CHAPTER 2

Reflections on Culture

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The history of anthropology I tell in the beginning of this chapter is a series of frustrated attempts to find a set of theoretical categories that will adequately distinguish between what has been thought of as social structure and what has been deemed culture. I call this "the category problem."

Roy D'Andrade: Deceased.

The University of Chicago Press has generously permitted the reproduction here of a discussion originally published in Cassaniti and Menon's 2017 edited volume, *Universalism without Uniformity*. That discussion occurs in the sections of his chapter (D'Andrade 2017) about lifeworlds: the final paragraph of "The Formation of Cultural Values" and the three sections to follow, "How Many Lifeworlds in a Society?," "Civil Society, the Covering Lifeworld," and "Lifeworld Colonization." This editor did not realize this duplication until she happened to read the earlier essay of D'Andrade's in the other volume, when that book saw publication during preparation of this one. D'Andrade has never before, to this editor's knowledge, published the same words in two different places. This departure from his usual practice must have been due to the exigencies of his illness, which, as we tell in the Preface, included pain, memory loss, and inability to work.

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Next, I explain what I think the problem is. I illustrate my explanation with a reanalysis of some of my own research, on values in three countries. My initial error was to conflate individual values and cultural values. The latter are values that have become institutionalized. In this way of thinking, culture, including cultural values, is an emergent property of individual minds—just as the rigidity of an iron bar is an emergent property of atoms and their interactions.

Values inhere in many different institutions, and can differ across these, and so there is a need for a systematic description of the institutions in which values are embedded in a given society. To this end, I introduce the idea of lifeworlds, complexes of values, norms, institutions, practices, and sanctions along with representations of these shared by members. Such an approach abandons altogether the attempt to divide up social structure and culture, which are inextricably bound up in a lifeworld, making the category problem disappear. In any complex society, there are many such lifeworlds, members of the society typically belonging to multiple ones of these. This idea of the way societies are organized has further interesting causal implications, which I will discuss.

It's Just a Point of View

Gregory Bateson saw the problem clearly. In *Naven*, his ethnography of the Iatmul, Bateson describes how he tried to test the validity of the major theoretical categories he had brought to his ethnographic task. First, he selected three "bits of culture": (1) a mother's brother giving food to his sister's son, (2) a man scolding his wife, and (3) a man marrying his father's sister's daughter. Next, he selected three of his major theoretical categories: (1) the *pragmatic*—satisfying the needs of individuals or contributing to the integration of society; (2) the *ethological*—part of a patterned expression of emotion; and (3) the *structural*—the rules or premises of the culture, which he thereafter referred to as its "premises." He then set up a three by three matrix. Each of the rows of the matrix was labeled with a "piece of culture," and each of the columns with one of his categories. He went on to explain,

> Then I forced myself to see each bit as conceivably belonging to each category. I found that it could be done.
>
> I found that I could think of each bit of culture *structurally*; I could see it in accordance with a consistent set of rules or formulations … Equally,

> I could see each bit as "*pragmatic*," either as satisfying the needs of individuals or contributing to the to the integration of society. Again, I could see each bit *ethologically*, as an expression of emotion.
>
> This experiment may seem puerile, but to me it was very important, and I have recounted it at length because there may be some among my readers who tend to regard such concepts as "*structure*" as concrete parts which "interact" in culture, and who find, as I did, a difficulty in thinking of these as labels merely for points of view adopted either by the scientist or by the natives. It is instructive too to perform the same experiment with such concepts as economics, kinship and land tenure, and even religion, language, and "sexual life" do not stand too surely as categories of behaviour, *but tend to resolve themselves in labels for points of view from which all behavior may be seen*. (Bateson 1958: 262; italics added)

Bateson assumes that the reader understands what the problem will be when any "piece of culture" can equally be seen as pragmatic, or ethos, or structure. Nothing is gained by identifying any aspect of Iatmul culture as one or another. Whatever identification is made, it is merely a "point of view." Nothing about culture has been explained. Or, to put it another way, if our categories of behavior are just "labels for points of view from which all behavior may be seen," then using these categories can tell us nothing about the world but only about our own points of view.

Bateson's insight notwithstanding, over the years, category problems involving the distinction between culture and social structure did not reach a solution. At the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 1959, there was a well-attended session on the topic, in which ensued a lively and scholarly discussion about the difference between *culture* and *social structure*. At the end of the session, it was generally agreed that not much progress had been made.

Culture, as subsequently described by Clifford Geertz (1973), was interpretation of texts—having nothing to do with social structure. Schneider's (1968) work on American kinship was restricted to an analysis of symbols, with the result that investigations of kinship among Irish, Italian, English, and other ethnic groups yield almost identical accounts. Schneider recognized that it was the cultural norms that were different across these groups, and he deliberately excluded these norms from his analysis, to support his account of an "American" kinship. Current practice in leading cultural anthropology journals is to handle the conflict about the term *culture* by not using it.

In fact, recent articles in *Ethos* and *Cultural Anthropology* rarely use any of the theoretical anthropological terms of the pre-postmodern period: i.e., *role, norm, structure, culture, class, group, collective, personality, motive, belief, expectation, goal, market, artifact, system, function, internalization, acculturation, enculturation, material culture, drift, superstructure, lexeme, and syntax.* This is not to say that contemporary anthropologists are no longer grappling with the same old problem, albeit in new terminology. Witness this excerpt from the flyer for an international conference on *Affective Relationality* held in April, 2016 at the Freie Universiät in Berlin, and attended by this volume's editor: "… affects have to be conceptualized as a dynamic relationality that traverses between and across individuals, and not as inner 'mental states'."

Early Attempts at Resolution

One answer that British social structuralists gave to the *culture* versus *social structure* problem was to reposition culture by saying that it referred to *nothing but* things like cooking recipes and pottery. By restricting the definition of *culture* to odd bits, there was no danger of *culture* being conflated with *social structure*. But Bateson's problem remains: When an ethnographer does a study of, say, Western Apache kinship, is that a study of Apache culture or Apache social structure? And, if both, which is a part of which?

A different tactic was adopted by sociologist Talcott Parsons. For Parsons, a human society is constituted by the interaction between and within the *cultural system*, *social system*, *personality system*, and *biological system* that make up society. The *cultural system* consists of the interrelations of symbols, while the *social system* consists of the relations of persons in roles and collectives. The *personality system* consists of a system of motivations and values, while the *biological system* consists of the interaction within the actual physical body (Parsons and Shils 1951). Parsons did not worry if the same item was part of more than one system. What made it part of any system was the *causal* relations this item had with other items in that system, not anything intrinsic about the item. That sounds good at the theoretical level. But it still does not answer the question about Apache kinship. Nor did it please anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn.

Kluckhohn's dissent was presented in a signed footnote to "Some fundamental categories of the theory of action: A general statement," the introductory chapter of the edited volume *Toward a General Theory of Action*,

co-authored by the contributors to this collection, Kluckhohn among them (Parsons and Shils 1951: 3–29). His objection concerned the boundaries that Parsons drew around the concept of *culture*. Kluckhohn felt that their statement did "not give full weight to the extent to which *roles are culturally defined, social structure is part of the cultural map, the social system is built upon girders supplied by explicit and implicit culture*" (Parsons and Shils 1951: 26–27, fn. 31; italics added).

Parsons' response, given in a memorial volume for Kluckhohn, was that only special aspects of the social structure are parts of the cultural map. For Parsons, the "exigencies of interaction in social systems" and the "analytically defined interests of acting units" are independent of cultural factors (Parsons 1973: 55). Parsons said that, in this case, the *system of social relationships* and the *system of kinship symbols* are in a zone of *interpenetration*. *Interpenetration* was a frequent term in Parsonian theory. It seems to me that calling the overlap between categories "a zone of interpenetration" is really an admission as to the nondistinctness of these categories.

A more procrustean move was made by Cornelius Osgood, who was Curator of Anthropology at Yale University and a leading ethnographer of the cultures of the Arctic, China, and Korea. He divided his ethnography of an Alaskan group called the Ingalik into three separate publications, on Ingalik material, social, and mental culture, respectively. For Osgood, it was *all* culture, differing only in descriptive content. In a review of the last of these three volumes, *Ingalik Mental Culture* (1959), in the *American Anthropologist*, Edmund Carpenter commented on the novelty of Osgood's solution to the category problem:

> This three-fold division is not the traditional economy–society–religion one, but rather a very precise effort to clarify the nature of such data by correctly categorizing them. Thus, each volume is both an ethnographic report and a theoretical adventure. (Carpenter 1961: 848)

While from one point of view the controversy about how to define *culture* and *social structure* is a minor quibble, to those who spent their adult lives thinking and wondering about how *social structures* work, or how *cultures* are organized, the issues were anything but trivial. Moreover, while this is a hoary problem with a long history in anthropology, it persists into the present, to plague even contemporary researchers such as myself.

Ontological Levels and Reductionism

The different approach to the relation between social structure and culture that I want to propose requires a short detour into some basic assumptions underlying my proposal. Fundamental to the modern worldview is the idea that there is a hierarchy of ontological levels. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the most basic things, the things that cannot be further subdivided. According to the standard theory in physics, there are a few forces (gravity, the electromagnetic force, the weak force, and the strong force) along with a few fundamental particles (bosons, quarks, and leptons) that make up the most basic stuff of the world. If string theory proves to be true, then there exists an even more basic level, composed of n dimensional strings or loops from which the fundamental particles are formed. Higher in the hierarchy are protons and neutrons, made from combinations of quarks, and at an even higher level, there are atoms, made of electrons and protons and neutrons. The next higher level consists of molecules, composed of combinations of atoms, able to form solids, liquids, and gases. These three levels constitute the physical stuff of the world.

The next two levels are the biological and the psychological; the level of living things and the level of things that have minds and are conscious. None of this is controversial. What is controversial is the idea that there exists a level of collective mental states on *an even higher ontological level* than individual mental states.

An ontological hierarchy is not just a matter of little things making up bigger things. Objects at each higher level must be characterized by having causal powers that things at lower levels do not have, causal powers that are due to the interaction of things at the lower level. Physicists call these new causal powers *collective effects* or *emergent properties.* A simple example of an emergent property is the rigidity exhibited by an iron bar. Thousands of individual atoms of iron, taken each by each, do not have rigidity. The collective effects of rigidity are created by *interactions* between the atoms, interactions that are a result of intrinsic properties of these atoms. Due to these interactions, atoms of iron form a lattice structure that gives the interconnected atoms properties of *rigidity*—something no single atom of iron has.

Accounting for upper level collective effects by understanding how lower level entities interact is one kind of *reductionism.* This is called *non-eliminative reductionism* because, unlike *nothing-but reductionism*,

it does not *eliminate* the properties of the upper level. The upper level properties are genuine new causal properties that do not exist at the lower level. *Non-eliminative* reductionism attempts to account for upper level properties by showing how the entities at the lower level, in interacting with each other, form new entities with new causal properties. A well-known example of non-eliminative reductionism is the reduction of the properties of life to the interaction of certain molecules. Life, instead of being some strange causal force, or *élan vital*, as it was once termed, turns out to be the emergent effect of certain molecules interacting in certain ways. The great story of the discovery of the double helix and the unraveling of the genetic code gives us an account of how the high-level collective effect of life is produced by the lower level interaction of molecules. *This does not mean that life is nothing-but molecules.* Molecules are not alive, nor can they grow, reproduce, and die. Life, growth, reproduction, and death are properties of living things, not molecules.

Eliminative reductionism is not always wrong. A case of eliminative reductionism that turned out to be right was the reduction of heat to *nothing but* the motion of molecules. Heat, instead of being some kind of special causal stuff, as those who believed in phlogiston thought, is nothing but molecular motion, and anything that can be said about what heat does can be restated without loss of information in terms of the effects of the motions of individual molecules, taken one by one. Heat has no causal powers that molecular motion does not also have.

In some cases, it is not clear whether non-eliminative or eliminative reductionism in the correct view. For example, while there are people who believe that consciousness is a kind of special thing never to be understood in terms of reductionism, most psychologists believe that consciousness will ultimately be seen to be an emergent property caused by the interaction of certain kinds of cells—neurons—with each other and the environment, and nothing more. How this emergent effect comes about is not yet known. In fact, at present, there is hardly a good idea about how it could happen. Unraveling the mystery of consciousness is one of the great puzzles of science for the twenty-first century.

As we will see, however, the case that we are addressing here is a clear one of non-eliminative reductionism. The explanation for how individual mental states lead to collective mental states is a matter of emergent properties.

Mental States and the Collective Consciousness

Just as life is puzzlingly different than ordinary matter, so mental processes are puzzlingly different than ordinary cells. How can cells—a network of connected neurons, for instance—be conscious, or know things, or want things, or have feelings? Yet, human life is based on the emergent causal powers of the human mind; that people can perceive, reason, remember, want, feel, and intend to do things. Cultural and social processes require the existence of minds. Of course, these processes require bodies too—complexes of living cells—and the cells that make up the body must be made of molecules, and so on. But the causal powers of culture, society, and psyche are based on *mental causal powers.* Without minds and their causal powers, there would be no culture and no society as we know it.

And just as networks of neurons interact to form the collective effect or emergent property of consciousness and mind, so minds interact to form higher level *collective mental states.* A norm is a collective mental state—a collective agreement that something should be done in a certain way at a certain time by certain people. It is *intersubjectively* shared; that is, in the relevant group, we each know that everyone knows about this norm, and everybody knows that we know it.

Collective mental states can do things that individual mental states cannot. A basketball team can only play because the members of the team jointly share the cultural model of basketball and its norms. The teams have "*collective intentionality*" (Searle 2006) or what we might call "*we-intentionality.*" Cooperative team sports are vivid examples of the emergent property of cultural norms. Collective mental states can create coordinated action, group obligations and interpersonal commitments, and institutions. Singular individual beliefs and actions cannot do this. It is emergent collective mental states that make the order of society possible because without a collective mental state, norms and institutions are impossible. Collective mental states have extraordinary and ubiquitous causal powers (Searle 1995). Of course, collective mental states can always be reduced in a non-eliminative way to individual mental states, but collective mental states are *not* nothing but individual mental states. *The interaction of minds creates a new thing—a collective mind made of minds.* This is because, while we cannot share bodies, we can share minds, and hence have collectively shared understandings, agreements, and goals and obligations. Culture is constituted by collective minds.

Unlike iron bars, which are made up of *physically* connected atoms, the connection between humans is based primarily on *communication*—the contact of minds through *language*. We share minds because we can talk to each other. This is a central fact about human existence. In fact, it can be argued that one of the most distinctive thing about humans, which is their very large brain, came about *because* of language. A number of experts on early human origins find physical evidence from the larynx and related structures that spoken language began before two million years ago with australopithecines and homo erectus, when the human cranial capacity was not much larger than that of a modern-day ape. But once a very rough and rudimentary way of sharing information about the world through spoken words began to develop, humans could *share* their minds, giving a powerful selective advantage to having large brains that could store the enormous amount of information that could be learned from other humans. The brain of a chimpanzee can only hold something around 500–1000 words, while human vocabularies are as large as 50,000 words or more (D'Andrade 2001).

As this excursus on collectivities, we-intentionality, intersubjectivity, and ontological levels shows, an answer to the question about the nature of the agreement that underlies things like *norms* is not simple. None less than eminent social theorist Jon Elster is stymied by the problem. In his book *Cement of Society*, he frankly admits:

> I shall argue for the autonomy of norms and their reality … I cannot offer a positive explanation of norms. I do not know why human beings have a propensity to construct and follow norms, nor how specific norms come into being and change. (Elster 1989: 125)

Elster is driven to this conclusion because he does not want to make an ontological commitment to collective mental states. Thus he goes on to say, "There are no societies, only individuals who interact with each other" (Elster 1989: 248). Elster is a true individualist. However, without the ontological commitment to anything *collective* that he is unwilling to make, it is impossible to account for norms, which are *collective* agreements about how things should be done.

The Deconstruction of Culture, Society, and Personality

Following Bateson, as part of an attempt to deconstruct the ideas of *culture* and *society* and *personality*, I broke these three global terms into more specific constructs, such as *institution*, *motive*, *value*, and *norm* (D'Andrade 2006). Consider the following matrix of columns and rows:

Personality is made up of:	Motives	Ideas	Values		
Culture is made up of:		Ideas	Values	Norms	Institutions
Society/social structure is made up of:			Values	Norms	Institutions	Practices

There may be disagreement about which constructs belong in which rows but there will be no disagreement about the fact that *psyche*, *culture*, and *society* are composed of overlapping elements. Looking at this high degree of overlap, one wonders how personality, culture, and society could ever have been defined as distinct things.

What makes these three concepts different, instead, is the way in which elements are organized. What is different about the organization of *culture* and *psyche* is that *culture* refers to the mental contents (symbols, meanings, models, ideas, etc.) that *flow* across persons and over time, while *psyche* refers to the *organization* of mental elements *within* individual minds. Just as *culture* is composed of elements that move across place, person, and time, so *psyche* can be thought of elements such as ideas, motives, feelings, and values that are organized within a single person. *Society* exists because practices do what they do—the bread gets to the table, the business produces products, the schools teach, the churches minister to their congregations, and so forth. These practices are organized in human societies by complexes of institutions, norms, and values. *Culture, psyche*, and *society* have become the source for a century of confusion because they have been used as if they were names for different kinds of *stuff*. But these nouns are, instead, necessary words for different kinds of causal *processes.*

By defining *culture* as process, one can both accept the omnibus definition in which *culture* contains almost everything—artifacts, institutions, symbols, ideas, and tea at the Savoy, and also regard *culture* as a causal force or causal power. For example, the activity of typing that I am now doing, plus the computer I am using and the English language in which I am writing are all linked to the past, and to me and other

people and our pasts, through a long chain of historical causal processes. These skills and artifacts did not just appear out of nowhere. I am *typing* because (among other reasons) typing is part of my *culture*, I am using a *computer* because (among other reasons) computers are part of my *culture*, and I am *writing in English* because (among other reasons) English is part of my *culture*. *Culture* in the sense of a historical causal process of the transmission of ideas, norms, values, and institutions has enormous power; it has brought us most of what we do and have. The main problem with the notion of *culture* is that it is too general and too various to serve as a good explanation of anything in particular; but it is essential for understanding human life overall.

Cognitive learning is quick and what needs to be learned can effectively be taught by being formulated and communicated in natural language. These abilities result in cognitive models that are easy to pass on to others, and hence to become culture. But for values to function as *felt evaluations*, not just thoughts about what is good, and for norms to function as *felt shoulds*, there must be some degree of internalization (Spiro 1984). Internalization typically requires socialization, which is why values do not generalize as easily and extensively as cognitive models. Many more Americans know about civil liberties than care about them. Motives and sentiments are even less often part of a cultural heritage because they are even harder to teach and transmit. But for some people, the motivation called *patriotism* is part of their culture.

My Own Tactical Error and Its Correction

It seems clear that values are part of *personality* as well as being parts of *culture* and *society*. But because I did not fully recognize that values function at distinct levels, I made a tactical error in a study of American, American Vietnamese, and Japanese values (D'Andrade 2008). Viewing values as primarily a personality characteristic, I developed a questionnaire that asked each respondent to rate how *personally important* (not at all, a little, moderately, quite a bit, extremely) 328 value items were (e.g., having peace and quiet, being one of the elite, living a life of adventure). Translations and back translations were carried out for Japanese and Vietnamese. American, Japanese, and Vietnamese-American respondents were asked to rate all items in their native language. Principal components analyses were carried out on the data, separately for each group and jointly for all.

When the data from the three cultures were analyzed, it was a surprise to discover that each of the cultures displayed almost identical bipolar dimensions for the first three components (D'Andrade 2008: 7–20). No more than these three components could reliably be identified. Labels and representative items for the three dimensions are *Individualism* (trying out new things, sexual freedom, and living a life of adventure) versus *Collectivism* (preserving the family name, defending my country, and maintaining old traditions); *Altruism* (protecting the environment, treating people equally, and protection of minority rights) versus *Self-Interest* (having social status, having great wealth, and being one of the elite); and *Industry* (thinking up ways of doing things, having self-discipline, and science) versus *Leisure* (taking it easy, sleeping, and watching TV).

While the conceptual organization of these three dimensions is quite interpretable, the dimensions are actually not strong, accounting for only slightly more than 10% of the total variance. The same organization was found by Shalom Schwartz, a social psychologist based in Haifa, Israel, who analyzed data from 75,000 respondents in 200 samples taken from 67 nations. Most importantly, not only were the dimensions for all three cultures virtually the same, *the ratings of value items for all cultures were almost identical* (Schwartz and Bardi 2001). These results are an impressive demonstration of the universality of a pan-cultural value profile that shows a high evaluation for treating others well, being self-directed, and treating others equally, but a lower evaluation for being power oriented, stimulation seeking, and being traditional.

These overwhelming similarities between values of different cultures create severe problems on several levels. Empirically, these results contradict decades of ethnographic research. Methodologically, these results from survey questionnaires are different than the results from participant observation, leaving the choice of methods uncertain. Theoretically, if every society's values are almost identical to every other society, there would seem to be little to cause or sustain cultural differences. Overall, this finding of strong value similarity between societies seems implausible. But that is what these data show.

One resolution to this conundrum can be found in the linkage between norms and values. For example, consider the conflict in the U.S. between abortion (pro-choice) and anti-abortion (pro-life) groups. Both groups agree about the value of preserving life, but this value is linked to different outcomes in each group. The pro-life groups sees abortion as the destruction of life, which directly contravenes humanitarian norms and values.

The pro-choice group does not count the fetus as a real person and typically feels that, in some situations, bringing the fetus to term can result in an impoverished or depleted life for child, mother, or both. So the pro-life group wants the establishment of a norm prohibiting abortion under most or all conditions while the pro-choice groups wants the establishment of a norm leaving the decision to the mother. Each group sees the other group as having different values but what they really disagree about is the way in which abortion is *linked* to the value of life. The point, once made, is obvious. *Most values are relatively abstract schemas and very different actions can be framed as fulfilling or not fulfilling them.* Each group makes its own *interpretive linkage* about which values apply to which norms, and typically assesses cultural groups in which other linkages are made as lacking good values. In my experience, *the big differences between cultures are not in high-level values, but in the interpretations of what-counts-as-what.*

Another surprising finding of my value study was that the Japanese data did not display a high level of *collective* values. Extensive ethnographic work by Ruth Benedict, Chie Nakane, Takie Lebra, and Ronald Dore (see D'Andrade 2008: 106) has documented persuasively that Japanese social groups—university departments, businesses, and schools—display solidarity and group cohesion with strong social control. In my value study, the Japanese were only slightly higher than the Americans with respect to *collectivism*. This contradiction between ethnographic data and questionnaire data does not appear to be the result of different links between norms and values, as was the case in my hypothetical example about pro-abortion and anti-abortion groups. Rather, it seems to be the result of cultures containing two different kinds of values—*personal* values and *cultural* values (Kitayama 2002). This could explain the differences between the personal values found on the Japanese questionnaire and cultural values described in Japanese ethnography. But this explanation raises another question. It is hard enough to find out what someone's personal values are. How can one find out in a systematic way when a respondent gives some characteristic a high value whether the respondent is rating a *personal* value or a *cultural* value?

My solution has been to define *cultural* values as values that are *institutionalized*, and that, at the same time, may be more or less internalized. Take the role of the DOCTOR as an example. If one is a *doctor*, then one *should* have the competencies of a *doctor* and care about the things that *doctors should* care about. A *value is institutionalized in a role* if there are norms sanctioning role behavior that meets (or does not meet) this value

criterion. For example, doctors are supposed to value helping patients, not just earning money. If they pursue monetary gain to the neglect or maltreatment of their patients, they will be frowned upon by others in their profession, and may be formally sanctioned or even de-licensed.

Using this definition of an institutionalized value, I next developed a questionnaire to identify American values institutionalized in various roles. Undergraduates were given twelve common roles (DOCTOR, EMPLOYEE, TEACHER, BUSINESS PERSON, STUDENT, GOVERNOR, FATHER, MOTHER, SON, DAUGHTER, FRIEND, and LOVER) along with SELF and TYPICAL AMERICAN, to be rated on 43 value items. Questionnaires were organized so that every role was evaluated on all value items by 20 respondents. I should add that, typically, judgments about established cultural understandings do not require large samples because of the strong homogenizing effects of cultural consensus (Romney et al. 1997). While the sample was small, the average alpha for each role was 0.97.

The 43 value items fell into two groups: those values that were generally the same across all roles *versus* those values that were generally different across different roles. The value items that tended to be the same across all roles were *be responsible*, *be honest*, *persevere to overcome difficulties*, *treat others well*, *have self-control*, *be independent and self-reliant*, *work hard*, and *be knowledgeable* (D'Andrade 2008: 131–132). These values have a Puritan flavor, high on *altruism* and *industriousness*. Be a good person, self-directing and competent no matter what your role—*sister* or *governor*.

The remaining seventeen items did discriminate among roles. Correspondence Analysis (Romney et al. 1998) was used to display both roles and value items in the same space. Both the *individualism/collectivism* and *altruism/self-interest* dimensions were apparent and emerged without rotation. SELF falls close to the center of the graph, indicating that respondents placed themselves neutrally with respect to the two dimensions. The values of being both *individualistic* and *altruistic* are perceived as important values for the roles of LOVER and FRIEND, while being *collectivistic* and *altruistic* are important for the roles of FATHER, MOTHER, SON and DAUGHTER. Being *self-interested* is described as important for the TYPICAL AMERICAN, and both *collectivism* and *self-interest* values are important for the role of GOVERNOR. Being almost purely *self-interested* is important for a BUSINESS PERSON, while the both *self-interest* and *individualism* are important for the roles of EMPLOYEE, TEACHER, and DOCTOR.

If someone uses the value item *well-organized* as important for the role of an EMPLOYEE or that of a MOTHER, this does not mean that this person rates *himself* or *herself* as *well-organized*, whatever his or her anticipated life trajectory. The fact that the value of *being well-organized* has been institutionalized for the role of the EMPLOYEE or the MOTHER is a fact about American *culture*, not necessarily a *personal* value.

The Formation of Cultural Values

The questionnaire described above finds values that are important to holding various roles. But values are embedded in many institutions besides roles, including rituals, laws, organizations, conventions, myths, art, and games, to name just a few. Given the huge number of institutions in any society (Searle 1995), if cultural values are to be studied, some systematic way of grouping institutions needs to be formulated.

A family, for example, has its own action systems consisting of things people in the family do, its own material culture, collective representations, norms, institutions, and its own roles and social network. The major institutions of families are the institutions of marriage and descent, with their corresponding kinship roles. The norms that apply to these roles change as the members of the family grow and age, but the core family values of love, care, and intimacy are unchanging (Quinn 1987). To describe a family is to describe a culture, or more specifically, to describe a cultural formation within a larger cultural formation.

One perspective for describing these cultures within a culture is through the concept of a *lifeworld*. Phenomenologists—Aaron Cicourel, Harold Garfinkel, and Alfred Schütz, for example—treat the lifeworld as the everyday ordinary world that is pervasively intersubjective and socially constructed, without which communication would be impossible. Such an intersubjectively shared lifeworld is transparent to its members, but full of meaning and consequence. It should be noted that the construct *lifeworlds*, as defined here, differs somewhat from its usage by Alfred Schütz (Schütz and Luckmann 1973, 1989) or Jürgen Habermas (1984), its two most famous proponents. For them, the lifeworld concept focuses on the *total* background (Searle 1995) which is necessary for human communication. In this chapter, by contrast, *a lifeworld* is treated *as an interconnected functioning complex of values, practices, norms, sanctions, institutions, and representations intersubjectively shared by a recognized collectivity.*

In this view, the lifeworld of American family life contrasts sharply with the lifeworld of an American business office. A striking example of the home/office difference can be seen in the comparison between the trading floor of a large investment bank and an American family. Michael Lewis's 1989 book *Liar's Poker* contains a striking description of the trading floor of Solomon Brothers, a Wall Street investment bank in the 1980s. Solomon Brothers was divided into two departments: equities (stocks), and bonds. A series of governmental regulations in the 1980s changed the selling and buying of bonds from a relatively sedate activity to a rapid high-stakes market involving truly huge amounts of money, where the conditions of uncertainty created much risk. Bond traders came to glorify risk taking, along with the development of aggressive interpersonal competition, and ruthless, cut-throat behavior. According to Lewis, the top traders in the bank engaged in huge bets on the movement of bond and stock prices, consumed gross amounts of food and drink, bullied lesser traders, swore constantly, and frightened the personnel assigned to assist them. This lifeworld glorified risk taking and the power that comes from the personal accumulation of wealth. Solomon Brothers in the 1980s is an extreme example, but business worlds generally contrast with American families (but not families everywhere) in having a strong hierarchy (various levels of bosses and workers). In this hierarchical system, rewards are based on values concerning minimizing costs and maximizing profits as well as evaluating the skill, efficacy, responsibility on which the business depends. There is a New Yorker cartoon that mocks this kind of value difference. In the cartoon, a conference table of business men are listening to their boss, who begins the meeting by saying "Before we discuss destroying the competition, screwing our customers, and laughing all the way to the bank, let's begin this meeting with a prayer."

How Many Lifeworlds in a Society?

What is unclear is how fine the classification of lifeworlds should be. Very fine lifeworld discriminations would capture how different every family is from every other family, and even from itself every few years. On the other hand, less differentiated lifeworld categories would distinguish only between the strikingly different lifeworlds in a society. For example, there is some agreement that for many societies *kinship*, *religion*, *politics*, and the *economy* are distinctive enough to often require separate chapters in an ethnography.

Lifeworlds are subsidiary cultural worlds that exist within the larger collectivity of some society. The lifeworlds of a modern society are much more numerous than the lifeworlds of a tribal society. For an extreme example of the latter, Allen Johnson, who worked among the semi-foraging, semi-horticultural Matsigenka of the Amazon basin (Johnson 2003), found a simple, family-based society that has no institutionalized politico-religious leaders comparable to the chiefs or big men typically found in such societies. The family is perhaps the only significant lifeworld among the Matsigenka (A. Johnson, personal communication). By contrast, it would be impossible to describe all the lifeworlds of American society—business worlds, military worlds, legal worlds, neighborhood worlds, educational worlds, and so forth. Such an ethnography would run to many thousands of pages.

Civil Society, the Covering Lifeworld

This observation raises the further question about whether in a modern society of such complexity there is a lifeworld that corresponds in some way to the *whole society*. This covering lifeworld would include almost everyone in a society, even if the roles, norms, practices, etc., that apply to the full collectivity are relatively small in number. Cultural sociologist Jeffrey Alexander (2006) argues that there is such a lifeworld, which he calls *civil society*. For Alexander, American civil society is a *sphere* of actions, institutions and ideas, values, and norms that the typical American knows and assumes that other people know. Intersubjectivity includes mutual knowledge of a variety of topics—current national political issues, current facts about war and peace, current candidates for political office, major sporting events, reported disasters, issues concerning public debt and finance, statuses of and relations between ethnic and racial groups, positions of various religions on moral and spiritual matters, and more. This information is provided by the media such as newspapers, TV, and radio, and by the structure of the public world more generally, but also by interpersonal contacts such as family, friends, respected others, and like people. In a modern society, this huge and constantly shifting mass of information is presented continuously and redundantly to the average citizen.

Civil society contains a loosely defined role structure: *citizen, voter, pundit, media consumer, activist, public official, reporter, columnist, publicist, spin doctor*, and so forth. Most of these roles involve the production, consumption, and evaluation of information about the society. Alexander (2006)

presents a comprehensive analysis of the binary discourse code that he finds to be used in civil society. Claims and counter-claims are made in a binary logic concerning *responsibility* versus *irresponsibility. Irresponsibility* covers a multitude of sins—for some examples, *misuse of funds, stupidity, theft, lying, cheating, being biased, immaturity, lack of moral sense, and incompetence*—and myriad related ways of failing civil society. Alexander calls this covering lifeworld a *sphere* of society. He gives markets, states, political parties, churches and sects, patriarchal and other kinds of families, and groups based on ethnic, racial, and regional ties as examples of other spheres of modern society.

Lifeworld Colonization

Most people seem able to move from one lifeworld to another without even noticing. This non-awareness is aided by the fact that some values are important in both lifeworlds. Being responsible and honest, for example, are salient across a wide variety of lifeworlds—as indicated by the results of the questionnaire described above. But sometimes people experience strong conflict when different values are salient in different lifeworlds. Michael Lewis writes, for example, about how hard it was for him to make an advantageous sale in the trader's lifeworld where he had to *not* divulge to his buyer how bad the bonds he was recommending really were (Lewis 1989). He soon left his job as a bond trader with a strong feeling of relief and some lasting guilt.

Personal dilemmas like Lewis's are not the only way conflicts in values come about. Another striking form of value conflict occurs when the values of one lifeworld *colonize* another lifeworld. The use of this term is borrowed from Habermas. For Habermas, colonization occurs when an autonomous subsystem of the society infiltrates a lifeworld from the outside, "like colonial masters coming into a tribal society" (Habermas 1984: 355). The term is used here to refer also to a situation in which some value, central in one lifeworld, begins to become more dominant in a different lifeworld. For example, in the United States, the value of acting in accordance with the business morality of making decisions primarily on the basis of the 'bottom line' has partially colonized other lifeworlds such as that of higher education.

Such lifeworld colonization can be very upsetting. It is most distressing to academics when the administration of a university begins to shift its primary decision criteria from achieving academic excellence to purely

monetary considerations such as maximizing the number of undergraduate enrollments. Around the world, this type of conflict is not rare. In the now defunct Soviet society, the great colonizing value was that of unstinting support for the communist party, which was supposed to take priority over family or business values. In much of the Middle East, the great colonizing values are Muslim religious values, which the people of many Middle Eastern countries believe should trump family, business, and national political values. In Italy, it is said that, conversely, family relationships trump business relationships and even enter into the "business" of crime (A. Cicourel personal communication). One can see the Mafia as an example, in which fellow criminals are ritually incorporated as family members because it is only family that one can trust.

Evolution

Social evolution refers to the cultural evolution of whole societies, including the cultural norms and practices that organize resources, labor, economy, trade, kinship, political power, warfare, and so forth. Much of the current work on human evolution is concerned with selective pressures on groups, not selective pressures on individuals. A comprehensive model of this type for the evolution of human societies has been presented by Johnson and Earle (2007). The central selective pressures these authors identify are population growth, technological development, and environmental constraints, from which they trace out development from family-group societies to nation states, combining a "multilinear theory of alternative lines of development arising from unique environmental and historical conditions" (Johnson and Earle 2007: 27).

Among nonhuman species, selective pressures are marked by natural events such as competition with other species or changes in the environment. But it is possible for human cultures themselves to act as a selective pressure too. An example, presented above, is the effect of language on the human brain. Once language became a part of human culture, humans could do a new thing: *share information*. Then, the practical usefulness of sharing information created a selective pressure for larger brains, which could learn and remember greater amounts of information (D'Andrade 2001). Another example is the evolution of the human hand. The human use of sharp stones as tools and weapons evolved through external environmental selective pressures. Once created, stone tool use asserted selective pressure for a change in the structure of the thumb and

fingers of the hand so that the object, say a stone, could be held in a precision grip between an opposable thumb and the other fingers. This process, by which an organism changes its environment and thus alters the selective pressure on itself, has been thought of as evolutionary *niche construction*. The niche model has been developed by John Odling-Smee and others (Odling-Smee et al. 2003). Culture is not the only example of such a niche. A few other kinds of environmental changes effected by organisms themselves, that then exercise selective pressure back on the original population, are beaver dams, termite mounds, and bee hives.

The niche model has been used by Peter Richerson and Robert Boyd to explain a variety of human instincts. Such a model is needed because genetic theory alone cannot account for a variety of human characteristics. The niche model untangles the complicated relations between genetic evolution and cultural evolution. For one example, most evolutionary theorists agree that genetic selection alone cannot account for the widespread occurrence of human cooperation. Alone, genetic selection on individuals would not be powerful enough to winnow out uncooperative persons because it is too slow and because it is subject to dilution by free riders and immigration (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 203). Richerson and Boyd conclude that human cooperation would have to have been a cultural intervention into human life. In their analysis, many of the distinctive characteristics of humans compared to primates are the result of cultural evolution due to selective pressures from norms such as that exacting cooperation from group members. They speculate that intergroup competition gave rise to culturally transmitted cooperative and other group-oriented norms. This set of norms became a niche, individual selection then favoring psychological dispositions that make individuals more likely to confer, and want to gain, social rewards for following a group's norms for cooperation and the like, and to impose, and want to avoid, social sanctions for disobeying them (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 195–196).

As a result of these processes of niche construction and adaptation to the new niche through natural selection, people are endowed with two sets of innate predispositions or "social instincts." One set is composed of ancient genetic instincts shaped by kin selection and reciprocity, complex family life, and a potential for strong bonds of friendship characteristic of the primate lineage, predispositions we share with our primate ancestors. The other set of genetic instincts, which Richerson and Boyd call "tribal" instincts, enabled humans to interact cooperatively with large, symbolically defined groups of people. About the conflict between the two, they say:

> These new tribal social instincts were superimposed onto human psychology without eliminating those that favor friends and kin. Thus, there is an inherent conflict built into human social life. The tribal instincts that support identification and cooperation in large groups are often at odds with selfishness, nepotism, and face-to-face reciprocity. (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 215)

These tribal instincts evolved within the world of latter day australopithecine and early homo erectus populations, as improved technology made possible larger and more stable groupings and a finer grained division of labor. A good example of the "inherent conflict" Richerson and Boyd allude to is Robert Paul's (2015) hypothesis of a universal conflict between men's urge to compete for mates and the collective need to suppress any such violent competition in the interests of in-group harmony and tranquility. As symbolically marked collectivities develop strong in-groups and out-groups, the importance of symbols and humanly constructed meanings increases.

For the psychologist Michael Tomasello, as for Richerson and Boyd, the most crucial human adaptation, one that nonhuman primates have to only limited extent, is "the understanding of conspecifics as intentional beings like the self" (Tomasello 1999: 56). While this capacity might have involved a number of different cognitive modules, Tomasello hypothesizes that this capacity to understand others as intentional mental agents like oneself was key to human evolution. This mental capacity, Tomasello supposes, is necessary for collaboration in the hunt, such collaboration being a forerunner of group cooperation. Tomasello's and Richerson and Boyd's competing explanations for why cooperation was initially adaptive for human groups are just two of several (for another scenario, see Burkhart et al. 2009).

This cognitive capacity does not emerge all at once in development, but first appears around nine months of age. Human infants at this age, unlike the young of other primates, engage in "proto-conversations" with caregivers that involve face-to-face looking, touching, and vocalizing with clear turn-taking and mimicry of body movements. From nine to twelve months, a new set of behaviors emerges, called "joint attention." Joint attention is when the infant alerts another to an object by pointing, eye-gaze or other signaling. At about the same age, a whole suite of other behaviors begin, including imitation of both instrumental and arbitrary acts and use of imperative gestures. Tomasello argues that joint

attentional behaviors are not just isolated, independently learned behaviors, but rather reflect the infants' overall understanding of other persons as having perceptions and goals, like themselves (Tomasello 1999: 64).

For Tomasello, these and other human social behaviors that distinguish human children from nonhuman primates are a result of the selective pressures in the cultural niche that surrounds human infants and children.

> Human beings are designed to work in a certain kind of social environment, and without it developing youngsters … would not develop normally either socially or cognitively. That certain kind of social environment is what we call culture, and it is simply the species-typical and species unique "ontogenetic niche" for human development. (Tomasello 1999: 78–79)

Thus, Tomasello uses the evolutionary niche model to trace out the interacting genetic and cultural processes in human development. As humans made culture, culture made humans.

A fairly large number of human propensities have been proposed to have been shaped by culture. As Richerson and Boyd say:

> Tribal social instincts evolved in social environments shaped by cultural processes. This new social world, a result of rapid cultural adaptation, drove the evolution of novel social instincts in our lineage … Such environments favored the evolution of a suite new social instinct suited to life in such groups, including a psychology which 'expects' life to be structured by moral norms and is designed to learn and internalize such norms; new emotions, such as shame and guilt, which increase the chance norms will be followed; and a psychology that 'expects' the social world to be divided into symbolically marked groups. (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 214)

They continue:

> Eventually human societies diverged from those of other apes and came to resemble hunting-gathering societies of the ethnographic record. We think the evidence suggests that about one hundred thousand years ago, most people lived in tribal scale societies. These societies were based on in-group cooperation where in-groups of a few thousand were marked by language, ritual practices, dress, and the like. Social relations were egalitarian, political power was diffuse, and people were ready to punish transgressions of social norms, even when personal interests were not directly at stake. (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 214)

These authors conclude with a view of the human tragedy that occurs as new tribal social instincts compete with old primate instincts. This competition creates an inherent conflict in human life. Tribal instincts that are involved in identification and cooperation in large groups conflict with ancient genetic instincts toward selfishness, nepotism, and face-to-face reciprocity. Deep loyalty to family and friends conflicts with loyalties to tribe, caste, and nation. Increasingly, as societies become more complex, groups of elites are able to reward themselves disproportionately from public resources.

Powers of Culture

This chapter has been an attempt to identify processes that illustrate the powers of *culture* as causal forces. Despite the richness of this old hypothesis, it seems to have fallen out of favor. As recounted at the beginning of this chapter, even the use of the word *culture* is now avoided by many of those writing in anthropology journals. But culture can hardly be left out of the equation.

The account presented here does include culture, and demonstrates the explanatory powers of doing so. Here, culture is super-organic; contains values that can be cultural while not personal; is embedded in various lifeworlds which are not the same as the general culture; is a major evolutionary force through gene-culture interaction in cultural niches; is responsible for creating the modern psychological dispositions of humans, resulting in a moral-norm-governed world; and engenders conflicts, for example when lifeworlds are colonized or when contradictory psychological dispositions come into play.

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