is as weighty as the importance more readily accorded 'structure.'

Useful, too, may be Hanrahan's commitment to distinguishing symbolic, institutional and everyday dimensions in which culture and politics become entwined. When applied to religion, this encourages looking into whether institutionally expressed views do, or do not, correspond with what people are experiencing on symbolic and everyday levels of their cultural interactions. A propos of Lichterman's perspective, studying the customs of civic-minded church groups can provide insight into the complexities of religious discourse as it becomes communicated, and altered, 'on the ground.' And studying "the politics of small things," a la Goldfarb, encourages us to investigate challenges to institutional church power that may occur through rebellious discourses, artistic and otherwise.

Overall, then, these essays make fine contributions, potentially applicable to a wide range of significant cultural developments. But, when stepping back, another issue comes to mind that these essays as a whole do not particularly address. We learn about how culture and politics interconnect, but less about why cultural changes proceed in one direction or another. What leads to the furthering, or the setting back, of attempts to democratize 'status' in precisely the way Fraser advocates — why the election of a Bush as opposed to a Kerry, a conservative as opposed to a liberalizing pope? To probe these questions more deeply may require borrowing from, or

combining, ideas from the sociology of emotions — i.e., looking into “how emotions work,” as Jack Katz calls it — so as to understand not only what people are doing as active cultural

actors but what they are *feeling*. Such an investigation might round out, and add even more layers of multi-dimensionality, to the increasingly refined sociology of culture that authors have been building here.

In Praise of Uncertain Futures

Mitchell Stevens, New York University

One of the great problems with the sociology of culture, one it shares with the broader discipline, is that it claims as its substantive purview all things social. This makes it hard for those of us who do this work to know what we have in common. Compounding this trouble is the fact that, as with the discipline in general, the sociology of culture enjoys little methodological or theoretical consensus. So one gets volumes like the *Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture*, in which very different kinds of excellent scholarship are lumped together under conspicuously non-specific section titles. Within Section II, titled “Cultural Systems,” my happy assignment for this review, for example, were theoretical assessments of the state of cultural-sociological scholarship of science (Knorr Cetina), the mass media (Jacobs), religion (Williams) and aesthetics and taste (Zolberg; Hennion). Read in one sitting, the five chapters made for an invigorating if intellectually schizophrenic afternoon.

What the chapters have in common is also the one thing that everyone in our subfield shares, namely, a commitment to the notion that meaning is a constitutive component of social order. So Karin Knorr Cetina carefully defines the epistemic “machineries of knowledge construction” (p. 67) which vary across scientific fields and which thus produce different forms and kinds of knowledge. Ronald Jacobs makes a convincing case that mass media enriches, rather than diminishes, the public sphere by providing people with more and varied kinds of cultural information. Rhys Williams revisits Geertz’ classic (1973) statement on religion as a cultural system, finding in it the kernels of contemporary sociological approaches which view the cultural and structural components of religious systems as intermingled and codetermining. Vera Zolberg deftly surveys recent studies of change in elite taste cultures which summarily demonstrate that, in contemporary industrialized societies, heterodox tastes are preeminent symbols of distinction — that, in other words, it’s cool to be an omnivore (Peterson 1992). And Antoine Hennion provides a downright brilliant theory of the relationship between the aesthetic and corporeal components of taste. He speaks, for example, of “...an accumulated history that has made it possible to concentrate the taste of wine in the glass of an informed taster whose palate *has become the other side of the wine, the body indispensable for the wine to have ‘body’ too* (pp. 141-2; my emphasis).” In their various ways, all the authors mentioned above make clear that meaning makes the world.

A second great problem with the sociology of culture is that, by letting meaning matter, it renders all social order subject to the inherent caprice of intersubjective negotiation and cultural innovation. This makes it hard for us to do the things that sociologists in general want so badly to do, namely, to model and predict social processes. To be sure, the meanings we study often crystallize into more or less stable cultural

and material forms, which is why, for example, there is considerable epistemic continuity across generations of scientists who share a discipline; why ancient religious beliefs endure even while theology develops continually; and why there is a market for expensive durable goods, like televisions, which convey streams of data in highly standardized digital forms even while the cultural products they carry change quite rapidly. But however instantiated into scientific communities and religious organizations and material objects they become, meanings have a plasticity that communities, organizations, and objects do not. There always are new ways of making sense of things, and sometimes, these new ways develop constituencies, who build organizations and artifacts to instantiate the innovations that even the most sophisticated models and predictions of social change cannot by themselves enable us to foresee.

I was most newly sensitized to this obdurate fact, which we might otherwise call *history*, by this volume’s chapters on aesthetic heterodoxy (Zolberg) and taste (Hennion) especially. They reminded me that styles and palates change and, with them, social order. They reminded me that people who make culture, who often live on the fringes of social legitimacy and accrue only modest livings, can sometimes change the world. So, for example, artists struggling for access to low-rent studio space create a style of life that becomes broadly normative model of urban gentrification — loft living (Zukin 1989); product designers invent stuff so beguiling to consumers that the innovations spawn whole new industries and configurations of production (Molotch 2003); and the music of oppressed farm workers of the Mississippi River Delta becomes, over time and with the contingent efforts of multiple parties, one of the most celebrated components of official U.S. culture (Grazian 2003).

In the end the problems of our subfield — an imperial reach unmatched by conceptual or methodological consensus, and the caprice at the heart of all of our objects of inquiry — is precisely what make the enterprise so perennially exciting and so generative of new ways of seeing the world. So, I will live with poorly descriptive chapter categories and leave the modeling and predicting to others. Taking meaning seriously has its own rewards.

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The Cultural Significance of Everyday Life

Timothy J. Dowd, Emory University

When reading Part III of the Blackwell Companion, one passage encapsulates (at least for me) the main thrust of its four chapters: "...while all empirical projects are compromised by epistemological problems, there is nonetheless much to be gained by attention to the details and the textures of 'everyday usage...'" (DeNora 2005: 150). In attending to such "everyday usage," the chapters grapple with questions of "how" – such as, *how* do people make sense of cultural objects (e.g., television shows) and categories (e.g., childhood)? In answering these questions, they remind us that the sensemaking that marks our daily existence is far from mundane but, instead, is fundamental.

There is much to admire in the four chapters, yet I briefly focus on how they tap important themes in cultural sociology while exploring topics that range from music (DeNora) and fame (Press and Williams) to commodification (Cook) and motherhood (Kefalas). The first theme entails how individuals interpret the world in which they reside. For example, media scholarship has turned its attention to the active audience – as a corrective to past work that portrays individuals as passive consumers who are easily swayed by the onslaught of content. Instead, the "active" turn highlights how individuals evaluate and select content that appeals to them and find meaning in the process (sometimes in idiosyncratic ways). To that end, DeNora notes how music can serve as a resource by which individuals construct their identity, while Press and Williams show how fans of reality shows identify with the characters and, consequently, develop a distinctive view of what constitutes "celebrity." Sensemaking by individuals, however, is not limited to media reception. Cultural scholarship on inequality explores how individuals in particular classes and status groups enact their own view of the world – including what constitutes appropriate and worthy behavior. Kefalas extends such explorations by showing how low-income women hold notions of motherhood that resonate with general views yet also incorporate specific material constraints; they define good mothers as "being there" for their children amidst the problems that arise, and they view motherhood as bringing order and validation to their lives. In sum, these chapters exemplify efforts to bring agency to the fore.

The chapters touch on another, related theme in cultural sociology – the sensemaking that occurs within and among organizations. Reacting against heroic images of organizations that proceed with certainty, some argue that organizations face an overabundance of information that obscures paths to suc-

cess; as a result, powerful actors within the organization decide what particular information to heed based on their interpretation of the situation. Similarly, others note that the logic by which dominant organizations assess their market defines not only how business is to be conducted but also sets the stage for how both supply and demand will unfold. In both instances, the sensemaking processes are not reducible to economic concerns but are also infused with cultural values. Cook provides one (but not the only) example from the chapters regarding this organizational sensemaking. Changing notions about childhood opened the door for businesses to offer products for children; with first-movers demonstrating the legitimacy of such efforts, the proliferation of children's products and markets, as well as the commodification of childhood, became commonplace. Put another way, Cook and others show that social structures – such as organizations and markets – are not external realities that merely confront individuals, but rather, are ongoing constructions that are shaped by the sensemaking of powerful actors.

Finally, these chapters touch on another theme in cultural sociology, one dealing with the temporal implications of sensemaking. Scholars find that organizational sensemaking tends towards stability, especially because dominant organizations prefer the status quo that favors their interests. Indeed, as this stability occurs on a daily basis, the sensemaking that informs it becomes tacit, thereby seeming natural (small wonder that the cultural foundations of economic activity are not always obvious). The sensemaking of individuals, then, is informed by and contributes to this stability. As Cook acknowledges, the now-prevalent commodification of childhood shapes how children are raised. Nevertheless, such stability is sometimes punctuated. Scholars addressing both art worlds and social movements tout those moments when cultural entrepreneurs successfully champion a view of the world that departs from the status quo, eventually ushering in a new stability. DeNora illustrates this by describing how the exploitation of the phonograph by businesses and listeners resulted in a markedly new way to make sense of music – one that was not dependent upon live performance. These chapters, then, point to the ongoing interplay between agency and social structure. Of course, the four chapters address more than these themes. I highly recommend them, then, as each makes a compelling case regarding the theoretical and substantive reasons that cultural sociologists should heed everyday life.

Reflections on Essays on Culture, Identity, and Difference in *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture*

Prudence L. Carter, Harvard University

The essays by David Halle and L. Frank Weyher, Michele Dillon, and Orville Lee, which comprise Part IV, all make worthy conceptual and empirical contributions to the literature on the intersections between culture and social identities. Collective identities, as we understand, are sustained when individu-

als cohere around similar cultural forms or models. Conceptualizing, theorizing, and investigating identity formations based on everything from class to sexuality and religion to race, Halle and Weyher, Dillon, and Lee, respectively, illuminate the complex and multifaceted natures of social identity and culture as

sociological concepts. Changes in identity categories, they all agree, are inextricably linked to the dynamic changes in cultural frames and repertoires.

All of these scholars suggest that social scientists must be mindful of at least three traits—expansiveness, permeability and hybridity—that characterize contemporary social identities and their attendant cultures. For Halle and Weyher, class identities have undergone a proverbial face-lift where broad segments of the working class and the middle class now share behavioral traits and attitudes about stock trading and home ownership, which in the past were characterized as “bourgeois.” In a study of gay and lesbian practicing Catholics, Dillon describes how individuals maintain as part of their “embodied selves” what she calls “anomalous identities”—or identities whose practices, ideologies, and expressions are at odds with one another. Dillon’s informants challenge the institutional cultural frames of what it means to be Catholic and embrace religious practices and doctrine in such a way that the boundaries of Catholic identity are not *felt* or *experienced* as completely exclusionary. Lee approaches the subject of identity somewhat differently than the other thinkers. In fact, he uses the indications of cultural shifts to call for a dismantling of the idea of race as social scientists conventionally use it. Arguing that perhaps race is an anachronistic concept because even those individuals who share phenotypic similarities are likely to cohere with others around tastes cultures and other socio-cultural logics, Lee asserts that scholars of race need to separate the phenotypic meanings ascribed to the body from the performative, cultural constructions of the body. The latter meanings, he suggests, now constitute most racialized individuals’ concept of identity. In sum, from all of these essays, the reader gathers that cultural shifts and turns should compel scholars of identity to move away from narrow and homogeneous thinking about who’s in and who’s out of particular identity-based groups.

These essays convince me that social actors exercise their self-power and choices to maintain or embody multiple identities even if in practice some of these identities either contradict or are at odds with another identity. It is empirically supported that individuals experience daily life in ways that transcend dichotomous thinking about identities (e.g., gay and Catholic; a working-class stock owner; or a Black youth with a

hip hop aesthetic who loves classical music). Nevertheless, the fundamental tension in each of these essays lies between what the individuals choose to do culturally to express their identities and what the institutions and structures (fail to) do to either fully recognize or embrace these individuals who maintain multiple and sometimes anomalous identities. That is, rigid structural and institutional forces—such as a persistent and growing wealth and economic inequality gap; church policies that explicitly forbid gay and lesbian persons from openly serving as clergy; and persistent segregation and political and economic inequality that disproportionately affect the material well-being of black and brown bodies in U.S. society—expose the limited viability of hybrid identities and permeable cultural boundaries across class, sexuality and religion, and race. Agency is limited by the extent to which structures, institutions, and their cultural gatekeepers are willing to incorporate those who hold particular identities that diverge greatly from their ideological claims. Given this, studies of social identities and culture can inform us about how individuals see themselves vis-à-vis others within and outside their identity-based groups, but they are limited in explanations of how these multifaceted identities can transform society on a macro-level, particularly when it comes to either a sharing or a redistribution of cultural, economic, and political power.

Highlighting these tensions does not ignore the strong contributions that essays on identity, difference, and culture make, however. Each of these essays in fact makes the point that individuals can maintain multiple and disparate identities which hold multifold functions. I understand that with the increasing permeability of cultural boundaries and the emergence of multiple and hybrid identities, individuals have: 1) created multicultural selves, which indicate that those previously barred from status groups now have ways to be connected to and participate in them; 2) exercised their agency and choice in ways that preclude them from succumbing to powerlessness and disaffection with society; and 3) maintained worldviews and practices that both explicitly and implicitly challenge the inequitable socio-political designs of certain social institutions whose complete demise would not necessarily serve society well. Certainly, these social processes underline the critical and salient places that culture and identity hold in all of our lives.

***Rashomon* Reconsidered: A Reaction to Part V, "Collective Memory and Cultural Amnesia"**

Olga Shevchenko, Williams College

If there is one thing that *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture* has in common with collective memory – the topic of one of its sections, and the subject of this short essay- it is that both are inevitably selective. To merely state this selectivity would be commonplace. But omissions and emphases reveal patterns that speak volumes about the field. This is what makes many accounts of commemorative controversies so fascinating. This, too, is what makes the Blackwell volume both irreplaceable and potentially vulnerable: given the scope of the task at hand, its entries can only but hint at the available avenues of inquiry, and I applaud Mark Jacobs and Nancy Weiss Hanrahan for undertaking the timely and courageous project of bringing these threads together. While one *Culture*

could wish for a more prominent inclusion of works that analyze collective memory in its dynamic, interpretative aspect, as well as works on reception and negotiation of collective representations, it is clear that the volume editors did everything they could to include a broadest possible range of approaches. In this respect, the texts that comprise this section should be seen not as a single-voice manifesto, but rather as a variety sampler for what the field has to offer.

Nevertheless, elements of overlap exist. Collective memory is a topic that owes much to the cultural turn in social sciences, and at the same time, makes some of the deficiencies of this turn apparent. In one way or another, all chapters that comprise Part V of the *Blackwell Companion* build on or

react to the themes that have become staples of recent discussions in sociology of culture: recognition of multiple competing visions in what was previously conceived of as homogenous “cultures,” anxiety over discordant claims to cultural authority, processual vision of culture and memory as perpetually on-going works-in-progress, and interest in the mutually transformative influences that enable publics, agendas, genres and cultural artifacts to shape and be shaped by one another. Yet, while many of these themes initially emerged in the course of polemics with the preceding generation of cultural theorists, the texts of Barry Schwartz et al., Anna Lisa Tota, Jan Marontate and Robin Wagner-Pacifici which comprise Part V of the *Blackwell Companion* treat them more as points of departure than as something in need of a proof. In this respect, we may speak of these arguments having evolved to become canonical truths of their own.

Here, however, similarities between the chapters end. Canonical truths can be challenged and cast aside, but they can also be refined by being applied to new cases; one can embrace them in their entirety, abandon them and the challenges they represented, or attempt to move beyond them without loosening grip on their critical potential. Chapters in Part V are located at different points on this analytical continuum. The text by Jan Marontate represents the most careful attempt to synthesize the heuristic potential offered by the recent analyses of memory-making, taking as its springboard the field of museum studies. Marontate generates a careful inventory of various dilemmas that occur as groups of experts, publics and cultural subjects (memorably defined by the author as “groups who consider themselves stakeholders in the cultures on display,” p. 287) renegotiate authority and authenticity in the charged museum climate of the 21st century. While Marontate remains on the whole faithful to the fundamental premises of the cultural turn, works by Anna Lisa Tota and Robin Wagner-Pacifici push the bounds of this perspective towards new subject areas and/or new questions. Tota’s text does this by directing its analytical gaze towards the relationship between the civil society and the state in two Italian towns of Milan and Bologna, seeking to use the shape and vibrancy of the civil society in these two locales as a way of explaining why similarly traumatic terrorist attacks were partially forgotten in the former case, and continue to be commemorated in the latter. While Tota adopts a comparative approach as a way of circumventing the voluntarism frequently associated with radically

constructivist approaches to memory, Wagner-Pacifici weaves together a brilliant exemplar of Simmelian sociology of social forms. In a discussion which is indebted to Goffman at least as much as it is to Simmel, she analyzes the role of the witness in the dramaturgy of social relations. Wagner-Pacifici sees witnesses as simultaneously observers and (by the very fact of their observations) as actors and agents of history, and makes a convincing case against the distinction between action and observation in the world in which the presence of observer has so often acted as a catalyst for change. Finally, Barry Schwartz and his co-authors, Kazuya Fukuoka and Sachiko Takita-Ishii, make the most decisive break with what they call the “debunking motif” of recent collective memory studies, suggesting that not only are there limits to the flexibility with which past can be interpreted, but also that some cultures have a greater commitment to the preservation of memory and to the righting of past wrongs. The very use of the word “cultures” in the plural (as in “national cultures”) signals the authors’ skepticism concerning those legacies of the cultural turn that other contributors take for granted, and suggests their desire to revisit and rehabilitate elements of the theoretical vocabulary of Ruth Benedict and Ernest Renan.

Of all cinematic texts, Kurosawa’s film *Rashomon* has long enjoyed widest circulation in the field of memory studies. Depicting the irreducible heterogeneity of accounts that a single event can generate among its participants, *Rashomon* has provided an apt metaphor for the flexible and conflict-ridden nature of collective memory. But useful as it was, it may have, in the end, been misleading. All accounts of the past have not been created equal, and the contributions to the Blackwell volume, divergent as they are stylistically and theoretically, are symptomatic of the impatience with voluntaristic excesses of the cultural turn. It remains to be seen whether *Rashomon* is, in fact, an accurate metaphor for what the cultural turn in sociology has made possible, and some attention to related developments in other social science disciplines, in particular in history, may suggest ways for finding *within* the cultural turn the resources needed to overcome the impasse that contributors to the Blackwell volume identify. In any case, it seems apt to conclude by suggesting it as a possibility. For it is befitting to the students of memory to recognize how thoroughly even our dissatisfaction with the past traditions is shaped by the very past we seek to leave behind.

Institutions and Cultural Analysis

Abigail Saguy, UCLA

The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture, edited by Mark D. Jacobs and Nancy Weiss Hanrahan, offers a selection of exciting new work by leading contemporary sociologists of culture. Part VI, “The Culture of Institutions,” features four thought-provoking pieces concerning institutions and culture. In “Professions as Disciplinary Cultures,” Magali Sarfatti Larson builds on her influential earlier work to convincingly argue that the profession is a disciplinary culture that creates order on the basis of mastery of a field of knowledge and commitment to service. In “Everyday Life and the Constitution of Legality,” Susan Silbey draws on her important work with Patricia Ewick (Ewick and Silbey 1998) to delineate the differ-

ent ways in which people conceptualize law and legality – as sacred, a game, or a product of unequal power – thus stressing the interactive, cultural, multivalent, and socially constructed aspects of law. Mohr’s “The Discourses of Welfare and Welfare Reform” uses U.S. social welfare provisions to demonstrate the feasibility and value of using sophisticated technology to study discourse, writing that “we should put our machines to work sifting through streams of data taken from the textual universe.” Finally, Mark Jacobs’ “The Culture of Savings and Loan Scandal in the No-Fault Society” defines scandals as struggles between good and bad faith and persuasively

argues that they “germinate in cultures of corruption, secrecy, and suspicion along the fault-lines between politics and business.”

Taken as a whole, these articles point to the power of institutional arguments of culture. In her study of professions Larson examines how “the external forces of market and managerialism” and “internal stratification and competition” are reducing the cultural authority of professions to the technical component of expertise.” Silbey takes a specific form of professional and technical expertise – the law – and skillfully shows how laypeople make sense of it, alternatively conceptualizing law and legality as 1) operating according to known and fixed rules in carefully delimited spaces, 2) a game, or 3) a foreign and powerful system that needs to be resisted. Most people take for granted that laypeople’s concept of legality is influenced – even determined – by legal institutions and practices. One of Silbey’s (and Ewick’s) greatest contributions is showing how cultural understandings of law are varied and often contradictory. Indeed, she makes a persuasive case that the “normative plurality” of law strengthens its legitimacy and provides avenues for social change. Jacobs demonstrates how contradictions between institutional logics – e.g., politics and business – facilitates a specific cultural form: scandal. In contrast with the other three chapters in this section, Mohr’s project is methodological, showing how elegant lattices, blockmodels, clusterings, and tables, can be used to document institutionally-embedded logic. The idea that quantitative methods and sophisticated technology can be used to study cultural meaning, which Mohr has been instrumental in developing, has greatly enriched sociology of culture and continues to do so.

As these chapters demonstrate, grounding meaning in institutions provides a middle-ground between thinking of culture as mental maps in people’s heads or as “out there” in some abstract sense. As such, it is currently one of the most promising avenues for work in sociology of culture. Institutions produce “cultural repertoires” that people use to make sense of the world. An individual’s relative use of certain repertoires may thus vary, depending on their contact with a given institution. So, one would expect lawyers to be more influenced by legal doctrine than non-lawyers and for economics graduate students to act more as rational actors than religion students. In other words, as Larson points out, specific professions develop their own cultures, just as other groups develop their own “group style” (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003).

Perhaps one important perspective is missing from this otherwise very compelling volume. If culture is produced within institutions, differences in national institutions can help explain the relative prominence of certain “cultural repertoires” in some countries compared to others. Given the power of cross-national comparisons for cultural sociology (see, e.g., Corse 1997, Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001; Lamont 1992, 2000; Lamont and Thevenot 2000; Spillman 1997), the dearth of such analysis in the Blackwell volume is striking.

For instance, in my comparative work on sexual harassment in the U.S. and France (Saguy 2003), I found the U.S. courts and French legislature have produced two disparate accounts of sexual harassment, as discrimination in employment and sexual violence, respectively. These disparate frames, in turn, inform (but do not solely determine) media representations of, corporate approaches to, and individual accounts of sexual harassment. Media representations of sexual harassment have been further informed by legal restraints on journalistic reporting, so that strict libel laws have limited the number of sexual harassment scandals in France, compared to the United States (Benson and Saguy 2005). Thus, it is not just that disembodied “frames” or “discourses” shape societies’ accounts of sexual harassment, but also that understandings of sexual harassment are rooted in differing institutions in each country. This further brings attention to the fact that the articulation between institutions happens both at a macro level (e.g., cross-national institutional differences) and at a micro level (e.g., individuals’ use of law and legality).

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Benjamin Franklin Ate Here, continued

Rocky Balboa trained to be a champion; and of most recent note, the Seaman's Church Institute building, better known to younger visitors as the luxury residence-*cum*-television studio for the pseudo-reality show MTV Real World Philadelphia.

But when it comes to authenticity, few local cultural attractions carry the symbolic weight of the city's junk food: Pennsylvania Dutch soft pretzels, generous Italian hoagies, refreshing water ice, and that most celebrated of homegrown edibles, the Philly cheesesteak. Hmm, the perfect sandwich of grilled steak, fried onions, and Cheez Whiz on a soft, chewy Italian roll is the taste of the city itself. This raises an interesting question for sociologists of culture: where does local cuisine come from? Or more to the point, how do particular foodstuffs come to be associated with a specific geographic place, region or locality?

In some cases, an ecological argument would seem most appropriate—potatoes are grown in Idaho; domestic cattle are raised in the Midwest; pancake syrup is tapped from maple trees in Vermont. But as sensible as such an argument may appear on its face, a more sociological approach emphasizes how cuisines become symbolically attached to locales as a product of cultural labor occurring within fields of gastronomy consisting of practitioners, cultural authorities (journalists, food critics, celebrity chefs, travel writers, prize committees, academics) and commercial interests (Fine 1996; Ferguson 1998; 2004). In this manner, even seemingly self-evident place-based signifiers must be creatively fabricated and rigorously defended if they are to maintain the properties of well-known social facts, rationality be damned. Many locals will argue to the death that a truly authentic Philly cheese steak must be prepared with Cheez Whiz, even though the city's "original" cheese steaks were sold at a still-successful eatery called Pat's during the 1930s—years before Cheez Whiz (perhaps the most artificial of all foodstuffs) was introduced in 1952, and in Canada, no less.

In addition, not all local cultural traditions gain the same degree of fame that others acquire; as Gary Alan Fine (1996) argues, historical legacies are socially constructed, and largely defined by reputational entrepreneurs in a position of influence who possess the incentive to emphasize certain kinds of ideological claims while downplaying others. For this reason, only some regional delicacies gain the attention of a greater culinary public while others remain as local secrets—which is why you can order a "Philly" cheesesteak on Belmont Avenue in Chicago, but no one in Philadelphia has heard of Chicago-style Italian Beef. (However, in Philadelphia you can find Chicago-style Vienna Beef hot dogs, as well as the Morton's of Chicago steakhouse chain.)

Also, these myths of place carry greater resonance when they seamlessly blend into what Gerald Suttles (1984) refers to as a city or region's "cumulative texture" of local culture. For instance, everyone knows that Ben and Jerry's ice cream is produced in Vermont, not only because the company promotes itself as "Vermont's Finest," but also because Vermont has a developed reputation as a dairy state (i.e. Vermont cheddar cheese) as well as being a bastion of alternative

countercultural sensibilities easily appropriated by the ice cream manufacturer in flavors with silly names such as Cherry Garcia, Wavy Gravy, Phish Food, Dave Matthews Band Magic Brownies, and Karamel Sutra (to say nothing of The Full VerMonty). Meanwhile, because it does not easily coalesce with more dominant images of the City of Brotherly Love, only a small minority of ice cream lovers identify the dessert with Philadelphia's urban culture, even though the hand-cranked ice cream freezer was invented here in 1843; Breyers Ice Cream was founded in Philadelphia in 1866; Bassett's Ice Cream has been made here since 1893; and the ice cream soda was invented by accident at the Franklin Institute Exposition in Philadelphia in 1874. While "Philadelphia style" ice cream (as opposed to French custard style) is certainly known of by confectionary connoisseurs and appears on the packages of several brands such as Turkey Hill, the label hardly carries the same cultural resonance as New England clam chowder, Buffalo chicken wings, or Chicago-style deep-dish pizza. (In fact, "Philadelphia style" ice cream is alternatively known as "New York" or "American" style.)

Meanwhile, the Philly cheesesteak succeeds as a local cultural symbol because it is so well integrated into the idealized tapestry of the city's working class heritage, most famously represented in recent memory by the city's fictitious Italian Stallion, Rocky Balboa. In fact, a set of rituals concerning the "proper" way to order a cheesesteak in Philadelphia has developed over the years that forces the customer (proletarian or otherwise) to emphasize their streetwise confidence, brashness, and tough attitude—"Whiz wid" means a cheesesteak with Cheez Whiz and fried onions, and you better not ask what "w/out" means, if you know what's good for you. The line guys over at Pat's are Philadelphia's answer to the Soup Nazi on Seinfeld. You got a problem with that?

Local cuisines deemed "authentic" within their cultural fields are of two varieties: domesticated and commercialized. Some foods are considered most authentically prepared in the home—Grandma's chicken soup, Pa's secret barbecue sauce, Mother's chocolate-chip cookies—to the point where much restaurant fare lacking in homemade TLC finds itself targeted for derision, or at least a rotten tomato. Typically, such dishes are surrounded by a rich folklore of generational family recipes and memorable meals prepared by venerable relatives. Though produced by amateurs in the home, these sentimental favorites are often valued over commercially prepared products, and the mass-market or upscale versions of such domestic fare are easily mocked for their pretensions. (For an infinite sampling of this culinary trend in the blues clubs of Chicago, see Grazian 2003).

Alternatively, certain kinds of commonly purchased food are thought of as more authentically commercially prepared cuisine. Few domestic cooks today prepare cheesesteaks, stuffed pizza, fresh salt pretzels, or poppy-seed bagels in their home kitchens, or rely on a family recipe passed down through the ages. In these instances, the commercialized version sold to the public is considered the authentic original. Moreover, it may be far easier to attach a stable local identity to commer-

cial foods—New York bagels and delicatessen-style cold cuts, Philadelphia pretzels, Chicago-style hot dogs—than domestically prepared foods, as urban eateries are less mobile than their residents. While one could argue that authentic soul food can be found not only in the South but also in Northern cities with large black populations like Philadelphia, bagel shops and delis all over the globe pay homage to New York City, and the cheesesteak sandwich often carries the Philly label across the country, as well as at participating McDonald's.

In the interests of establishing a monopoly on authenticity, local commercial entities also have a strong incentive to advertise themselves as place-based, which is why local Philadelphians argue that it is *by definition* impossible to find an authentic Philly cheesesteak outside the city limits, and New Yorkers complain they cannot find a *real* bagel anywhere outside the five boroughs. (Never mind the fact that some of the best New York bagels are made across the Hudson in New Jersey.) Meanwhile, private residents have much less of an incentive (not to mention fewer resources) to defend their traditions as specifically localized—while the national, regional or ethnic origins of domestic cuisine may be argued to be authentic (i.e. the Sicilian grandmother's tomato sauce recipe from the Old Country), the success of its replication abroad requires that such authenticity be deemed transplantable. (Otherwise, that Sicilian sauce would be considered inauthentic by Italians themselves, as the tomato was brought to Europe from the New World only after the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1519.)

Of course, *within* the city limits the debates over local authenticity rage on. Should the meat on a cheesesteak be thinly sliced, or shredded; should the roll be soft or crusty? Is the best cheesesteak in town at Pat's on Ninth Street and Passyunk in South Philly, or at Geno's across the street? Or is it at Dalessandro's in Roxborough, or Chink's on Torresdale

Avenue in the Northeast region of the city? Are the cheesesteaks served at the Reading Terminal Market downtown just for tourists, or are they the real deal? One thing is for certain: the most *expensive* sandwich in the city is served in Rittenhouse Square at the posh Barclay Prime, home of the \$100 cheesesteak succulently prepared with Kobe beef, sautéed *foie gras* (recently replaced by lobster in the wake of protests from activists), shaved truffles, caramelized onions and melted triple-cream Taleggio cheese on a brioche bun, and served with a complimentary bottle of champagne.

You got a problem with that?

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Books of Note

Richard A. Peterson, Vanderbilt University

Bulman, Robert C. High School: Cinema, Schools, and American Culture. New York: Worth Publishers. Bolman analyzes 185 films about high schools and adolescence. He finds three types of American films. Urban high schools are seen as filled with socially-troubled low-achieving students who are dramatically transformed by the singular efforts of a lone unorthodox, good-hearted teacher-hero who encourages his/her students to conform to middle-class standards. In the films about middle-class suburban schools, the focus is on teen angst, where teenagers search for identity and the rewards of status and popularity with their peers, and the hero is usually the student who is able to rise above peer pressures. Movies about elite private high schools depict a narrow and stifling world rooted in inherited privilege, and the heroic student is the one who follows her/his own heart in finding personal happiness. The optimistic, middle-class slant of these three kinds of films, Bulman argues, comes into sharp focus when they are contrasted with high school films produced outside the US. Eschewing happy endings, the foreign films present images of adolescent life as

much more complicated, confusing, and dark. Not just good scholarship, this book will make provocative reading in a wide range of college (and high school) courses.

Halkias, Alexandra. The Empty Cradle of Democracy: Sex, Abortion, and Nationalism in Modern Greece. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. In Greece, abortion is seen by many women as "natural" and other forms of birth control are considered "invasive." The result is a very high abortion rate and a low birth rate. Based on fieldwork in an Athens family-planning clinic in which she conducted 120 interviews with women who had had two or more abortions, Halkias shows the tensions between the ideas of a free autonomous individual and the interests of the nation, patriarchy, and religion.

Cook, Karen S., Russell Hardin, and Margaret Levi. Cooperation Without Trust? New York: Russell Sage Foundation Books. Trust, the authors argue, is often not necessary to maintaining cooperative relationships. They give numerous illustrations to show that mutually beneficial relationships take place without

trust. People may be bound in reciprocal relationships, may be limited by wishing to maintain their reputation, to maintain social capital networks, or by direct monitoring. In fact, they argue, outright distrust may be the cornerstone of creating systems of cooperation. A stout distrust of government, for example, prompted the writers of the US Constitution to build a system of checks and balances to keep the behavior of government officials in line with the public will, while unquestioning trust is an invitation to tyranny.

Gambetta, Diego and Heather Hamill. Streetwise: How Taxi Drivers Establish Customers' Trustworthiness. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Books. Based on interviews in Belfast, Northern Ireland and New York City, the authors find that cabbies seek out the sign-management strategies that help cabbies decide on the trustworthiness of their clients and signal their own reactions. Rather than focus on single signs, they look for clusters of signs and act accordingly. Belfast cabbies, who tend to be local ex-paramilitaries, exhibit macho behavior when they need to forestall criminal behavior, while the predominantly foreign-born New York cabbies minimize danger by appeasing robbers and carrying only small amounts of cash.

Andy Bennett and Keith Hahn-Harris, editors. After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave. The first three chapters show the inadequacy of the subculture idea as promulgated in the 1970s by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies and discuss alternative conceptions (such as neo-tribe, lifestyle, and scene) more in line with the realities of contemporary youth culture. The following nine chapters explore specific youth scenes in England, Canada, Russia, and Australia.

Three from Blackwell

Outwaite, William and Larry Ray. Social Theory and Postcommunism. The book discusses the thesis that the fall of communism has decimated conceptions of society alternative to capitalism. Globalization, modernity, and post-socialism are explored.

Davies, Douglas J. A Brief History of Death. Davies shows the changing attitudes to the act of dying, grieving, burial. He examines the changing artistic representation of death as well as the fear of mass death in disasters.

Adkins, Lisa and Bev Skeggs, editors. Feminism after Bourdieu. Bourdieu had relatively little to say about women, gender, and feminism, but the authors anthologized here assert that the richness of his social theorizing can be "opened up" by contemporary feminism.

Six from Sage Publications

McRobbie, Angela. The Uses of Cultural Studies. McRobbie, one of the leading scholars in the field, offers a text-like conversation on the development of cultural studies by focusing on

the contributions of six scholars. In individual chapters, she focuses on the contributions of Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Judith Butler, Homi Bhabha, Pierre Bourdieu and Frederick Jameson. Going well beyond exegesis, in each case she discusses the real-world political implications of their ideas. Pierre Bourdieu was no fan of British cultural studies, and McRobbie is sharply critical of his late policy works.

Hubbard, Phil, Rob Kitchin, and Gill Valentine, editors. Key Thinkers on Space and Place. Key thinkers include Benedict Anderson, Euan Hauge, Trevor Barns, Susanne Reimer, Jean Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman, and David Clarke among others.

Marchessault, Janine. Marshall McLuhan. Marchessault presents a sympathetic reading of Marshall McLuhan's intellectual biography, tracing the development of his ideas from romantic art and Catholicism to the world in which the medium is the message.

Wouters, Cas. Sex and Manners: Female Emancipation in the West 1890-2000. Wouters shows that regimes of manners were promulgated to civilize men and to shape the behavior of the newly emancipated woman.

van Dijk, Jan A. G. M. The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society. After reviewing the evidence that the new personal computer technologies are deepening the divide between haves and have nots, van Dijk presents 26 policy proposals designed to close the divide.

Jaynes, Gerald D. editor. Encyclopedia of African American Society. Approaching the topic from a "street-level perspective", Jaynes not only treats slavery, discrimination and rap music, but he also provides a complete list of African-Americans in sports halls of fame.

Four from Open University Press

Critcher, Chas, editor. Moral Panics and the Media. Critcher brings together twenty-eight pieces that deal with the sudden eruptions of indignant concern that are created by moral entrepreneurs, fanned by the mass media, and turned to their own advantage by politicians, preachers, police and pressure groups.

Lewis, Justin, Sanna Inthorn, and Karin Wahl-Jorgensen. Citizens or Consumers? The Media and the Decline of Political Participation. Based on a large study of media coverage, the authors assert that the perceived decline in political participation in Great Britain and the US is in part a result of the fact that the news media do not report on the actively engaged citizenry.

Hartmann, Thomas Berker, Yves Punie, and Katie Ward, editors. Domestication of Media and Technology. The authors draw examples from diverse contexts to show the processes by which what is initially taken to be novel becomes a taken-for-granted part of every-day life.

Bell, David and Joanne Hollows, editors. Ordinary Lifestyles: Popular Media, Consumption and Taste. Focusing on "how to" books, magazines, brochures, websites, and television shows, the authors show how conventional tastes and lifestyles are shaped and inculcated.

Routledge's Four

Dettmar, Kevin. Is Rock Dead? In September 1956 a country music song proclaimed "The Death of Rock and Roll." Dettmar examines the numerous assertions made in the half century since by opponents and fans of the music alike that rock is dead. If it is dead who killed it, where, when, why, and how? Dettmar suggests that the death-and-reincarnation theme is vital to the continuity of the music, or as Chuck Berry put it, "rock and roll is here to stay."

Nicholson, Stuart. Is Jazz Dead? If you watched the ten-hour Ken Burns TV documentary, you would obviously think so, since eight of the hours dealt with jazz before World War 2. Another bit of evidence is that jazz has been enshrined as art with its own space in New York's Lincoln Center. Nicholson shows that in France, the Caribbean and other parts of the world jazz has shed the "art" stigma and thrives as a vital force in the contemporary world. Nicholson suggests that it could also happen here.

Duckworth, William. Virtual Music: How the Web got Wired for Sound. Duckworth explains his "Cathedral" project which culminated in a 2001 24-hour live webcast concert with sounds streamed from around the world that won the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award for composition. The book also traces the development of interactive music from Erik Satie through John Cage, Brian Eno, Moby and Scanner.

Randall, Annie J. editor. Music, Power, and Politics. The thirteen authors draw on examples from Civil War-era USA, women in punk music, Nazi Germany, and resistance in modern day Iran, and more to show how music is used in socio-political struggles.

EDITORIAL NOTE

If you would like a new book noted, please send the publication information along with a descriptive press release (not evaluative review) to me at:
richard.a.peterson@vanderbilt.edu.

The word "descriptive" should be underlined. Publishers seem to be relying on well-meaning but clueless interns to write for them. The result is vacuous boiler-plate. The following is the full description of a book taken from the 2005 catalogue of a major publisher.

"[Title of the book] provides an accessible introduction to the field of [title of the book] through broad and in-depth coverage of the main theories and methods currently employed by scholars active in the field. The volume consists of newly commissioned essays, written by internationally recognized scholars, in three areas: theoretical perspectives, methodological perspectives, and topical areas. Each section contains an overview, and each chapter includes an annotated bibliography and discussion questions."

Such copy as this could be written simply by glancing at the table of contents. I have not noted this potentially important book because I would have nothing helpful to say. Authors can save themselves from such botchery and bad punctuation by submitting to publishers a brief abstract and a briefer summary of the work.

Announcements

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

Theory and Society plans to publish a special issue in 2006 on Jean-Paul Sartre in honor of the 2005 centenary of his birth. The special issue will be co-edited by David Swartz (dswartz@bu.edu) and Vera Zolberg (zolbergv@newschool.edu). The journal invites manuscript submissions that address in an original way aspects of Sartre's life and work that relate to his view of society in light of the specific cultural/social/political context in which he worked, and the role that writers, and intellectuals more generally, can play in modern societies. The working deadline for manuscript submissions is December 2005.

ARTICLE OF INTEREST

The Spring 2005 issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly* (vol. 69, no. 1) contains an article in the sociology of culture: "Elite Revisionists and Popular Beliefs: Christopher Columbus, Hero or Villain?," by Howard Schuman, Barry Schwartz, and Hannah D'Arcy.

Reminder:

"Culture Days" at ASA are Sunday, Aug. 14 and Monday, Aug. 15.

Check out the program at--

www.asanet.org.