profane that spell out the rhythms of culture, always a step ahead of its definitions and descriptions.

The word 'culture' belongs to the histories of Western European languages. If we want to move into the elusive phenomenon in other places, below the shifting internal line of cultural difference, we will not look for translations and approximations of the word. Such synonyms carry on their back the impulse to translate from the European, which is a characteristic of the colonized intelligentsia under imperialism, and thus is the condition as well as the effect of that differentiating internal line. They will not let us go below it. We must rather learn a non-European language well enough to be able to enter it without ready reference to a European one. We may discover Creole versions of the word 'culture' which will complicate our argument. But they are neither the same word nor its translation.

Anthropologists and comparative historians learn field languages but customarily do not enter them so that they become languages of reference. Cultural Studies investigators typically do not relate to their native languages or the languages of their immediate or remote places of origin as languages of reference. The only route to learning languages in this way is through instruction in reading the verbal art in these languages and instruction in philosophizing through ethical systems in them. However, this would require educational reform.

Such efforts might make us realize that every cultural process, even in the belief system and ritual sector, moves because human beings imagine and create fictions of all kinds, including the rational fictions that extend philosophy; and that it is not possible for one of us to have access to an exhaustive sense of all the cultures of the world. Study of diversity in metropolitan space should make us aware of the limits to the production of cultural information outside the metropolis.

Let me qualify everything I have said by suggesting that in the field of culture alive there are no mistakes. Cultural continuity, made possible by cultural change, is assured by cultural explanations, coming from all sides, insiders and outsiders, rulers and ruled. The study of cultures is part of culture – the anthropologist's picture of elders initiating young men and women, as well as these very words you read. Culture is a place where different explanations always collide, not just by races and classes, but by genders and generations. Culture is its own explanations. It is possible that the assumption of a collectivity sharing a culture is not an essential truth, but a millennial increment of the need to explain.

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# Culture and Cultural Analysis

*Michael M.J. Fischer*

**Keywords** cultural critique, global restratification, (post)structuralism, reconstruction after trauma, religious returns

Without a differentiated and relational notion of the cultural (the arts, media, styles, religions, value-orientations, ideologies, imaginaries, world-views, soul, and the like), the social sciences would be crippled, reducing social action to notions of pure instrumentality. When singularized, frozen, or nominalized, 'culture' can be a dangerous concept, subject to fallacies of pejorative and discriminatory hypostatizations (we have reason, they have culture) or immobilized variables (their culture is composed of x features). The modern social science use of the term 'culture' is rooted in the historical milieus that arose with the dismantling of the religious and aristocratic legitimations of feudal and patrimonial regimes, and the agons of Third World particularistic 'cultures' against First World claims of universal 'civilization'. As a counterpoint to definitions of culture as the 'best' productions in aesthetics, knowledge, and morals, the anthropological understanding removes the hegemony of cultural valuation from elites with its erasure of attention to demotic and subaltern forms, and instead asserts the importance of understanding the relations between all cultural forms at play and in contestation within social formations.

## The 1970s

Cultural studies, (post)structuralism, and symbolic or interpretive anthropology transformed cultural analysis in the 1970s, along with feminism, media and performance studies, new historicism, and early studies of decolonization and new nations.

*Symbolic anthropology* drew upon the quasi-cybernetic paradigm of Harvard's Social Relations Department under Talcott Parsons, the semiotics of C.S. Peirce, R. Birdwhistle, and T. Sebeok, structural linguistics (field linguistics classes taught systematic methods of elicitation and analysis of cultural units), Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigms and Noam Chomsky's generative grammar. The core course in the Anthropology graduate program at the University of Chicago was organized into Cultural Systems, Social Systems, and Psychological Systems. David Schneider (founder of the Society for Cultural Anthropology) argued that the cultural system provided the principles of organization for the social system; Clifford Geertz (1973) argued that the cultural system was logico-meaningfully integrated, the social system functionally integrated, and the psychological system psycho-dynamically integrated. Geertz thus wrote essays on religion, ideology, common sense, art, and moral thinking as 'cultural systems'. Schneider argued that the distinction between etic and emic could not be sustained, thereby making all systems of thought, native and scientific, merely variant modes of cultural accounting. Victor Turner analyzed the Ndembu 'forest of symbols' with a widely imitated combination of structural-functional (Durkheim, van Gennep) analysis of mythic charters and ritual process, Freudian fusions of corporeal-emotive and cognitive-symbolic poles in symbol formation, and Kenneth Burke's performative notions of the rhetorics and grammars of motives.

The turn towards *interpretive anthropology* led by Geertz and Turner followed from the instability of the etic/emic and the cultural/social system distinctions, and drew upon the hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions of Dilthey, Weber, Freud, Schutz, Ricoeur (who also taught at Chicago), and Mircea Eliade (also at Chicago).

Meanwhile in fall 1966, structuralism and poststructuralism arrived simultaneously in the United States via *The Structuralism Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Science of Man* conference at the Johns Hopkins University with Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, Lacan, Barthes, and others, an event that would lead to a dominant strand of cultural work of the next generation [Macksey and Donato, 1972]. In France, structuralism and post-structuralism were modalities of French response to the traumas of World War II, Americanization, and the influx of North Africans after the Algerian War of Independence. Lévi-Strauss brought together the enthusiasm of post-war thinking about set theory, linguistics, and cybernetics with an elegy and reconstructive method for aboriginal cultures destroyed by colonialism in Australia and in the Americas. He and his fellow structuralists (Georges Dumézil, Jean-Paul Vernant, Michel Détienne, Pierre Vidal-Naquet) transformed the study of Greek mythology and myth studies in general. No longer could anyone identify deities with single virtues (god of wisdom) without considering that deity's structural position vis-à-vis others; no longer could one version of a myth be privileged without considering the entire set of transformations that a mythic structure makes possible. Lévi-Strauss seemed at the time to vanquish (in favor of deep, pervasive, regenerative mythic and social structures) the attempt by Jean-Paul Sartre to fuse voluntaristic, politically engagé, existentialism with the inertial forces of history understood through Marxist lenses. Lacan, the early Foucault, and Bourdieu were received in the United States as elaborations of this culturalist structuralism.

Foucault's insights into disciplinary power and the birth of the clinic may have had something to do with a kind of Freudian *nachträglich* or post facto recognition of his experiences as an adolescent: the reformatory to instill heterosexual codes, and watching compliance to the Nazis in his native Poitiers ('we all have a fascism in our heads'; Raber, in Herman, 2004). Derrida and Lyotard were more explicit about the legacies of World War II. Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition*, Evan Carton points out:

> turns – between chapter 9 'Narratives of the Legitimation of Knowledge', and chapter 10, 'Delegitimation' – on a paragraph devoted to Heidegger's notorious 1933 Rector's Address, . . . and the new chapter begins, 'In contemporary society . . . [where] the grand narrative has lost its credibility'. (Carton, in Herman, 2004: 24)

The essay is about the coming of the computer and information age in which local language games and performativities will have more force than past universalist ideologies for mass mobilization (in the name of History, Reason, or Progress), and where incommensurabilities among language games and value systems will challenge two centuries of standardized linguistic, religious, educational nation-building (as France copes with Muslim North African immigrants). Similarly, Derrida in his first major work (*Of Grammatology*) takes on the 'ethnocentrism which everywhere and always, had controlled the concept of writing . . . from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger'

and introduces the image of ashes that would grow as a motif in his corpus, quoting Edmund Jabes, 'Où est le centre? Sous la cendre' ('Where is the center? Under ashes') (Derrida, 1967: 24).

The stress in interpretive anthropology and poststructuralism on culture as contested meanings created, negotiated, and performed in locally polyvocal contexts dovetailed also with the rise of *Cultural Studies*. In Britain, Cultural Studies arose at Birmingham University from literary studies, branching out under the leadership of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall into youth and popular culture, ethnicity, hybridity, race, and class cultures. In the USA, Cultural Studies grew out of American Studies redirected by anthropologists and folklorists (initially at the University of Pennsylvania), and from labor and social history as in the work of George Lipsitz (1990, 2001). For a time, centers for Cultural Studies sprang up to create interdisciplinary work between the humanities and social sciences, until the field was eventually reimperialized by English and Literature Departments, losing not only its ethnographic and social science edge, but its fledgling efforts to work in languages other than English (ironically the language of most writing about postcolonialism) except in Comparative Literature Departments.

## The 1980s

The 1980s produced revised modes of cultural analysis, followed in the 1990s by changing infrastructures (media, environment, biotechnology, and violence) that took on new cultural salience. The 1980s' revisions included new approaches to using ethnography to investigate and map the changing nature of cultural and social forms at the end of the 20th century (Marcus and Fischer, 1986); inquiries into the multiple disciplinary tools that could be employed in making cultural analysis more trenchant and revealing (Clifford and Marcus, 1986); the incorporation of transdisciplinary approaches (feminism, deconstruction, film and media studies, new historicism, science and technology studies, cyborg anthropology); the efforts to revive area and global studies with fresher ideas about how to do multi-sited ethnographies of mutually dependent activities in dispersed parts of larger systems or networks; and inquiries into second-order modernization and the risk society (Beck, 1986; Fortun, 2001; Petryna, 2002). New journals propelled these initiatives, including: *Cultural Anthropology* (vol. 1, no. 1., 1986), *Public Culture* (vol. 1, no. 1, 1988), *Positions* (vol. 1, 1992), *Visual Anthropology* (1987), *Subaltern Studies* (vol. 1, 1982), *Representations* (1983), and the eight-volume annual *Late Editions* (1993–2000).

## The 1990s

In the 1990s, a new experimental, recombinant, mode of cultural thought, writing and visualization took material shape, through the combination of commercial biotechnologies (shaped by post-1980 legal, financial, and technological infrastructures) and information technologies (particularly after the World Wide Web in 1994 and linked databases made the Internet an everyday medium). Lyotard's 1979 speculations on the postmodern condition of knowledge and the role of the computer in making information available suddenly seemed both quaint and prescient: quaint in failing to foresee the many-to-many communication uses, the way just-in-time accounting could reorganize the business world, and the way email would speed up the pace of work and introduce new stratifications; yet prescient in the apperception of new local language games and formats, including increased communicative reach through flows, codes, and performativity rather than single propositions or arguments. Compare also: Gregory Ulmer's efforts to think Derrida through electronic media [1985, 1989, 1994], Avital Ronell's re-readings of telephony in Alexander Graham Bell's America versus the place of technology in Heidegger's Germany [1989], Friedrich Kittler's contrast between the cultural formations carried by standardized German in 1800 and the gramophone, film, and typewriter in 1900 [1985, 1986], and the efforts by Mark Poster, Jacques Derrida, and Michael Fischer to rethink the oral versus literate cultures debate (Goody, 1977; Ong, 1982) for new electronic modes of communication [Poster, 1990, 2001; Derrida, 1996, 2001; Fischer, 2001, 2003).

As restratification processes proceeded in the aftermath of the implosion of the Soviet Union and the decline of the bipolar world, violence and religious legitimations repackaged themselves. Derrida suggested that globalatinazation through the capital concentration and mergers of transnational media conglomerates would make Islamic and other 'fundamentalist' resistance movements appropriate and be undone by the new media, like a kind of auto-immune disease, intense, virulent and violent, very much like AIDS, the plague of these years whose dynamics also gave rise to new modes of cultural work, with activists pushing for changes in drug approval processes, using the Internet to challenge the hierarchical relations between doctors and patients, insurance companies and beneficiaries, and the entire healthcare system. Globalatinazation, AIDS (and SARS, multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, mad cow disease, and other viruses), 1990s' financial crises moving rapidly across the globe from East Asia to South

America, and worries about climate warming, all made the 1980s cultural notions of alternative modernities seem, if not quaint, more relational than ever, differentially connected to the global patchwork of political and cultural economies. Ethnic and religious warfare intensified and led to renewed analyses of the limits and weaknesses of constitutional forms of governance and the lack of local rootedness of human rights and global humanitarian industries.

## Circa 2005

We live today under the sign of the film *Safar-e Qandahar* by the Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, and its image of prostheses being parachuted from Red Cross helicopters to Afghan men running on crutches to catch them. Under this sign, at least three sites intersect of deep play (overinvestments of money, power, fantasy, hope and fear, putting our existential, ethical, and social stakes at risk): (1) the reconstruction of society in the wake of social trauma and structural violence; (2) immersion in telemedia that affect access to information, formation of public sentiments, and manipulation of the public sphere, governance, and personal subjectivities; and (3) changes in life science institutions involving both profound commercialization of biological research, and efforts of patient groups using the Internet and other new information technology tools to force accountability on the institutions of science and what is made to live and who is let die.

Just as, Lyotard might say, there is no Jew and we are all jews (female, queer, normalized, neurotic, vulnerable, struggling for recognition, autonomy, rights, community, place, citizenship), so there is no culture, and all we do is cultural. Culture is not a variable; culture is relational, it is elsewhere or in passage, it is where meaning is woven and renewed, often through gaps and silences, and forces beyond the conscious control of individuals, and yet the space where individual and institutional social responsibility and ethical struggle take place. Cultural anthropology operates in a set of third spaces: where new multicultural ethics are evolving out of demands that cultures attend to one another, and within technoscientific networks where the demands of the face of the other, history, and autobiographical figurations counter the reduction of all to the same. The challenge of cultural analysis is to develop translation and mediation tools for helping make visible the differences of interests, access, power, needs, desires, and philosophical perspective. Above all, as we begin to face new kinds of ethical dilemmas stemming from developments in biotechnologies, expansive information and image databases, and ecological interactions, we are challenged to develop differentiated cultural analyses that can help articulate new social institutions for an evolving public sphere and civil society.

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# *Bildung*

*Josef Bleicher*

**Keywords** aesthetics, *Bildung*, education, *Kultur*, morality, self-formation, *Weimar Klassik*

The concept of *Bildung* (educative self-formation) may well be the most grandiose thought to emerge in the 18th century, according to Gadamer (1975), who considers it the guiding concept underlying the rise of the humanities. In tandem with them, it engendered the movement that evolved new aesthetic and moral standards and ideals and also challenged the orientation towards a narrow Enlightenment rationalism in the name of the rounded *Bildung* of the individual. This notion of *Bildung* later informed the education system in Germany with its emphasis on integrating a wide range of subjects and competences within a framework established with reference to the *Vorbild* (model) of the classic languages and authors. Here it followed the precepts of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who succinctly stated that 'The true purpose of the human being is the Bildung of all his strengths into one integrated whole.'

In the 19th century, while accompanying the transformations related to the industrialization of Germany with critical commentary, the meaning of *Bildung* itself was transformed. At the cultural level, it found itself trying to maintain the inheritance of humanist ideals in face of the dehumanizing effects of rapid industrialization, and the transition of Germany from a *Kulturstaat* (state identity based on culture) to a modern, economically driven nation-state belatedly clamouring for a place on the world stage. *Bildung* thus became streamlined into *Ausbildung* (training, expertise) to answer the need for skilled manpower, and thus increasingly approximated the notion of 'education' prevalent in other European countries. Concomitantly, at the socio-political level, sharpening social differentiation accompanying the modernization of Germany saw its remaining humanistic essence become the canonized, elitist preserve of the *Bildungsbürgertum* (that segment of the bourgeoisie defined by the accumulation and use of cultural capital).

The conceptual history of *Bildung* parallels that of *Kultur*, as the micro- and macro-levels of cultural self-formation. Interestingly, both these emblematic concepts arise out of a naturalistic