A Message from the Chair
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Performance and Counter-Power (2): The Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Sphere[*]

The modern civil rights movement began with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955-56, a drama that brought Martin Luther King into the spotlight and captured the attention of Northern communicative media and citizens. After Montgomery, King and his colleagues formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). For the next four years, this strongly networked organization devoted itself to winning voting rights by launching campaigns to register and educate potential Black voters. These campaigns were bound to fail. They aimed at achieving regulatory intervention and political power directly in the South without first addressing communicative institutions and achieving influence in the North. Movement leaders learned the hard way that they would have to put first things first. They would have to mount a full dress, years-long social drama for the benefit of the civil audience in the North. Only if they succeeded in this communicative effort could they produce the regulatory intervention – first via voting, then via positive law and office regulation — that eventually would give them political power on the local scene.

The critical learning experience that changed leaders' minds was the sit-in campaign that black college students launched in 1960. As a result of this spectacularly successful movement, lunch counters were desegregated in Greensborough and Nashville and hundreds of other Southern cities. The most important effect of the sit-ins, however, was to introduce what came to be called "direct nonviolent action." With this new tactic, the civil rights movement's understanding of itself was permanently changed. Without ever explicitly acknowledging it, leaders discarded the Ghandian approach to nonviolence. For Ghandhi and early movement leaders, non-

Editor's Note

Please let me know your ideas for submissions!

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The Power of Patriotic Performances: A Comment on Jeffrey Alexander
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As I write, hundreds of thousands of recent immigrants and supporters reportedly are preparing to stay away from work and school and take to the streets in support of federal legislation that would give many undocumented workers (chiefly from Latin America) a chance to achieve legal residency and employment status and eventually "earn their way to citizenship" if they choose. The planned strikes of May 1, 2006 are but the latest installment of a major political drama that has been building for several weeks as throngs of demonstrators have made their presence felt in numerous cities in towns in nearly every region of the United States.

Rarely since the civil rights and anti-war protests of the 1960s has this country witnessed the emergence of a social movement of comparable scale and scope. There are of course important differences of context between the two periods. Unlike

Sociability and the Transliterative Practices of Occupational Subculture
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It is that season of the year. Sociologists are making hotel reservations and confirming travel plans to gather en masse for the annual meetings of the ASA. We will pack our bags, tweak our talks and make plans for dinner and drinks with friends and colleagues who, in their everyday lives, are normally scattered across North America and beyond. With the theme of this year's meetings, *Great Divides: Transgressing Boundaries*, it is perhaps appropriate that a vast flock of sociologists will be crossing national borders into Montreal, Canada to convene, rather than travelling within the United States and acting as host to those sociologists who come from abroad. Of course, the border between Canada and the United States is fairly porous (both culturally and in terms of travel and trade restrictions), and any 'great divide' is more a matter of active bound-

violence had been an end in itself; they believed that love and tolerance could alter the consciousness of the oppressor. After 1960, nonviolence became a tactic, a means to a dramaturgical end. Its function became, not to efface the anti-civil violence of racist officials but rather to provoke it, allowing movement activists to draw attention to their own civil composure in turn.

The drama-producing status of direct nonviolent action became evident in the next year, in the "Freedom Rides" of 1961. For several weeks, the leaders of CORE (Congress for Racial Equality) and SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) organized a "protest bus" to test laws outlawing discrimination in public transportation throughout the South. Every few days, the riders on this Freedom bus would be brutally beaten, sometimes nearly to the point of death, by the white vigilante posses that gathered to receive them in the bus stations of the deep South. This campaign did not succeed in making the South enforce its antidiscrimination laws. It did succeed, however, in providing for Northern whites an extraordinarily compelling melodrama about racial power, suffering, and heroic justice. This dramaturgical power was suggested by the fact the Freedom bus eventually came to be filled with more journalists and national guardsmen than movement activists, and in the end was trailed by many more carloads of the same.

The endgame of these serial civil dramas was to so deepen emotional identification and symbolic extension between Southern blacks and Northern whites that powerful Northern officials were compelled to undertake the very serious political costs of what came to be known as "the second Reconstruction." The 1963 Birmingham campaign marked the tipping point, after which the Northern civil sphere became so communicatively engorged that it did indeed transmogrify into regulative intervention.

The year before Birmingham, in 1962, the movement had suffered a disastrous political and symbolic defeat in Albany, Georgia. The black protest leaders learned from this experience. In their effort to penetrate the symbolic space of the Northern civil sphere, they vowed, in the future, to leave much less to chance. Until Birmingham, King and his organization had entered local civil rights contests rather haphazardly, leveraging the black hero's national prestige and the civil deference he commanded into dramatic power over an ongoing flow of events. After the Albany fiasco, protest leaders realized that, in order to frame white violence effectively, they would have to exert significantly more control over their own performance and, if possible, over their antagonists' as well.

The very choice of Birmingham as the target for this exercise in systematic provocation reveals the movement's heightened self-consciousness. Birmingham was picked, not because of its potential for progressive reform, but for the very opposite reason. As a deeply reactionary city, its chief law enforcement officer, "Bull" Connor, had a serious problem containing his temper and maintaining self control. Only if there were a clear and decisive space between civil good and anti-civil evil could the conflict in the street be translated into a symbolic contest, and only if it became such a symbolic context could the protest gain its intended effect. Agonism is essential to the plot of every successful performance.

In the days leading up to the campaign, the dramatic tension between protagonists and antagonists reached to a fever pitch. Ralph Abernathy, King's principal assistant, promised "we're going to rock this town like it has never been rocked before." Bull Connor retorted that "blood would run in the streets" of Birmingham before he would allow such protests to proceed. Providing an overarching narrative for this imminent clash, King drew upon the book of Exodus, the iconic parable of the Jews' divinely inspired protest against oppression. The SCLC leader publicly vowed to lead demonstrations until "Pharaoh lets God's people go."

Despite elaborate preparation, however, the social drama failed to ignite, and the performance did not develop as planned. The demonstrations began on cue, and King went to jail. Yet Birmingham's black civil society did not rise up in solidarity and opposition, and the surrounding white civil sphere in the North became neither indignant nor immediately involved. Even King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail," which was later to be accorded canonical status in American protest literature, failed to generate any significant response from the Northern media, much less from their audience.

The routine of daily marches, arrests, and nightly mass meetings continued into early May, but the national reporters begin to drift away from Birmingham for lack of "news." It became increasingly difficult to mobilize support beyond the small core group of dedicated activists. The problem was that the sequence of demonstration, arrest, and mass meeting was, indeed, becoming routine. It would have to be disrupted by something "abnormal." An event would have to be staged that would have the power to create a breach in the ongoing social order.

After intensive discussion and self-doubt, movement leaders made the decision to allow Birmingham's school children to enter the fray. In the historical literature, the motivations and the repercussions of this decision are typically represented in quantitative and material terms, as making up for the falling numbers of adult participants. Much more significant, however, was the potential for altering the moral balance of the confrontation. Children would appear even more well-meaning, sincere, and innocent than the movement's nonviolent but powerful and determined adults, and this greater vulnerability would provide an even sharper contrast with the irrational, violent repression that the movement intended to provoke from Southern officials.

When the "children's crusade" began, and hundreds of young people were herded off everyday to jail, the drama did, in fact, sharply intensify. Attendance skyrocketed at the nightly mass meetings, and a sense of crisis was in the air. Birmingham was back on the front pages, and the local confrontation had succeeded in projecting itself into the symbolic space of the wider civil sphere. As the long time local leader of Birmingham's freedom movement, Fred Shuttlesworth, proclaimed to the overflow crowd who showed up in his church the evening after the children were first jailed, "the whole world is watching Birmingham tonight."

It was the pressure created by this intensifying external scrutiny, not simply the objective constraint of the city's jails being filled to overflowing, that managed to incite Birmingham's bad tempered sheriff. Bull Connor finally unleashed the repressive violence that underlay white domina-

tion. Stepping outside the constraints of civil society, he resorted to physical force, turning fire hoses on the protestors, setting police dogs loose on them, and allowing his officers to use electric cattle prods. Because of his local power, the sheriff thought he could act with impunity. Yet, while he did succeed in gaining control of the immediate situation, he could not control the effect that this exercise of unbridled power would have on the civil audience at one remove. The sheriff ignored duality at his peril. Bull Connor won the physical battle but lost the symbolic war.

By engaging in public violence, these Southern white officials allowed themselves to become antagonists in a civil drama written and directed by the black protest movement. The melodrama presented Southern evil in an almost gothic way. Graphic reports of horrendous, lopsided physical confrontations between civil good and anti-civil evil were broadcast over television screens and splashed across front pages throughout the Northern civil sphere. Fiercely rushing water from high pressure fire hoses swept little girls and boys dressed in their Sunday best hundreds of feet across Birmingham's downtown square. As they were pinned against a brick wall, the civil interpreters from the North transmitted the children's screams of terror and their pathetic efforts to shield themselves from the violent force. Growling German shepherds and their police handlers in dark sun glasses lunged forward into the youthful crowd. Northern journalists, both reporters and photographers, recorded the viciousness of the animals and the arrogant indolence of the men, and they captured the fright, helplessness, and righteous rage of their nonviolent victims. The emotional resonance these photos generated in the Northern civil sphere was palpable, and became only more profound with the passing of time. From being symbols that directed the viewer to an actual event, the photographs of the confrontation became icons, evocative embodiments of the fearful consequences of anti-civil force in and of themselves.

It is important not to forget that these media messages were representations, not literal transcriptions, of what transpired in Birmingham during these critical days. Even if the events seemed to "imprint" themselves on the minds of observers, in fact they needed to be interpreted first. The struggle for interpretive control was waged just as fiercely as the struggle in the streets, and its outcome divided just as cleanly along local versus national lines. In their own representations, Birmingham's local media completely inverted the indignant interpretive frame provided by media in the North. For example, when the *Birmingham News* reported on the fire hosing of demonstrators, it presented a photograph of an elderly black woman strolling alongside a park, holding an umbrella to protect herself from the mist produced by the gushing fire hoses nearby. "Just another showery day for a Negro stroller," read the caption below the photo, offering the further observation that the woman "appears undisturbed by disturbances" from the riot nearby. Headlining statements by city officials, the local media broadcast the Birmingham Mayor's condemnation of the "irresponsible and unthinking agitators" who had made "tools" of children and turned Birmingham's whites into "innocent victims."

For Northern communicative institutions and their audiences, however, the linkage of anti-civil violence to white, not black power proved much more persuasive. Portraying the black demonstrators as helpless victims at the mercy of vicious, inhuman force, these reports evoked feelings of pity and terror. For the audience in the surrounding Northern civil sphere, in other words, the narrative of tragic melodrama was firmly in place. Northern whites' identification with the victims triggered feelings of civic outrage and moved them to symbolic protest. Angry phone calls were made to Congressional representatives, indignant letters fired off to the editorial pages of newspapers and magazines. In the *Washington Post*, an angry citizen from Forest Heights, Maryland, poured out her personal feelings of outrage and shame. Her simple and heartfelt letter provides an eloquent expression of the indignation she evidently shared with many other white Americans in the North. From the perspective presented here, it is of particular interest that she explains her outrage as motivated by her identification with the black protestors, to whom she effortlessly extends her own ethical and civic principles.

Now I've seen everything. The news photographer who took the picture of a police dog lunging at a human being has shown us in unmistakable terms how low we have sunk and will surely have awakened a feeling of shame in all who have seen that picture, who have any notion of human dignity. This man being lunged at was not a criminal being tracked down to prevent his murdering other men; he was, and is, a man. If he can have a beast deliberately urged to lunge at him, then so can any man, woman or child in the United States. I don't wish to have a beast deliberately urged to lunge at me or my children and therefore I don't wish to have beasts lunging at the citizens of Birmingham or any other place. If the United States doesn't stand for some average decent level of human dignity, what does it stand for?

The experience of moral outrage was so widely shared in the days after Birmingham that it set the stage for regulatory intervention and fundamental civil repair. Martin Luther King declared that "the hour has come for the Federal Government to take a forthright stand on segregation in the United States," and President Kennedy responded by assuring the public that he was "closely monitoring events." The President sent Burke Marshall, the head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, down to Birmingham. With Marshall's prodding, settlement negotiations were begun. In the eye of the hurricane of communicative mobilization, white and black leaders for the first time spoke cooperatively face-to-face. As the local negotiations continued, high officers from the surrounding civil sphere — President Kennedy and his cabinet secretaries – placed calls to strategically placed local businessmen and to corporate executives outside the South who could exercise leverage on the local elite. These interventions eventually produced a pact detailing goals and timetables for ending Birmingham's economic segregation.

While these progressive local reforms certainly deserve praise, it was to the community beyond the city, indeed beyond the region, that the Birmingham demonstrations were aimed. It was their success in mobilizing the North's more democratic and, potentially at least, much more powerful civil sphere that made Birmingham into "Birmingham," a watershed in the history of the social movement for civil justice in the United States. "Birmingham" would enter into the collective

conscience of American society more powerfully and more indelibly than any other single event in the history of the movement for civil rights. In the days immediately following the Birmingham settlement, a weary President Kennedy summed up this new world of public opinion in a complaint to his Majority Leader in the Senate: "I mean, it's just in everything. I mean, this has become everything." Three months later, a White House official remarked to the Associated Press, "This hasn't been the same kind of world since May." In 1966, Bobby Kennedy recalled the period during an interview. "Everybody looks back on it and thinks that everybody was aroused about this for the last three years," Bobby remarked. "But what aroused people generally in the country and aroused the press," he insisted, "was the Birmingham riots in May of 1963."

The effect of this dramatic deepening of Northern white identification with protesting Southern blacks is clear. It was a profound arousal of civil consciousness, which "Birmingham" simultaneously triggered and reflected, that pushed the civil sphere's elected representatives in the direction of regulatory reform. That summer, the Kennedy administration drew up far-reaching legislation, submitted to Congress as *The Civil Riqhts Act of 1963*. With this action, the symbolic space of communicative mobilization became transformed into the details of law and sanction that would eventually allow massive regulatory intervention in the Southern states.

It is a matter of historical debate whether this civil rights legislation could have been passed without Kennedy's own martyrdom in November, 1963, and the accession to the Presidency of Lyndon Johnson, the former Senate Majority Leader who was a master of the legislative craft. That the very introduction of this far-reaching legislation represented a fundamental fork in the road, however, should be beyond dispute. In fact, despite the momentous events in the two years that transpired between Birmingham and Senate passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, these events can be properly understood only if they are seen as iteration, as amplifying and filling in the symbolic and institutional framework that had become crystallized by the early summer of 1963.

ENDNOTE

* In this second section of a two-part essay, the first section of which appeared in *Culture*'s Winter issue, I present an empirical case study that follows up themes in "Performance and Power," which appeared in the Fall, 2005, issue of *Culture*. I draw here from Part III of *The Civil Sphere*, which will be published early this summer by Oxford University Press.

Comment on Alexander's Performance Theory, continued

the 1960s civil rights activists, the current pro-immigration demonstrators cannot yet lay claim to an unfulfilled "promissory note" issued by constitutional amendment long ago, although both movements have involved calls for legal rights on behalf of persons whose moral entitlement to such rights was or is energetically contested by opponents. At the same time, there are some striking parallels. Like the flag-burning protesters of the Vietnam era, today's demonstrators, many of whom are evidently foreign nationals, have engaged in symbolic rituals—the flying of Mexican flags and the release of recordings of "The Star-Spangled Banner" sung in Spanish—that rendered their political loyalties and identifications vulnerable to questioning by political opponents. In the case of the Vietnam protests, charges of disloyalty were so successful and enduring that they helped defeat a Democratic presidential candidate (both a Vietnam veteran and a noted critic of the war) more than 30 years later.

Organizers of the current demonstrations seem to have learned their lesson quickly. Within a few days, they were reportedly handing out thousands of American flags to arriving participants, thereby diluting the confusing impression conveyed by the display of foreign flags alone. In doing so, however, they also risked raising the scrim and revealing the degree to which the demonstrations, though not centrally orchestrated, nonetheless reflect careful planning to help ensure that the message they communicate will find a receptive audience among the majority of enfranchised citizens. Whether opponents' charges of underlying disloyalty and dissimulation will undermine the current efforts remains to be seen. Yet the previous successes of the Civil Rights Movement remain a powerful cultural script for others to invoke and with which they can improvise in promoting new causes under new historical and political conditions.

What all these examples make clear is that, for a social movement to succeed, leaders must pay close attention to the impression they and their followers convey to audiences in a position to help realize, or thwart, the movement's goals. In short, modern social movement organizers must be skillful producers and directors of political theater if they are to persuade a national audience that their cause has merit. For sociologists who wish to understand the power of patriotic protests, something like a cultural pragmatics of political performance is arguably essential.

Enter Jeffrey Alexander. In a series of articles (Alexander 2004a, 2004b) and two recent essays (Alexander 2005, 2006) in these pages, Alexander has proposed a "cultural pragmatics" of social interaction as performance and sought to extend this model to the analysis of power relations and political stagings in a variety of contexts, including the Civil Rights Movement, terrorism, and other cases. Although he describes cultural pragmatics as "a new approach to social action as social performance" (Alexander 2005, p. 1), he is fully aware that the pragmaticist analysis of social action cum performance is hardly unprecedented, even as applied to the sociology of collective protest and social movements, let alone as a more general mode of inquiry (Alexander 2004a, 2005).[1] Yet, it does seem fair to say that the sense of novelty and excitement surrounding kindred projects like sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication, and social drama à la Gennep and Turner passed their peak some twenty years ago (cf. Alexander 2004a, p. 547), when I was still in college and Alexander was on his

third or fourth path-breaking volume on social theory. It is arguably time to recover some of this valuable legacy, and Alexander makes just such an argument with greater erudition and analytic subtlety than most other sociologists (including this one) could hope to do.

Since Alexander has already done the hard work of elaborating and justifying his program, I will confine myself here to the easier role of an admiring critic with an ongoing interest in the cultural dimensions of politics. In the remainder of this essay, my critique will be threefold: (1) The theatrical metaphor, though useful as a guide to modeling social behavior or human interaction under *particular* conditions, is too limited a frame to describe *all* social action or interaction as such. Put another way, if all the world were to be described as a "stage," then we would need another word for the real stage. (2) To be valid, performance theory should start by acknowledging the difference among three kinds of *settings:* the theater proper (based on make-believe), theater-*like* settings (in which authenticity is essentially contested), and the relatively unstaged, "authentic" settings of everyday life. All can involve "performance" in some sense, but this is not always the same as pretense. (3) Within the middle category, taking cultural pragmatics seriously will require recognition of the variety of empirical *genres* of political performances—for example, "patriotic" versus contentious stagings, as well as the hybrid genre I have called "consentful contention" (Straughn 2005).

Performance as Metaphor and Model. Whatever else it is to mean, the concept of "performance" implies a basic analytic distinction between actor and role. More specifically, it implies that a real human being, or *person*, is attempting to enact certain characteristics of an assumed *persona* before an audience composed of one or more others (who may or may not include confederate actors on the same "stage").

According to Alexander, the basic aim of any social performance is to convince an audience that the *persona* adopted is in some sense "genuine," rather than merely feigned. Generally speaking, the purpose of a performance has been realized if the basic ingredients of staging—including the relevant ("background") representations shared by actor and audience, the ("foreground") script, the written text (if any), and the enactment itself (*mise-en-scène*)—converge or "fuse" in conveying the desired impression (or "cultural extension") upon the audience. The precise criteria for performative success need not be well defined once and for all, but in a given instance their fulfillment is contingent in large part on the skill of the actor(s) and other contributors to the *mise-en-scène*. "Successful performance," he writes, "depends on the ability to convince others that one's performance is true, with all the ambiguities that the notion of aesthetic truth implies" (Alexander 2004a, p. 530). When fusion occurs, the performance will also induce a sense of "psychological identification" with the characters on stage among members of the audience (Alexander 2004a; 2005). When it fails, performances will "seem artificial and contrived, less like rituals than like performances in the pejorative sense" (Alexander 2004a, p. 529).

If this (admittedly simplified) summary of Alexander's basic model is accurate, however, then it can be readily shown that, to qualify as a "performance," social action must meet certain pragmatic conditions that cannot be called universal, even in modern or complex societies.[2] While the distinction between actor and role, between person and persona, does seem to describe many everyday situations, it does not do justice to those others in which individuals are behaving more or less unselfconsciously, even in the presence of others. Thus, in certain settings (as when fleeing a burning building or engaging in athletic competition), action or interaction may become so "automatic"—actor and action so merged in "flow" (cf. Alexander 2004a, p. 548)—as to eliminate all but the most residual element of artifice or impression management. More commonly, it may happen that the "role" a social actor is seeking to "enact" is simply one that she or he believes to be *real*, in the sense that the "persona" performed is identical with one's own (idealized) self-concept. In the latter case, "in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves—the role we are striving to live up to—this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be" (Park, 1950 #2355, p. 250, quoted in Goffman 1959, p. 19). Yet when self-concept and role are identical, in what meaningful sense can we still speak of "performance"? Does it not make more sense to posit that social action is at times *like* a theater actor's activity on stage, and at other times more or less unstaged? Can the theatrical frame (Goffman 1974) ever be more than a partial metaphor, at best shedding light on certain stage-*like* contexts of social interaction?

Performance, Simulation, and Authenticity. Alexander does not see the theatrical frame as just a metaphor, of course. He wants performance to be an analytic model for social action as such. Like Habermas, he interprets the "performance of a [theater] troupe before the eyes of third persons" as "only a special case" of social performance writ large (Habermas 1984, p. 90). Unlike Habermas, Alexander justifies this choice in part by reversing our usual assumptions about the historical relation between stagecraft and politics. Whereas we tend, I think, to regard politics as a "stage" mostly in a metaphorical sense, by analogy to the theater, Alexander argues that "the emergence of theater was more or less simultaneous with the emergence of the public sphere as a compelling social stage" (Alexander 2004a, p. 544). The public sphere, in other words, is not just *like* the theater. Both the political and the theatrical stage share a common historical origin and hence belong to the same general category of social action as performance. To be empirically valid, this implies, any theory of social action in modern societies *must* be a theory of social performance.

This is a stunningly original argument. Yet, even if true, it still does not follow that the criteria of performative "authenticity" on the theatrical stage must be the same as those that govern *any* type of performance—social, political, or otherwise. In fact, this is demonstrably *not* the case, as I hope to show next.

For Alexander, social performance in modern or complex societies is always an attempt at strategic manipulation. The skill of the actor lies in being able to dissimulate sincerity while covering his tracks: "the very success of a performance masks its existence" (Alexander 2004a, p. 549). In a strikingly postmodern move, Alexander thus insists that the authenticity of modern performances is always deferred, never actually present. The problem, as I see it, is that he does not tell us where we got our notion of authenticity in the first place.

While the obvious cases of simulated sincerity will seem especially deserving of the theatrical analogy, this is only by way of contrast to what we all believe (sometimes accurately, we like to think) to be authentic efforts at truthful communication. "Even a strategically intended self-presentation has to be capable of being understood as an expression that appears with the claim to subjective truthfulness" (Habermas 1984, p. 94). Although there may be reasons for skepticism about Habermas's account of the public sphere as a historically privileged venue for relatively undistorted communication (Habermas 1984, 1989), neither can we afford to reduce all communicative interaction to its dramaturgical dimension, as Alexander seems to propose. To do so, I believe, would deprive us of any intersubjective grounds for making important ethical, as well as analytic, distinctions among differing *contexts of interaction* and, and hence among different types of *social orders* on the basis of their capacity to promote, or at least tolerate, authentic human self-expression and communication.

This is not to deny that the "verisimilitude" (Alexander 2005) of public performances is often in question, as Alexander repeatedly insists. Indeed, it is *essentially* contested in many political and social settings. But I do think that cultural pragmatics must pay closer attention to particularities of political and ideological *context* than Alexander has so far ventured to do. For it is these particularities that often determine the likely degree of subjective authenticity on the part of the actors, as well as the *genre* of a political performance—whether "patriotic," contentious, or some combination of the two. To see this, let us consider some examples from state socialism, a context with which I am familiar from my own research.

The Power of Political Performances, Patriotic and Contentious. It is no accident that East European critics of state socialism used theatrical metaphors in describing their daily experiences under these repressive political regimes. In his well-known essay "The Power of the Powerless," Vaclav Havel characterized the Communist state in Czechoslovakia as a "dictatorship of the ritual" (Havel [1978] 1991, p. 139), by which he meant that individuals were compelled to act as if they were patriotic socialists, whether or not they actually identified with the role. To illustrate, he asks us to imagine a greengrocer who has displayed a sign in his window bearing the slogan, "Workers of the world, unite!" Why has he done this? "Is he genuinely enthusiastic about the idea of unity among the workers of the world?" (Havel [1978] 1991, p. 132). One need not know much about the plight of the *petite bourgeoisie* in state socialism to doubt the greengrocer's sincerity on this occasion. More likely, his enactment of "socialist patriotism" merely functions as an expression of political helplessness. In a "dictatorship of the ritual," Havel goes on to argue, the "power of the powerless" lies precisely in resisting such compulsory performances. To be considered a "dissident" in state socialism, one had only to "live in truth"—a standard of authenticity that Havel's readers, in both East and West, could readily comprehend.[3]

Not all patriotic performances in state socialism involved helpless obedience, however. As I argue at length in a recent article (Straughn 2005), inhabitants of Communist East Germany were occasionally able to *make claims* on the authorities precisely by enacting the standpoint of a patriotic citizen, ostensibly for the purpose of "helping" the state implement its stated objectives and quasi-universalistic social guarantees. Such strategies of "taking the state at its word" were not merely compliant; they were *contentious*. In fact, they were *consentfully* contentious to the extent that they took advantage of the state's own legitimating ideology in order to "test and contest the sincerity of [its] commitment" in defending "the interests of the working class" (Straughn 2005, p. 1602). In this way, ordinary citizens and communists alike sought "to exercise the 'voice' option under authoritarian conditions without relinquishing the advantages of loyalty" to the broader goal of "building socialism" (Straughn 2005, pp. 1601-02).

As Alexander's own examples demonstrate, the consentful genre of contestation is in no way limited to authoritarian regimes. Many liberal societies, too, have suffered from a "contradiction between theory and practice," which Alexander aptly labels "duality" (Alexander 2006, pp. 2-3), as when constitutionally guaranteed civil rights and equality of opportunity are vitiated by selective poll taxes and *de jure* segregation for certain categories of citizens. Here again, we find disenfranchised citizens and their supporters engaging in performances of patriotic contention, albeit under considerably different "genre constraints" from those in state socialism.

Whether in liberal or authoritarian societies, the sincerity of patriotic performances is essentially contested, yet this does not mean that all involve dissimulation. In state socialism, the state's heightened sensitivity to contention of any kind necessitated that even true believers genuinely interested in reforming the system strive to maintain the impression that they were acting as loyal socialists, not "counter-revolutionaries" (Straughn 2005, pp. 26-38 and *passim*)—an impression in which they sincerely believed.

Alexander convincingly argues that the success of social performances is always contingent, never automatic, but the conditions for success can differ in kind, not just by degree, across different types of settings. In many contexts, winning the day will likely depend on the right combination of perceived worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment ("WUNC"), as well as the skillful improvisation of collective identities (Tilly 1998; cf. Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995). In state socialism, by contrast, a lone individual negotiating behind the scenes with a sympathetic official may have better chances of prevailing than an organized protest group with access to an independent mass media, however thorough their mastery of the craft (Straughn 2005, pp. 1622-42; cf. O'Brien and Li 2006).

If anything remains constant, perhaps it is this: that the power and ultimate success of any "patriotic performance," whether compliant or contentious, typically depends on the capacity of the actors to convey a message of solidarity to an audience with the power to help realize political change.[4] Where political change is the goal, contentious performance must effectively couple critique of the status quo with avowed commitment (real or feigned) to basic values and principles enshrined in the state's own "dominant ideology." In all cases of political performance, however, the criteria of success differ from those we conventionally apply to performances on the theatrical stage. While the latter may be judged by formal or aesthetic criteria, political stagings are meant to have practical or "perlocutionary" force as well (cf. Austin 1962). Political dramaturgy succeeds when political conditions have changed as a result. The actors' persuasiveness in an allotted role is but a means to an end, although the journey may be enjoyable along the way (the more so, one imagines, when the movement achieves its aims).[5]

In this endeavor, actors whose standing to voice such claims is in question will likely meet with suspicion in some quarters. Critics of non-citizens demanding economic rights or a legal pathway to citizenship may "'cast' their opponents as…insincere and artificial actors who [are] only role playing to advance their interests" (Alexander 2004a, p. 545). Yet, this does not mean that *every* political performance is merely an exercise in dissimulation. True believers who choose protest may likewise face cynical skepticism about their "true" motives by opponents of their stated cause. (Recall that the loyalty of U.S. Civil Rights activists was increasingly questioned as well as their demands began to merge with those of anti-war protesters who burned U.S. flags or carried foreign ones.) On one point, at least, Alexander and I will probably agree: for protesters contesting the contradiction between of democratic universalism and *de facto* disenfranchisement, the power of their public performances will depend, at least for domestic audiences, on their skill at combining contention with the appearance of patriotism. Patriotic protesters for democracy, unite!

Culture

ENDNOTES

1 Outside sociology, of course, cultural anthropologists have been analyzing communication and social interaction as ritual or performance for many decades, with some important crossovers into cultural sociology (e.g. Geertz and Turner). Within sociology proper, Blumer and Goffman probably came closest to establishing communicative interaction and social ritual as legitimate objects of analysis.

2 Alexander argues at some length (2004a; 2004b; 2005) that traditional and modern societies differ in how likely performances are to fuse. "The more complex the society," he maintains, "the more often social performances fail to come together in convincing, seemingly authentic ways" (Alexander 2004b, p. 92). As I lack the expertise to evaluate such comparative claims, I will limit myself to showing some of the limitations of his performance theory in certain modern contexts.

3 Even a postmodernist like Foucault recognized that people were resisting the Gulags for a reason (Foucault 1980, p. 136).

4 Performances can, of course, play to more than one audience. Thus, what counts as "heroism for one audience" may well count as "terrorism for the other" (Alexander 2004b, p. 99). Yet, a polarization of audience perceptions is not necessarily incidental, a symptom of failed "fusion." In fact, it may be precisely what the terrorists are trying to provoke.

5 This is not to say that the theatrical is never political. With the rise of the "civil sphere" several centuries ago, Alexander rightly notes, "theatrical performances became arenas for articulating powerful social criticisms" (Alexander 2004a, p. 544). In state socialism, for example, the theater was used at times for purposes of covert dissent, but here too the audience was well aware that something other that a performance in the usual sense was involved. If audience members took delight in "reading between the lines" of certain plays or character roles to find trenchant political critiques, this was because they believed they were glimpsing and identifying with "the man behind the mask," not just with the character he was playing. If plays could be *made* political, whether as socialist propaganda or as vehicles for dissent, it was only because politics was not assumed to be the main purpose of theater as such.

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Sociability and the Transliteration Practices of Occupational Subculture, continued

ary maintenance than a fait accompli stemming from highly contrasting cultures. However, the lack of immediately apparent contrast does not make the boundary irrelevant for our travel, particularly since sociologists are members of an occupational subculture that includes members from many nations and fields of sociological production.

Having done extensive research focusing on the identities, communities and subculture of Canadian and American poets, I'm the first to admit that cultural comparison between Canada and the United States can be tricky, for the two can be like twins who are often mistaken for one another. And yet just as with twins, if you know either one of them well the fact of their difference can feel unquestionable, even if you can't quite put your finger on what it is that makes them so very different. However, when making comparisons between fields of broad cultural similarity the subtle, mundane processes of actors negotiating difference can be brought into high relief. While the strength of contrast that comes from comparing vastly different fields can threaten to obfuscate subtler

processes of mediation, comparison between similar contexts avoids that danger, and the everyday practices that contribute to cross national subculture step into the foreground.

A key for this comparison of similar fields is Bourdieu's understanding that the differing constellation of institutions within varying fields of cultural production affects the habitus of actors—and in turn the possibilities and likely patterns of their practice. The 'lay of the land' is internalized as a social landscape of power relations, possibility and expectations; and actors' trajectories and definitions of success are plotted and come to fruition against this backdrop of internalized social space. It is because geographically and historically grounded institutions are incorporated into actors' personal and collective habitus that place is crucial to the conception of cultural fields, even though fields of cultural production are social, not physical spaces (Bourdieu and Johnson 1993; Bourdieu 1996). The institutions and history particular to a locale constrain or enable differing forms and patterns of relations.

In travelling to convene with one another on the basis of shared profession, sociologists work to bolster their subcultural affiliation with one another while actively creating and maintaining a cross-national occupational subculture, particularly when the conference travel takes us to a national field whose contexts and constellation of institutions create a habitus that leads to different expectations, understanding and practices. In Canada, all universities are publicly funded, meaning that there is no public/private divide for academic institutions. Most refereed journals are located in the States, and when submitting to those journals, studying Canada is a choice to be justified in a way that studying the U.S. rarely is. In addition, the U.S. has a vastly greater number of academic institutions (whether teaching or research-focused) with which practitioners can affiliate, and these U.S. schools are subject to a stratified system of ranking that is in contrast to what McLaughlin has called the 'flat' nature of Canadian higher education institutions (2005). These factors and others play into the differences for Canadian and American sociologists—but what does that mean for us as we head to Montreal? How might that affect the ways that we interact to maintain our occupational subculture?

In this brief piece, I'll draw from my research on poets in Canada and the United States to suggest why physical travel is so crucial for a 'meeting of the minds'. Both the importance of happenstance and sociability, as well as processes of transliteration that I have found poets employ to bridge differences between contemporary fields of poetry production suggest how we might view our own practices as we enter into the ill-defined process of 'working a room' at the annual meetings and the interactional processes of creating and maintaining the transnational occupational subculture of sociologists.

In studying poets and poetry communities, I have veered away from a 'production of culture' goal of understanding how poetry is produced, and instead have trained my eye on how poets produce and sustain themselves. This is not only because of the curiosity that the eccentricity of poethood engenders in me personally (though that surely has been a factor) but because poets are a population for whom many of the usual explanatory variables for the formation and sustenance of occupational identity and community do not play as central a role. Unlike sociology, poetry is a field of "incomplete professionalization" (Anheier and Gerhards 1991). It has no required training, no clearly stated hierarchy or reliable career trajectory, and poets' status is indeterminate (Anheier and Gerhard 1991; Bourdieu 1996; Wilson 1958, 1990). However, there are similarities between poets and sociologists that make an examination of poets' practices suggestive of ways to understand and even guide our social sociological practice.

Just as poetry is produced under a mantra of 'art for art's sake' and individual careerism is shunned as contaminating, sociologists also connect authenticity to a commitment to knowledge production for its own sake, whereby the research performed should speak for itself and not require any form of commercial or personal promotion. In fact, one of the ASA section listservs was recently occupied with a fascinating discussion about how appropriate it is (or is not) to cite your own work, or suggest it to others. In addition to this preoccupation with serving a 'calling' rather than promoting one's own career, sociologists like poets are engaged in text-based cultural production. Whether we make it a focus of our intent or not, whether or not we torture ourselves with issues of aesthetics and craft, as academics we are writers. But just as is true with poets, what one writes is only the beginning of understanding what it is to inhabit the identity and claim membership in this occupational subculture. And how that subculture is diffused is reliant on both the work produced and collegial interactions as we travel to convene with one another in a show of membership and group solidarity that bolsters the faith that the game of sociology is a worthy pursuit.

With poets, the need to connect with other poets while maintaining disinterest in personal careers means that urban centers exert a magnetic force. After all, if meetings with other poets are intentional, it is too easy for a poet's relations with peers to be seen as calculating. Poets' decisions to live in urban centers are often the result of the desire to be closer to the resources and events that allow for more intensive and yet, more seemingly-serendipitous engagement with a poetry scene. It is not only the existence of publishers, reading series and events that urban centers are likely to have, but of existent communities of poets who themselves have the ability to mobilize resources of legitimation, and affirm a poet's identification with and commitment to the career; it is the 'bohemian index' of the place (Florida 2002), and the presence of neighbourhood spots that serve as meeting places and provide opportunity for bohemian sociability (Lloyd 2006).

The sociability of propinquity results in informal groups who share memories of particular events, debates, scandals and (sometimes fleeting) venues. And the ties made and memories shared create both networks that can be activated for further resource allocation or exchange and shared understandings. That is, affective ties formed through relations of propinquity stay active even if the venue is closed or participants move away.

Even though poets often categorize poetry communities as divided along lines of poetic genre (just as sociologists identify according to their subdiscipline), divisions between genres do not necessarily block relations between those who write in different forms and styles, and generative relationships are often maintained across aesthetic divides. While there may be tensions between writers of lyric and avant-garde poetry, those tensions do not preclude gregarious association. Indeed, poets who vigorously attack each other's work on stylistic grounds regularly engage in sociable interaction ranging from engaged and interested conversation and gossip to creating the fodder for gossip to come. These friendly relations do not diminish poetic debates, but they do result in the cultivation of poetic networks that seem counterintuitive if one takes divisions between genres as reflective of definitive social divisions.

While friendship involves sociability, sociability does not always progress to the more intimate and personalized relations that exist between friends. Even though it is less emotionally laden and intense than friendship, sociability can create tenacious ties and salient effects despite its lack of intimacy. Unlike friendship, which is reliant on specific personalities and their particular relations, sociability is social interaction for the sake of interaction and its pleasures. It is not dependent on particular content, nor is it overly personal (Simmel and Hughes 1949). It is, then, pleasant conversation, chit-chat, or banter. It is the erasure of all but the pleasure of association as relevant for the interaction at hand. It is sociability when one comes away from an encounter feeling refreshed and entertained, yet unable to remember what the conversation was about. It is sociability that can make one feel a sense of belonging in a gathering where no one there is a friend. Although poets have the ability to choose an urban existence academics are scattered according to institutional affiliation, and the daily duties of professorship preclude there being as much opportunity for serendipitous sociability in the course of daily living. But sociability is surely part of the draw and necessity of our annual meetings, as is evidenced by (among other things) the constant crowd in the hotel lobby, no matter where we choose to meet. And while we attend and give talks about our research, the work presented is only part of the draw.

While Fine and Kleinman contend that understandings, behaviours and artifacts are diffused in order to create subculture (1979), key for this discussion is the role of artifacts in distributing subculture, and the ways that they provide openings for the generative practice of sociability. Artifacts distribute subculture in part

because they are attached to the people that bring them, particularly when the artifact is entwined with a living person, as it is in the books and other publications of living poets or the papers presented and published by academics. The artifacts can be physical objects (as when a journal or book is distributed), but the writing itself, whether it is made material or performed for its distribution, comes into play and genre takes center stage in shaping the connections and networks that span fields. In this way, texts are disseminated as representatives of a field and invitations to further association. The following comment from a poet on how one gets to know other poets includes not only the usual and obvious observations about attending events or going to school together, but of text being something that can be harnessed as a form of social introduction:

> You go see them [other poets] and you know their work and you talk to them afterwards and you say: 'Listen I like what you do'. But mostly the way you get to know people is by publishing, because you publish in magazines and people read it and they know who you are because they have seen your work, so people know you're a peer. We immediately have huge things in common.

That commonality is not as immediate in practice as this poet has made it out to be. How is it that 'people know you are a peer'? What is the process and crux of that recognition? When making connections between fields (or sometimes even between communities in a larger field), in order for the connection to be successful, that is, in order for it to result in ongoing interaction and the mutual extension of networks, there needs to be a way for poets to claim one another as peers.

Here is where the fact that poets see genre as defining (and in parallel that sociologists see subdiscipline as defining) comes into play. While communities do not align neatly along differences of genre, similarities of genre contribute to the networks that poets build and provide a category that poets affiliate with when moving between fields and establishing new relationships and networks. In essence, poets making connections according to shared genre are identifying with one another because of the similarity in what they produce—but that is only a foothold for the interactions that can then proceed. For beyond that initial identification they are joined by how they make one another possible in ongoing reciprocal relations that draw both into each other's networks, networks that may or may not involve that initial similarity of genre.

Travel between the fields takes tertiary relationships (within which people are unlikely to meet) (Calhoun 1991) and pushes them toward the possibility of closer connection as the travelling poet opens the way for the extension of her network as she moves from initial contact to sociability within the newfound field. Sociability, however, requires the adoption of shared habitus if one is going to adequately forget oneself and engage in the pleasant play of entertaining banter and be able to move from that to the extension of networks between the two fields the poet's travel spans. It is not that I must know who you are, but *where you fit*, and how you are likely to next move in the context of the room and its current inhabitants. Without this internalized 'lay of the land' a poet who is new to a field can monopolize another poet's attention, not knowing when it is time to step aside and allow the other poet opportunity to interact with others whom it is important to engage with socially. Indeed, monopolizing a poet on her 'home turf' not only prevents them from engaging in productive relations of exchange, but it is likely to mean she will not provide introductions for the newly arrived poet, who will be deemed 'too needy.'

What is necessary is the ability to transliterate from one's own habitus and therefore make an assessment of the resources available in the room. Only then can one become both conductor and conduit—the fusion of arrival and transliteration creating energy that can activate the networks to which one is attached in ways that shift members of these separate fields from tertiary relations with one another, to secondary relations with the newly-arrived poet mediating their contact (Calhoun 1991). The work of diffusing and creating subculture is therefore contingent on a practice of transliterative assimilation—but not the swallowing up of difference that assimilation is often understood to be, but the assimilation of transliterative practice that likens what one knows to what one sees, through the generative power of the simile.

Perhaps our annual sociological trek is crucial to our occupational subculture, not only because it gives us opportunity to present our work to one another for critical response and questions, or to meet new people working on similar issues, but because we need the sociability, the closeness of bodies that Durkheim has claimed contributes to spirited belief and faith (1995 [1912]). And as is true for poets, our working lives as sociologists require a certain finesse as we work both to further our own careers, and to pursue the lofty goals of knowledge production, of public sociology, and (in some views) the liberatory possibilities of social research. This finesse is an ease of association that is cognizant of the expectations and positions of those with whom one interacts—information that a name tag on a lanyard only begins to supply, and which requires an ability to apply one's own embodied and located understandings to the current situation of mutual convergence among colleagues—who we must be aware are not all our status peers, if we hope to engage productively with one another.

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Report on Second UCSD Culture Conference, May 5, 2006

Kwai Hang Ng, UCSD

However important the concept culture is, it is, like other grand concepts in sociology, a term with fuzzy boundaries. Its meanings slip and slide, depending much on whom drives the concept to work.

On May 5, about 90 sociology faculty and graduate students gathered together at University of California, San Diego to once again reflect and debate the many meanings of culture. The conference featured Randall Collins (University of Pennsylvania) and Chandra Mukerji (UC, San Diego) as its two keynote speakers. Four other sociologists interested in culture, including Marles Charles (UC, San Diego), Laura Grindstaff (UC, Davis), Francesca Polletta (UC, Irvine), and Mitchell Stevens (New York University) made up an interesting panel on the interplay between cultural sociology and four other sociology subfields, namely social inequalities, popular culture, social movements, education.

Surely, culture leaves its handprints everywhere; but can we identify a common thread among the many existing understandings of culture? Can sociologists, at least at a very general level, come up with a coherent enough narrative on yet the latest turn in the sociology of culture? If the speakers at the conference are a fair representation of the field, then one can quite confidently proclaim – in diversity, there is unity. Despite a variety of methodological approaches and substantive focuses, there is an emerging emphasis on seeing culture as more inventive and enduring, less strategic but more enchanting. "Constitutive" is the buzz word; by which many speakers mean that culture is understood not merely as an effect of something else (dependent variable), or even one of the many causes (independent variable) in a variable-centered model, to something that suffuses all the many social spheres by shaping the very processes of how people seize hold of social reality, and how people want to change or in some case maintain the reality perceived.

Randall Collins set the tone for an interesting day by putting forward a bold thesis of "culture as cult." Culture has been said to be many things - totality, codebook, group mentality, capital, social production, toolbox, nonmaterial action. Collins wants to add to this list the idea of seeing culture as cult. The metaphor is meant to bring sociological awareness to the near-religious, at times excessively emotional, nature of culture. "At its high point, culture action is magnetic; it attracts, recruits, and dominates the attention space," he said.

Collins argued for paying attention to what he called a "social scene" as the crucial nexus of social change. "Making a scene, man!" Collins performed in dramatic tone to show how the everyday expression nicely captured the creative potential of a scene, which he defined as an emergent, creative space with "a concatenation of overlapping social networks." A powerful social scene shakes and trembles the status quo; it attracts and builds up new networks. A successful scene harnesses the energies unleashed by the use of interaction rituals, i.e., a set of effective techniques through which participants foster effervescence among themselves.

Collins also remarked that interaction rituals can be borrowed upon and deployed in new and, at times, even alien contexts. One example he pointed to was the counterculture of the 1960s. Collins pointed out that much of the interaction ritual techniques of the 1960s have been preserved in a milieu which is politically very far removed from the left-wing networks tied to the counterculture of that era. "If one wants to see culture action techniques of that period today, one can find it in the worship services of some evangelical Christian churches."

But if Collins finds the agentivity of culture in the eruptive effervescence fostered in a scene, Mukerji finds it in the quieter, more hidden corners of history. For her, the agentivity of culture can be seen in the tacit and mundane knowledge embedded in people's way of life. Her latest work on 17th century France seeks to explore what she calls the "hidden country of culture," buried by the official transcript which often erases the contributions of subordinate groups.

Mukerji studies the French grand engineering project of that era: the Canal du Midi, which stretched from Toulouse to the Mediterranean just north of the Pyrenees. The Canal was portrayed in the period as a heroic undertaking, a mission impossible no less. It was also an icon that demonstrated how Louis XIV and Jean-Baptiste Colbert modeled the then new France after the old Rome.

The unsung heroines in Mukerji's story were a group of local peasant women in the Pyrenees region. Her archival research suggests that some of the most important classical techniques that defined Roman engineering had been lost in the formal knowledge known to the French intellectuals in the seventeenth century but have been preserved in the practical skills and techniques acquired by the peasant women. These women used Roman techniques in its vernacular form to perform contour cutting and added drains for the project, even though their contributions have been largely erased from the French official accounts.

Implicit in her narrative is a notion of creativity through new uses and combinations of old cultural forms, very much in the Simmelian sense. In other words, while the new is different, it is at once redolent of the old.

During the panel session, the four presenters discussed how culture is deployed in the subfields of social stratification, popular culture studies, social movements and the sociology of education. Once again, their talks charted out a shift of focus from treating culture as one among many factors influencing the subject matters studied to being a central force in shaping how people come about understanding these phenomena in the ways they do.

Charles referred to how in the field of social inequalities, sociologists influenced by the work of the late Pierre Bourdieu take culture as a deeply enduring, internalized system of cognition. This system of cognition eventually leads up to a hierarchy based on taste and lifestyle that is irreducible to economic interests. Grindstaff highlighted the surge of working class conservative populism as a powerful force in the public imagination. "I think pop culture scholars ignore the Bill O'Reillys and Ann Coulters of the world at some peril…" "They represent a complex circuit of exchange between political discourse and media discourse," she said. Polletta embraced the constitutive turn. She said though social movement scholars traditionally have paid much attention to culture, the concept is often juxtaposed as something outside of structure. She believed the next step is find ways to study how structure emanates from culture, and vice versa. Mitchell Stevens said there is no question that school is the premier cultural institution in modern society, so much so that many sociologists of education have taken culture for granted. He said the challenge for sociologists studying education is to find ways to face up to the constitutive capacity of culture within a framework of individual-level data analysis that is traditionally the bread and butter of educational research.

More work needs to be done to bring out the concept's valuable implications in actual research. As always, culture finds more focus in relation to a specific research context. Yet, participants were never left in any doubt that the Second UCSD conference was quite a scene.

The conference was organized by Amy Binder, Mary Blair-Loy, John Evans, Michael Haedicke, and Kwai Ng. It was funded by UCSD's Department of Sociology and Division of Social Sciences. A third Culture Conference will be held spring 2007. *Culture*

Association of Religion Data Archives

The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), located at www.thearda.com, provides free access to high quality quantitative data on religion. The ARDA allows you to interactively explore American and international data using online features for generating national profiles, maps, church membership overviews, denominational heritage trees, tables, charts, and other summary reports. Over 400 data files are available for online preview (including the International Social Survey Program and multiple years of the General Social Survey and) and virtually all can be downloaded free of charge. The ARDA has also developed a series of tools for education. Learning modules provide structured class assignments and the many online tools allow students to explore religion across the globe or in their own backyard. Housed in the Social Science Research Institute at the Pennsylvania State University, the ARDA is funded by the Lilly Endowment and the John Templeton Foundation.

Science and Technology Module, General Social Survey

This year's General Social Survey (GSS) will include a science and technology (S&T) module. Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS), the module combines questions that have been asked on previous SRS surveys with new questions, many of which probe different aspects of the cultural authority of science.

The GSS S&T module opens new avenues for survey research on S&T knowledge and attitudes. NSF has collected similar survey data for over 25 years, generally using telephone surveys focused exclusively on this topic that were designed and administered by Jon Miller, now at Northwestern University. Now the NSF questions will appear on a high quality, nationally representative face-to-face survey that gathers data on a wide range of characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. As a result, researchers will be able to examine new dimensions in how S&T knowledge and attitudes relate to other social attributes. For example, the GSS contains measures of social class, religion, political preferences, confidence in institutional leaders, and attitudes toward government spending that, analyzed in conjunction with data from the S&T module, could shed new light on orientations to science among different segments of the American population. These measures go well beyond the demographic and educational indicators that NSF was able to include on past telephone surveys. SRS plans to collect data via the GSS regularly and hopes that social scientific analysis of the 2006 data will contribute to developing better indicators in the future.

The GSS S&T module continues the NSF time series on what Americans know about basic science facts (e.g., questions about evolution and radioactivity) and processes (e.g., questions about experimental design and probabilistic reasoning), how Americans get information about S&T, and how Americans perceive the promise and drawbacks of S&T. Many of these time series questions have been used in surveys done in other countries, especially in the developed world.

In addition, newly developed questions probe when and whether Americans consider science and scientists to be authoritative sources of policy-relevant knowledge. Some of these questions ask, for a series of issues (genetically modified foods, stem cell research, tax rates, and global climate change), whether scientists are knowledgeable about the issue, agree among themselves about the facts, ought to be influential in policy discussions, and can be relied on to act in a disinterested manner. Similar questions are asked about other elites (e.g., business leaders and elected officials) who are involved with these issues. The module also includes questions about the attributes that make a study scientific and whether certain disciplines and professions are perceived to be scientific.

SRS is a federal statistical agency, and for SRS the survey questions are "indicators"—quantitative representations that might reasonably be thought to provide summary information bearing on the scope, quality, and vitality of the science and engineering enterprise. SRS reports on these indicators in the chapter on public attitudes toward and understanding of science and technology in

Science and Engineering Indicators, a biennial publication of the National Science Board, NSF's governing body (http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind06/c7/c7h.htm).

The new indicators are intended to shed light on the authority that science has for Americans relative to other institutions and other cultural frames. In developing new indicators, SRS tries to collect data that are relevant to the enduring concerns of the federal science policy community. The federal government supports efforts to cultivate a scientifically literate citizenry that can assess scientific claims thoughtfully and make sensible use of scientific knowledge, and these data on "the cultural authority of science" are relevant to this broad mission.

At the same time, SRS believes that these indicators are relevant to basic social science issues. Science is a powerful, elusive, ill-bounded cultural frame that has become increasingly important over the centuries. There is a lot of interesting qualitative and historical research bearing on the role of science in modern culture, and there is also a body of NSF and other survey data dealing with the public's attitudes toward and understandings of science. These two lines of inquiry could build more on one another: social scientific analyses of science's cultural role could have more influence on the development of indicators, and social scientists could make more use of survey indicators to gauge the representativeness of case analyses and inform the study of culture in action. SRS hopes the 2006 S&T module will facilitate a more fruitful use of these complementary data sources.

In conjunction with the SRS module, NSF has included new indicators of knowledge and attitudes toward nanotechnology. In addition, questions about knowledge, attitudes, and policies relevant to the Earth's polar regions, funded by NSF's Office of Polar Programs, will also appear on the GSS. These questions are being asked in advance of the International Polar Year (IPY, 2007–8), and many will be asked again in 2010, after IPY activities conclude. NSF expects the before and after comparison will provide information about whether and how IPY increases public awareness.

Data from past NSF surveys that are suitable for trend analyses have been compiled by Susan Carol Losh of Florida State University and are available at the Interuniversity Consortium for Political Science Research (ICPSR) archive (http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR-STUDY/04029.xml) and at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/dataacq/nsf_surveys_science_technology.html). SRS expects to make a complete database for these surveys available later this year. The GSS module data will be available for analysis via the Roper Center or ICPSR by early 2007.

The S&T module was developed by Roger Tourangeau of the University of Michigan and the University of Maryland Joint Program on Survey Methodology, Thomas F. Gieryn of Indiana University, Paul DiMaggio of Princeton University, and Robert Bell of SRS after consultations with social scientists from various disciplines. For more information about the module, please contact Robert Bell (rbell@nsf.gov; 703-292-4977).

SSSP PANEL DESCRIPTION
BUILDING JUST, DIVERSE AND DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITIES: THE CASE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

This panel explores how academic freedom, as the right to speak out against injustice and inhumanity in its various forms, might be ensured in today's political climate. Melanie Bush from Adelphi University begins by providing an overview of where we stand today. Bart W. Miles and Stephen J. Sills from Wayne State University describe three strategies that faculty researchers have used to challenge the oppressive structures of Institutional Review Boards. G. Anthony Rosso, Academic Freedom Officer for the Southern Connecticut State University chapter of the AAUP, will discuss Association principles of academic freedom and collective bargaining strategies. Gerald Turkel, Chair of AAUP's Committee on Government Relations, will discuss AAUP noncollective bargaining approaches to resisting political attacks on academic freedom. And last but certainly not least, Jameel Jaffer, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union who is currently litigating a case filed on behalf of the American Academy of Religion, the American Association of University Professors and PEN American Center, and that names as a plaintiff in the lawsuit Professor Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss intellectual who is widely regarded as a leading scholar of the Muslim world, will discuss the methods of the ACLU.

Consistent with SSSP President Claire M. Renzetti's vision for the 2006 meeting, it is hoped that this panel, sponsored by the *Standards and Freedom of Research, Publication and Teaching Committee,* will encourage scholars devoted to the eradication of social injustice to energize, mobilize and strategize in an effort to thwart current threats to our academic freedom.

CALL FOR PAPERS--Changing Cultures: European Perspectives
Joint conference of the ESA Research Network Sociology of Culture
and the Cultural Policy Research Centre 'Re-Creatief Vlaanderen'
Ghent (Belgium), November 15-17, 2006

In recent years, attention has been given to such processes of cultural change as migration and cultural globalization, individualization and value change, cultural pluralization, the growing commodification of cultural artefacts, etc. The conference 'Changing Cultures: European Perspectives' aims at providing social scientists who study these and related issues within Europe with a forum for discussion and exchange. It is an international gathering for the sociological community, but one which is also open to contributions from related disciplines.

We welcome papers that address a range of conceptual, methodological and empirical issues. Sessions have already been planned on the future of cultural theory and qualitative and quantitative methods within the sociology of culture, on cultural memory & collective identity, on measurement issues, on art and cultural participation, on value change within Europe, on ethnic minorities & multicultural society, on cultural industries, on cross-cultural & comparative research, on daily cultures & life styles and on cultural globalization. We also welcome individual papers that focus other issues related to the main conference theme and proposals for a thematic session, workshop or round table.

More information on the conference and the conference venue can be found on the conference website, www.esaculture.be, which also contains a direct link for the submission of paper proposals. The deadline for proposals is June 15, 2006. Acceptance will be notified by September 1st.

SEE YOU THERE!

ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE ASA
AUGUST 11-14, MONTREAL CANADA

"CULTURE DAYS" ARE AUGUST 13-14

CULTURE SECTION COUNCIL AND BUSINESS MEETING: AUG. 13, 12:30-2:10

JOINT RECEPTION: CULTURE AND ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY SECTIONS,
AUGUST 13, 6:30-8:15 PM

VISIT THE SECTION'S WEBSITE--

http://www.ibiblio.org/culture/