

Culture

Section of the American Sociological Association

A Message from the Chair

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Edgework in the Sociology of Culture

Several years ago, I had the privilege of co-teaching a course at Swarthmore College with a pre-eminent scholar of English Literature in the English Department. An established authority on Faulkner and Morrison, he was beginning work on a book about Modernism and wanted a more sure grasp on the sociological themes and insights of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I had majored in Comparative Literature in college and was excited about the possibility of returning, for a semester, to the arms of the Humanities, rereading Joyce, Kafka, Rilke, Baudelaire, Woolf in an official rather than a casual manner. It also meant reading contemporary literary theory by Berman, Bersani, Deleuze and Guattari, and so forth. And what was I to bring to "Mapping the Modern," (the name of our eventual course)? I was to bring Weber, Simmel, Marx, Freud, Adorno and Horkheimer, and Arendt - prescient observers and analysts of modernity and all of its vicissitudes. The course was intense and wide-ranging, the students avid and engaged. But the big surprise for me, I am simultaneously embarrassed and proud to admit here, was that my pivotal choice to do graduate work in sociology rather than in literature was reconfirmed by this experience. Quite the opposite of feeling a nostalgic homecoming in the Humanities, I was a born-again sociologist! It wasn't that I loved the literature and its conjured up worlds, poetic language, knowledge of tragedy, any less. It was simply that the questions posed by the more sociological writers seemed most pressing to me and their frameworks for understanding the dramatic transformations in production, social organization and social life generally during modernity's onset were, well, simply what was needed for understanding. This experiment in cross-disciplinary explanation proved to be extremely informative.

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Editor's Note

Please let me know your ideas for submissions!

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Masada

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On the last day of October, a cavalcade of foreign dignitaries and Israeli officials joined hundreds of ordinary citizens making their way to the top of a plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. They gathered to proclaim this secluded fortress, called Masada, one of the world's most important historical sites — a place worthy of global attention and protection.

The United Nations, which put the Israeli mesa on the list of World Heritage Sites, chose the place in part to commemorate the Jewish rebels who held the lofty stronghold, and eventually perished there, in the waning days of a revolt against the Roman Empire in AD 73. In its report on Masada, the UN concludes that "the tragic events during the last days of the Jewish refugees who occupied the fortress and palace of Masada make it a symbol both of Jewish cultural identity and, more universally, of the continuing human struggle between oppression and liberty (Monastersky, 2002).

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The Propitious Penny: The Value of Thrift

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On my way to a dinner meeting one night in Washington D.C., I shared a cab with two other event-related colleagues: the Vice-President of Standard Oil and the Vice President of U.S. Steel. One paid the cab fare going; the other, upon return. As we entered The Madison and said goodnight, I thanked the gentlemen for their cab-fare generosity. They proclaimed simultaneously, "No need to say thanks. You get to pay the next time."

Now considering these fine men are of elevated socio-economic status, there is a lesson to be learned: to be financially wealthy and remain thus is to watch every penny. And to perhaps most people, "to watch every penny" is a philosophical phrase not to be taken literally. Unless you think as I do.
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But it was not my sole experience in such crossings. In terms of categorical placements generally, my *pedagogical* exercise in cross-disciplinarity has been mirrored by my *institutional* cross-disciplinarity (I inhabit a joint Sociology and Anthropology department at Swarthmore) and by my own cross-disciplinary *scholarship*. Thus, like many of us in the Sociology of Culture Section, I inhabit something of an edge. We start with sociological questions about culture in all of its incarnations and then, to a greater or lesser degree, discover that scholars from other disciplines have been circling around these same cultural phenomena with their own theories, methodologies, and questions. To what extent are we comfortable with the blinders we put on when we read only sociological studies of the things we seek to understand? Or, to what extent do we attempt to incorporate the ideas and findings of other disciplines that are similarly preoccupied? This is both a practical and a conceptual dilemma.

Cohabiting with the anthropologists at Swarthmore (a departmental configuration of many liberal arts colleges) has provided me with an intimate understanding of the ways that sociologists and anthropologists are so similar and yet so different in their approach to culture. It can be something as sharp as the fact that anthropologists have typically studied “a culture” and sociologists have studied “culture.” But perhaps some rapprochement is near as scholars like Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson write in the Introduction to their book *Culture, Power, Place* that they want to “raise questions about anthropology’s implicit mapping of the world as a series of discrete, territorialized cultures”¹ There is actually a lot at stake here for anthropologists who have a disciplinary identity based on the idea of an ethnography. What does it mean to claim, as George Marcus has also done, that ethnography ought no longer be based in a specific territorial site, but should be “multi-sited”? A similar sentiment is expressed by “New Historicists” like Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, when they reflect upon the problematic boundedness of culture studied by literary historians (who have a traditional investment in periodicity): “In what sense is any era every truly finished - who sets the boundaries and how are they patrolled? Do we not have overwhelming evidence, in our own time and in every period we study of an odd interlayering of cultural perspectives and a mixing of people, so that nothing is ever truly complete or unitary?”² At times, disciplinary rapprochement can transform into convergence as both sociology and anthropology claim pre-eminent scholars as their own, viz. Bourdieu. Of course, they may make of them very different things.

Even without rapprochement, I want to make a pitch here for sociologists engaged in the study of culture to look abroad, to other Social Sciences and to the Humanities. We need to be cognizant of current work in anthropology, literary theory, art history and visual theory, history, communication, linguistics, critical legal studies, political theory (cf especially the on-line journal *Theory & Event*). It may just be that a fixation with culture *requires* an intimate knowledge of the edges of disciplines and the points where they leak or build walls, as it necessarily puts into high relief the whole question of categories and their compositings. Certainly the development and vibrancy of the Boundary Network of the Culture Section speaks to this. Those sociologists who study culture import a quality of self-consciousness into their enterprise. What is culture,

after all, if it is not about reflection and representations? And what are disciplines, after all, if not a formalization of axes of representation (cf. Foucault’s early *Archeology of Knowledge*)? We must look about. As such, it behooves us to be both open and cautious in our borrowings and combinings.

What is at stake in the awareness of these edges? Something happens when you cross over the boundary – questions shift, certain things that were in the foreground are now in the background; terminology shifts. Some of these shifts are as subtle as discerning a different *resting point* for an analysis - are we investigating Leopold Bloom as a variation on a theme of identity in modernity or are we investigating identity formations in modernity? Some are pretty explicit - the literary theorist interested in narrative may be primarily asking an epistemological question about the nature and status of an entity called “a story,” while the sociologist may be interested in narrative’s impact on social cognition or action. The scholar engaged in cross-disciplinary work has a great burden, I think. One aspect of this burden is to be responsible and respectful of the traditions and contentions on the other side of the disciplinary boundary. For example, a recent and stimulating interest in narrativity in the sociology of culture brings with it the not inconsiderable task of truly coming to grips with literary theory’s explorations of narrative and narrativity. No sociologist should write about the narrative aspects of anything without having read Northrup Frye, Umberto Eco, Kenneth Burke, Mikhail Bakhtin, Frederic Jameson, Franco Moretti, Vladimir Propp, and Gerald Prince for starters.

Another burden is to remain responsible to the core questions of your sociological project while you illuminate the boundary for your readers. My own recent interest in analyzing pictures as well as texts has led me to study the vast scholarship on visuality (specifically that addressing questions of perspective) and iconicity in art. Many of these theorists have developed their own analyses on the hybrid grounds of their prior theoretical acquisitions and borrowings - Louis Marin’s semiotic analyses of the paintings of Nicolas Poussin borrows and works with Emile Benveniste’s structural linguistic program. Some art historians have borrowed from the social sciences in their concerns with the interplay between the artwork and the institutional complex out of which it emerges. Some are ultimately interested in technique, with questions about brushwork and paint consistency. There is, however, an eerily consistent experience I have in reading any or all of these analyses. As smart and as intriguing and as stimulating as they are, they never seem to be asking the right, that is the sociological, questions. It is almost as if they can’t actually see those questions. Current questions about the possibilities of a visual language, for example (see the work of Louis Marin, Norman Bryson and W.J. T. Mitchell) somehow stay at the level of the internal order of the picture or of the position and gaze of a spectator that is both fixing and transfixed. I want them to be about the possibilities of reading social pictures as we read social texts for their social meaning and impact.

An example from my current work on military surrender will illuminate some of these opportunities and challenges. For a sociologist, surrender is clearly a liminal social moment. The surrender should bring about the end of a conflict, but it will also bring about a transformation in the identities and relationships of the parties to that conflict. It cauterizes the trauma

of war, but it also threatens the sovereignty of selves and collectivities. So one of the things I have aimed to illuminate in my study of surrender is precisely that perilous liminality and the mechanisms that have evolved to navigate (or avoid) it. Such an illumination would be one of my, that is sociological, "resting points." But in order to accomplish this, I need to be able to see the surrender in its three-dimensionality. I need to read the textual surrender documents (including the agreements themselves and the reflections on them by the protagonists and witnesses) and I need to "read" the more pictorial and cartographic materials rendered. Only recently have sociologists begun to pay systematic analytic attention to the visual field and to pictorial representations of the visual field. "Visual sociology" is still in its burgeoning stages and must, if my claims about edge-work are valid, turn to those disciplines centrally concerned with the question of how to read a picture.

Art historians, particularly since the linguistic turn in the humanities and the social sciences, have been puzzling over the question of whether a synchronically displayed history painting has a discernible grammar in the same way that a linguistic sentence does. Louis Marin writes about this conundrum: "[I]t has to express diachrony, temporal relationships yet can do so only through the network of a whole that generates its parts logically or achronically by its own signifying economy... that represents only the logical relationships of elements subordinated to a center."³ For my purposes, this becomes a crucial question when attempting to assay historical paintings of surrender with the sociological questions about liminality in mind. In other words, how does liminality and its preoccupations reveal itself in pictorial renderings of surrender? Is there a pictorial "grammar" of liminality? To try and answer this, it is absolutely necessary to turn to theories of visuality and art. Sociology does not have the analytical tools required to get at this dimension of the total reality of surrender and its representations.

So, to give a necessarily telescopic version of my analytical trajectory, if liminality suggests disorientation, one key issue is that of recognizing this disorientation when it comes in visual shape. In his book about 18th century French genre painters (eg Greuze and Chardin), the art historian Michael Fried identified their frequent depictions of figures absorbed in the tasks and encounters of everyday life and analyzed this absorption as a key theme. He also noted that this absorption was always pictorially set off by placing a figure in the scene who was distracted - often this was a child. For my purposes,

studying paintings of military surrender and wondering about all of the figures who are simply not paying attention (figures whose eyes, faces, and bodies are not directed toward the key exchanges at the center of the field), it was the distraction, not the absorption, that was interesting. I wondered if the distraction had anything to do with the liminality of the situation and the disorientation that it brought in its wake. While at least one sociologist, Emmanuel Schegloff in his study of "body torque" has approached this analytical terrain of bodies captured in poses of in postural instability and its implications for involvement in social situations, he pointedly bifurcates the sociological from the art historical aspects with this discovery at the outset.⁴ I believe that what might look like a detour into the art historical scholarship may actually be sociologically fruitful. In other words, I want to push a bit more on the art historical questions and methods - questions about any possible grammar of the synchronic history painting, questions about the semiotic interplay of absorption and distraction, questions about the vanishing point of Renaissance perspectivalism - to see if they can illuminate the nature and meaning of the disorientation of surrender more deeply. Of course, readers of the resultant scholarship will judge if they do.

In conclusion, to echo and slightly reconstitute the theme of the 2003 American Sociological Association meeting - we have the right questions. And our answers will be all the richer and more interesting for our learned familiarity with the way other disciplines take on culture.

ENDNOTES

¹ Thanks to Mark Jacobs for helpful comments on this essay. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era," in *Culture, Power Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

² Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

³ Louis Marin "Towards a Theory of Reading in the Visual Arts: Poussin's 'The Arcadian Shepherds.'" In *Calligram: Essays in New Art History From France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. P. 67.

⁴ Body Torque, Emanuel A. Schegloff, *Social Research*, Fall 1998 v. 65, no. 3, pp. 535- 596.

Masada, continued

Making Masada into a World Heritage Site was the last step in a very long process, which began in the early decades of the 20th century mostly by secular Jews. The goal of this process was to turn Masada into a heroic memory.

I have devoted some years of research to try and figure out how and why and how this process unfolded. In my first book on this topic *The Masada Myth* (1995). I traced the development of the myth. This fascinating development was conceptualized within the framework of collective memory. Having

finished that project, another riddle came up. Between 1963-1965 Masada was excavated by a team of professional archaeologists headed by the Late Hebrew University professor turned politician, Yigael Yadin. I became very curious how was it that professional archaeologists gave such strong support to a mythical tale. Trying to decipher this riddle culminated in my 2002 book *Sacrificing Truth*. The two books ask different questions and use different methodologies. The following short piece will detail the essence of my work on Masada.

The Site. Let me begin with a physical description of Masada. Masada is a butte fortress nearly 100 kilometers southeast of Jerusalem, about a 90-minute drive from the capital. This rocky geological formation is located about 2 kilometers from the west shore of the Dead Sea, and about 17 kilometers south of Ein Geddi, in one of the world's hottest places (daily temperatures between the months of May - October average typically between 33 to 40 degrees centigrade). The height of the butte is about 320 meters from top to bottom. On its top there is a diamond-shaped, flat plateau. Its long axis is about 645 meters and its widest axis is about 315 meters (see Livne 1986).

The butte itself is very steep, and is accessible by foot either by climbing the eastern "snake path" (the preferable way) or, from the west side by means of climbing the natural spur upon which the Roman army built its siege-ramp. There is also a modern cable car, which makes reaching the top of Masada from the East side very easy.

The name of the butte and fortress in Hebrew is METZADA (pronounced ME-TZA-DA). The word METZADA is a derivative of the Hebrew word METZAD, or METZUDA, literally meaning a fort, fortress or stronghold. The translation of METZADA to Greek is Masada (Simchoni 1923:513). The Greek translation kept its sound in English and so METZADA has become popularly known as Masada.

Historical Masada. There is one historical textual source for Masada — the writings of Josephus Flavius. "Erase" Josephus and there is not much we know about what happened in Masada. Questions about the reliability and credibility of the historical narrative provided by Josephus continue to haunt us, and — I suspect — will continue to occupy a small army of scholars in different disciplines. For lack of other contemporary textual evidence, I suggest that we take Josephus' text as an historical base line. That is, take his account at face value as true, unless there is unambiguous and compelling evidence to caution us to be careful with his historical account. For example, Josephus tells us that before the collective suicide on Masada, the last Sicarii commander of the fortress — Elazar Ben-Yair — made two speeches. Josephus quotes these two speeches. Unfortunately, Josephus was not there. However, he was a contemporary, he could have guessed what such a speech could have been like, and one of the survivors of the suicide (there were 7) could have told the Romans about the speeches. Clearly, one needs to take the specific content of these speeches with caution.

What does Josephus tell us about the events in Masada? The events in Masada can not, and should not, be separated from the context. Between AD 66-73 the Jews in Judea revolted against the Roman Empire that controlled the region. The Roman Empire in the first century AD was at its peak of power, stretching from England to Mesopotamia and controlling a mighty and ruthless military machine. Josephus expresses great doubts he had at the time about the logic — politically and military — of that revolt. Moreover, it is clear from his description that extreme groups dragged the Jews into this doomed revolt. There were a few groups involved in the incitation to revolt, two of which are relevant to Masada: the Zealots and the Sicarii. While Josephus does not always make a clear distinction between the two, when he discusses Masada his usage of the term Sicarii is very consistent. The Sicarii

was a group whose name came from Sica, a small dagger members of this extreme group used to hide underneath their robes and assassinate their opponents in Jerusalem and elsewhere. Eventually, because of their ruthless nature, assassinations and terror, members of this group headed by Elazar Ben-Yair escaped from Jerusalem to Masada (it is unclear exactly when, or how, the Sicarii took control of Masada). This escape took place before the Roman army put a siege on, and in AD 70 destroyed, Jerusalem. That conquest entailed burning the temple and butchering the inhabitants.

Josephus describes how the Sicarii on Masada would not come to the help of the besieged in Jerusalem; how they raided nearby villages, including Ein Geddi (where they murdered 700 women and children and robbed their supplies). As the Roman army was crushing the revolt, advancing from north to south, more and more Jews were drawn into that revolt, with tragic results. The Romans were systematically destroying any resistance. After the fall of Jerusalem, not much was left. It took the Romans some time to decide to crush the last three fortresses that remained unsubdued: Macherus, Herodion and Masada. Masada was the last. Although we do not have an exact date, somewhere between the end of AD 72 and early AD 73, the Romans moved their 10th legion (Fretensis) against Masada. The siege probably took about 7 weeks (Roth 1995) and Masada fell on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan (Xanthicus). Prior to that, Ben-Yair made two speeches to his Sicarii begging them to commit suicide so as not to fall slaves to the Romans. Out of the 967 rebels on top of Masada, 960 killed one another and 7 hid themselves and survived to tell the story. Contrary to his description of the Roman siege around other fortified targets (e.g., Jerusalem, Gamla, Yodfat, Macherus) where the Roman army faced fierce resistance, no such resistance is described around Masada. The implication is that the Sicarii, so adept at assassination and terror, lacked fighting spirit when it came to face the Roman army. Neither did they resist the Roman army for three years nor did they stage a last stand battle but preferred suicide. Even a Biblical Samson end (that is, kill oneself together with one's enemies), was not considered. Josephus expresses respect for those committing suicide but no more than that.

Thus, the historical narrative found in Josephus is sad and tragic. He describes a doomed revolt, fights among the Jews, and a bitter disastrous end of the revolt, which ended with the torturous death of a very large number of Jews and the destruction of the temple. As a final act, three years after the revolt was crushed, we have a collective suicide of a group of extremist Jews on Masada. From Josephus' perspective, the end of Masada was unheroic and unwise.

Mythical Masada. One needs to be reminded that until the 20th century, the Masada historical narrative was largely in deep sleep among Jews. Was the historical narrative, as told by Josephus, the one Jews have been exposed to? Certainly not. The Masada historical narrative is definitely not a tale of heroics. On the contrary. And yet, Masada has been described, and is widely regarded, as a place of supreme heroism. How was such a tragic and frightening narrative transformed into a heroic tale? Why? When?

To answer these questions a series of methodologies was used. To begin with, it was necessary to go back in time, search archives, newspapers and history books in order to find out

when changing the Masada historical narrative took place. I located its origin in the beginnings in the second decade of the 20th century. As I moved forward in time, it became clear that the early crystallization of the myth took place in the 1920s, but picked up momentum in the 1930s. In the early 1940s the myth was pretty much crystallized and ready. It had a few salient figures supporting it, but the major figure was one Shmaria Guttman whose role in originally helping the myth into being can not be underestimated. Luckily, I could interview him, twice. The methodology for these questions thus included textual (written and transcribed interviews in the media) analysis and interviews (e.g., with children's book authors). Clearly, the myth began to decline in the mid-1960s. It was also very obvious that the myth was developed and disseminated by secular Jews. Observant Jews were not fond of the myth, and ultra orthodox Jews even criticized it. For the latter, the idea of militarily challenging the Roman Empire, the collective suicide or the assassinations committed by the Sicarii were acts viewed with scorn rather than awe.

Now that we had the dates, we could ask the why question. The answer was obvious. As the Zionist national movement, dominated by secular Jews, began to preach and later practice the return of Jews to their homeland, they had not only to face the anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews as "non fighters" but also to give the young generation of Israelis some heroic narratives. In this way a mystical connection with past could be achieved and a new consciousness of the new Jew could be forged. This functional necessity became much more pressing in the early 1940s when the small Jewish community in Palestine was facing the possible invasion of the Nazi Korpus Afrika commanded by Rommel. The peak days of the myth thus stretch from about the 1940s to the 1960s. Following the 1967 war (the "Six days War") new sites of heroism were accessible, new mythologies were created, and the importance of Masada declined. When I say "peak" or "declined" I refer to measuring such indices as: visits of Israelis to Masada, visits of youth movements on Masada, swearing-in military ceremonies on Masada. The next question is what is the Masada mythical narrative? To find out, I examined tour guide books, elementary and high schools history textbooks, history textbooks, encyclopedias; we examined children's literature, movies, the arts, I joined tour guides on Masada and listened to what the guides had to say, we checked the way Masada was presented in the Israeli army, in youth movements, in the media, and in the pre-state underground groups. When we look at all these sources, what the nature of the Masada Mythical narrative is becomes clear. Thus, if we take the many different sources of where the Masada myth appears and summarize them, then the essence of the Masada mythical narrative may be sketched briefly as follows:

The leaders of the popular Great Revolt were Zealots—adherents of one of the Jewish ideological trends of the period. The imperial Roman army crushed the revolt, conquered and destroyed Jerusalem together with the Second Temple of the Jews. The Zealots who survived the siege and destruction of the city escaped to the fortress of Masada, a stronghold difficult to reach atop a mountain near the Dead Sea. From there, the Zealots harassed the Romans and created such a threat that the Romans decided to make the tremendous military effort required and destroy Masada. Consequently, the

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Romans gathered their army, made the long and arduous march in the Judean desert and reached Masada. There, they surrounded the fortress and put it under siege. After three years of heroic battle by the few Zealots against the huge Roman army, the Zealots on Masada realized that their situation was hopeless. They faced a grim future: either be killed by the Romans, or become slaves. Elazar Ben-Yair, the commander, addressed his followers and persuaded them all that they had to die as free men. They thus decided to kill themselves, a heroic and liberating death, rather than become wretched slaves. When the Roman soldiers entered Masada, they found only silence and dead bodies (Ben-Yehuda 2002:46).

Historical Masada has thus been transformed from a narrative of a disaster and became a symbol for a heroic last stand. In the words of another famous Israeli icon, the former chief-of-staff and politician Moshe Dayan (1983:21):

Today, we can point only to the fact that Masada has become a symbol of heroism and of

Liberty for the Jewish people to whom it says:

Fight to death rather than surrender;

Prefer death to bondage and loss of freedom.

Clearly, the popular, widespread Masada mythical narrative retained some elements of the historical narrative in it, but in the main, it is significantly different from what Josephus tells us. It takes a long, complex and at some points unclear historical sequence and reduces it to a simple and straightforward heroic narrative, characterized by a few clear themes. It emphasizes that a small group of heroes, who had survived the battle of Jerusalem, chose to continue the fight against the Romans to the bitter end rather than surrender.

The Masada mythical narrative is thus constructed by transforming a tragic historical event into a heroic fable. The hapless revolt is transformed into a heroic war. The questionable collective suicide on Masada is transformed into a brave last stand of the few against the many. Some illustrative transformation themes are: contrary to Josephus, the rebels are referred to as "Zealots" (for their "zeal" for freedom) instead of the Sicarii; the massacre in Ein Geddi disappears; the siege on Masada is prolonged to three years; the two speeches of Ben-Yair are telescoped into one and the seven survivors disappear – heroes, after all, do not hesitate and do not choose life over suicide; Masada is frequently portrayed as a rebel base for operations against the Romans; in fact, no evidence exists for this claim.

The result is the construction of a very powerful, persuasive and consistently heroic tale. Moreover, many times this mythical narrative was told to young people after a long and arduous trek in the Judean desert. The plan used to call for climbing to Masada just before the sun rises over the Dead Sea in the east, and standing on top. As the yellowish dreary desert wakes up, on top of the butte, the cold breeze of the morning, with torches still burning, the mythical narrative is told. The suspension of disbelief in this orchestrated Schpiel is complete, and a strong feeling of national solidarity was achieved. Trust me, in my youth I was one of those young Israelis undergoing this dramatic event.

The archaeological excavations. Masada was excavated a few times, but the main excavations took place between 1963-1965 under the tight supervision of prof. Yigael Yadin. The next question was how come these excavations

gave such a strong support for the myth? The methodology here was different. The excavators of Masada met every day, at the end of the day, to discuss the findings of the day. These daily sessions were recorded and transcribed. The Institute of Archaeology at Hebrew University allowed me full and free access to these transcriptions. Examining these transcripts, in fact, opened a fascinating porthole into the daily discussions and debates about different findings on Masada. One can actually understand how the archaeologists were conducting their daily science on Masada. From that point on, what I did was to check each and every source that I could locate, as per find, to examine how the find was presented and how its interpretation developed. The follow-up ended in the 1990s when the final findings from Masada were published. When examined in this way, it is easy to see how the archaeologists, time and again, sacrificed truth for a myth. Again and again, as I demonstrate in my 2002 book, one can see how the different artifacts found on Masada were interpreted so as to support the myth. This included suppressing some findings, ignoring alternative and competing explanations, and suppressing any criticism of Yadin's version. Indeed, much of the criticism about these excavations came from outside Israel. It is interesting to note that when, in the 1990s, the final reports of the excavations were published (long after Yadin died and could no longer exert any influence), almost none of Yadin's interpretation found its way into these publications. Thus, in the final analysis, and to the credit of the editors of these detailed reports, science did triumph.

Let me use one illustration. On Nov. 26, 1963 the excavators found on the lower level of the northern palace three skeletons: a woman age 17-18, a child age 11-12 and a man age 20-22. Yadin is recorded as saying that this can not have been a family. Some pieces of armor were found near the skeletons. Nothing more was added to the find. Yadin began to evolve an interpretation of this find and in 1966 (in a book) already suggested that these bones may have been those of the last fighter on Masada and of his family. In 1971 (in an encyclopedia) he declared that the bones belonged to "an important commander of Masada and his family" and in 1973 (in a speech on Masada) these bones became "the remains of ... a very important commander, his wife, and their child, just like in the description of Josephus...." Of course, where exactly Josephus describes this is not disclosed, or how these bones became a "family" of an "important commander," perhaps of the "last fighter" is entirely unclear and left to the imagination of the reader.

Yadin's interpretation of Masada was significant because it was clearly ideologically motivated, aimed to reinforce Masada's role in Israel's national narrative. Ideology (including mythology) and science have two entirely different jobs: ideologically-grounded myths are not efforts to reveal truth but to promote moral values, mobilize sentiment and energy, sustain loyalty and commitment. As such the Masada mythical narrative was quite effective. Science, on the other hand, is aimed to reveal truth, distinguish it from falsehood, and ranks the issue of validity very high. In fact, science should protect us from getting entangled in our own mythology, from actually confusing reality with fiction. Yadin used the cloak of science to support a myth. As such, it may present a unique form of

deviance: falsifying interpretations not for the sake of a scientific theory, but for the sake of a national myth. By sacrificing truth Yadin also sacrificed science.

Conceptualizations. The Masada mythical narrative was analyzed with the analytical framework of collective memory. At that time, in the 1990s, researchers in this area were focused on such issues about the past as "did it happen or not." In this sense, the Masada myth fits very well into the Zeitgeist of the research agenda of that era. Vinitzky-Seroussi's (2002) illuminating conceptualization about fragmented memory was not available in 1995 and so the main analysis was to see how the Masada myth was composed of some historical parts and some imaginary parts. This analysis basically followed Barry Schwartz's now classic distinction between the continuity and discontinuity of collective memory. Like other new innovations, Vinitzky-Seroussi's recent innovation enables us a potentially fresh new look at these findings. We can try to re-analyze the commemoration of Masada as a fragmented memory, for example by different groups of Jews (e.g., secular vs. observant; or even within different secular groups). This analysis will inevitably require us to decide whether it is the nature of the past that makes it fragmentary, or if all we have is a potential for a fragmentary commemoration, which may not necessarily materialize. In contradistinction, the main conceptual framework used in Sacrificing Truth was an examination of how science works, how knowledge is generated, and particularly how, why and when deviance in science occurs. That is, a conceptualization framed in the sociologies of science and deviance. Kohl's (e.g., 1995 with Fawcett and 1998) work on the mutual influence of nationalism, politics and ideology vis-a-vis archaeology played an important role in this conceptualization.

Finale. The transformation of the Masada historical narrative into the Masada mythical narrative is a fascinating process. Much like Zertal's (1999) work, this is an examination of how a disaster was transformed into a heroic tale. My work on Masada illustrates, to my mind, how one can examine with two different prisms, using different methodologies, and different interpretative analytical frameworks, a research field. And, I should not finish this piece without expressing some sense of historical irony. The last transformation of Masada is the contemporary – it has transformed into a major tourist site, even with some illegal drug parties on top. Contemporary Israeli society has changed so much that the first two transformations simply do not fit it any longer. It is now that UNESCO decided to adopt this majestic and grim place for a World Heritage Site.

NOTES

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The Propitious Penny, continued

In our commodified society where practically all human activity carries a price and those prices are costly, do people even remember the concepts of "pinching pennies" and "a penny saved is a penny earned?" How viable is the penny? In a larger sense, can we measure the value of thrift in our society? This question was perfect for introducing a unique research methodology to my team of 36 Introduction to Sociology students in Iowa: the century-forgotten *Natural Field Study*.

Resurrecting Natural Field Experimentation

This study examines these questions: If our lowest denomination currency, the one-cent coin, rests on the floor even in a well-traveled area, will anyone stop to pick it up? How many people pass by before someone picks it up? What visible physical characteristics describe the persons who do pick up pennies: elderly? child? wealthy? poor? male? female? white? non-white? Is one type of person more likely than another to care for a fallen penny?

To examine these questions, a novel methodology, indeed a resurrected research paradigm, was implemented. The Penny Study as natural field experiment brings to scholarly venue a method of social-scientific research which dominated the pre-1920 mindset. When the Roaring Twenties appeared, the method roared out of sight, falling into disfavor as laboratory field experimentation came into vogue.

But as a participant in Yale University's Institution for Social & Policy Studies Summer Program: Experiments in the Social Sciences 2001 (with thanks to ISPS's Donald Green), I was fortunate to develop skill in conducting natural field experiments. What is so exciting about this methodology? The keywords: *natural*, meaning the phenomenon studied occurs in the normal public realm and is not artificially-contrived; *field*, meaning the study takes place within the natural society and not in a laboratory setting; and *experiment*, meaning something is manipulated and there is randomness of participation.

Therefore, this propitious form of research offers the validity of natural conditions among real people with the randomness of a lottery so coveted by researchers, as statistically documented by Green and his Yale colleagues.

My team of 36 student-sociologists eagerly agreed to participate in my special natural field experiment to assess whether or not the penny is valued to the extent that someone (besides me) would make the effort to pick up the coin. After all, for each coin I ever picked up, either I was extremely lucky to be the very first to encounter it after the previous owner lost it, or it had indeed rested there for who knows how long.

So to test public support of the penny, my students at the Iowa City Campus of Kirkwood Community College — a Top 12 nationally-ranked Vanguard college of 20,000 students --set out to place pennies throughout Eastern Iowa to examine the phenomenon of whether or not a passer-by would rescue a lost penny, a coin that is there for the taking. But because we realize that bending to pick up a penny is a physical endeavor some people might think not worth the effort, an equal number of nickels and dimes were also placed. As variables, they would indicate whether people will physically bend over to pick up a penny, a non-penny, or none at all. In total, the behavior of more than 4,000 men, women, and children was unobtrusively observed as they physically walked past, over, or even on top of, 150 coins that were placed individually at over 40 sites including street corners, banks, hallways, private businesses, mall shops, pedestrian walkways, libraries, grocery stores, and elsewhere.

Each coin was discreetly placed through the act of kneeling down to supposedly adjust a shoelace or stocking, while silently placing a coin upon the ground. Each coin had been carefully chosen to be of normal usage in appearance so it would not draw attention by being shiny-new nor antique-valuable nor distastefully-soiled.

And because there is a superstition regarding coin heads and tails in that a *head's up* coin is deemed *good* luck while *tail's up* means *bad* luck—all coins were placed “head’s up” on the ground in public places. (Student-researcher Sarah Griffith confirmed this in test-studies.)

Each coin was placed individually then carefully monitored unobtrusively from a distance for 20 minutes to see whether or not a passer-by would stop to pick up the coin. For safety precautions, coins were not placed in any location which might endanger a small child. Characteristics of each coin-picker were recorded.

Findings

Although 69% of all pennies, nickels, and dimes were picked up, only 52% of all pennies were, followed by 72% for nickels and 82% for dimes, both above average. Pennies received the least respect — many were left unwanted and unclaimed, not just throughout each 20-minute trial, but as several observers explained, “They are still there!” One of every three coins was not picked up, and in most cases this was the penny.

Figure 1. Coins Picked-Up and Left, of 150 Coin Trials

Coin	Picked-Up		Left	
	#	%	#	%
Penny	26	52	24	48
Nickel	36	72	14	28
Dime	41	82	9	18
Average		69		31

Fully 2,304 persons passed by the pennies, more than the sum total of nickels’ and dimes’ passers-by. Penny or not, men are twice more likely than women to pick up a coin. Children are most likely to pick up the pennies; teenagers overall pick up the most coins; and people over the age of 50 bend to pick up a coin only if it is a dime. Reflecting local racial diversity, 90% coin-pickers were white with 10% non-white. And reflecting local estimated social-economic status, only one street person and only one visibly wealthy person each claimed a coin.

Figure 2. Characteristics of Coin-Pickers, in Percent

	Gender		Approximate Age				
	Male	Female	Child	Teen	20s-30s	40s-50s	>50
Penny	62	38	38	12	27	23	0
Nickel	64	36	19	26	33	19	3
Dime	68	32	2	42	12	15	29

Of particular interest is that although coins were left at various locations, the one place in which coins were readily claimed were banks. Evidently, the act of banking draws an appreciation for even the penny.

In considering these findings, the team of 36 student sociologists reported varied observations. “No one picked up the penny. People walked over it, some with their faces down looking at the penny. They did not bother to pick it up,” said Margaret Chowdhury. “The penny was never picked up. It is still there today,” said Paul Soderlund, who set his on a street corner. Likewise, one-month later, Corey Nagle, Dory

Heidemann-Crees, Caiyun Zhao, and Barrett Tucker reported that their one-cent coins also were “Still there!” And “Regarding my penny,” said Aimee Baker, “nobody even looked twice!”

To examine whether the hindrance is the *penny* or the *act of bending over* to claim a coin, we introduced the variables of nickels and dimes. Although it is evident that even some of those coins receive little respect, when compared to the penny, they are more highly-valued.

“No one even looked at the penny. It seemed to be invisible. People looked directly at both the nickel and the dime but were reluctant to pick up either one,” said Steven Bock, who planted coins at an upscale business site. “I don’t think anyone wanted to appear needy.”

Amanda Wehr, who placed coins at the University of Iowa Memorial Union, and Micah MacDonald, who placed coins at the UI Main Library, saw their coins looked at, stepped on, and kicked down the hall. Even the dimes were not picked up.

Though nickels were appreciated especially by a child who immediately spent one on gum, dimes appeared most coveted. “An older lady eyed my dime for a while,” said Daisy Thompson. “Then she rushed over, but looked embarrassed about picking it up.” Said Lindsey Jo Yoder, “The older woman who claimed my dime looked very happy and said it was her lucky day.” And Becky McCollum discovered, “In my case, the dime was gone before I could turn around.”

Said student sociologist Amanda Wehr, “Small change doesn’t mean that much to people anymore. They don’t think it is worth it to stop and pick up a small coin when they are in a hurry because they know that it really won’t get them that much.”

Interpretations

Why do adults publicly display such a lack of interest in the penny although it rests at their feet as *free money*?

Theory 1: Small Change is No Big Deal

Witnessed were men and women who walked past or even on top of coins which sat unclaimed as currency. Some coins were stepped upon; some were kicked down the hallway. Some were picked up and pocketed; some were tossed into the air or given to someone else, often a child. This suggests that to adults, coins are not regarded as highly-valued objects.

Theory 2: Time is Money

For those people who ignore free cash, perhaps their defense is they are just too busy. Instead of *A Penny Saved* as mantra they believe *Time Is Money*. It takes time in a busy day to stop and pick up a coin. Apparently, that split second is worth more than a penny because most pennies are left unclaimed.

Theory 3: People are Downright Lazy

To bend over to pick up a coin is to exert energy. Physically, some people cannot do this action; but among the 2,304 people who passed by the pennies, someone among them must have been healthy and fit. Iowa is, after all, considered one of the healthiest states in the Union. Maybe people are just too lazy to pick up a coin. These are probably the same folks who leave socks and newspapers on living room floors.

Theory 4: Picking up Coins is Embarrassing

It has indeed been observed that many of the coin-pickers looked embarrassed about the act of picking up the coin. This is more than just blood rushing to the face, as the

researchers explained that the persons looked this way and that as if to hope that no one had noticed them. How can picking up a lost coin be an embarrassing act? Strangely enough, in this century when *sexual* needs are openly discussed, Heaven forbid that an adult man or woman be seen as having *financial* needs. However, children openly proclaim joy when finding and claiming even a penny; for they do not have the inhibitions prevalent to an adult mindset. A child sees a penny as a penny, not as a potential symbolic indicator of socioeconomic status.

Theory 5: Pennies are For Children

Pennies are deeply-rooted into our childhood stories and poems and experiences. Perhaps pennies, like toys, have also become ingrained in adults' minds as childplay. Adults saw the pennies, and let them remain unclaimed on floors and streets. But it is a fact that when an adult was accompanied by a child, the adult encouraged the child to pick up the penny. Is it because a penny is child's play? Or is it because the adult was too lazy or too embarrassed to pick up the coin himself or herself? The answer must be that the adult encouraged the child to pick up the coin because it would make the child happy, as it was observed to do.

The Future of the Penny

It is true that the penny — even when placed head's up— will be walked upon and kicked before someone makes the effort to claim it. However, perhaps the most important finding is that children value the coin.

Participating researchers reported that adults who picked up any coin did so with a smile, proudly showing that coin to a companion before pocketing it. Researchers also reported the finder giving the coin to a young child when accompanied; or instructing the child to pick-up the coin and keep it — always, the child was elated.

A child, the smallest among us who has not yet entered the work force, has to look for money where it can be found. Not every child receives an allowance; and children should not expect a salary for conducting household chores. How else

is there for a child to honestly learn about money? By experiencing one of the little joys in life, finding a coin that has been lost by someone else.

Although Congressional debate is attempting to render the penny and its place in our national currency worthless (www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/010528), children need their pennies. It is a child who is most eager to claim a lost penny or show excitement when handed one by an adult.

Perhaps Kelly Link, Penny Study student-sociologist, sums it up best: "My research shows that people still care about the penny. It may be just young children who care, but at least some people still do. How would poor people give their children money if there were no such thing as a penny? Even though pennies are not worth much, they are still money; and when saved, they can add up."

Conclusion

This study yields lessons that are not just substantive—about the relative value of thrift in American society—but also methodological and pedagogical.

Not only was the natural field experiment perfectly suited to the research problem at hand, its ready affordability makes it especially attractive in this age dominated by "big science." The total cost of this original primary field research was \$6.16 (the value of the claimed coins). Admittedly, that is rather *expensive* relative to the entirely cost-free study I designed for one of my other Intro to Sociology classes: they "Aaaah, Aaaah, Aaaah, Chooo!" sneezed all over Eastern Iowa to assess strangers' reactions. Those results? When a sneezer said "Excuse me," after the sneeze, 44 percent people said "Bless you," 7 percent said "Gesundheit," 36 percent made no response, and 13 percent made other responses including offering tissues. When a sneezer did not say "Excuse me" after the sneeze, 36 percent said "Bless you," 4 percent said "Gesundheit," 47 percent said nothing, and 13 percent made other responses including expressing a concern for cold season.

Moreover, the method offers manifest pedagogical value. Just listen to my 36 students, who began to learn sociology in the most interesting and effective way—by *doing* it.

Conference Reports

Concrete and Brick Walls: Symbolic Boundaries Research Network Online Conference, Feb. 10-14, 2003 *Dustin Kidd, University of Virginia*

Conference preparation for a new age: crawl out of bed, remain in your pajamas, turn on your computer, and call your cat up to your lap. No need for PowerPoint slides, nametags, business cards, or hotel maps. The only map you will need is the 'nav bar' at the top of the Website. Welcome to the Symbolic Boundaries Research Network Online Conference, held in February. Bethany Bryson hosted the conference, including setting up the Website and serving as a discussant for many of the conversations that took place.

Participants began in the Convention Center, where they could enter their own biographical statements, read bios of other participants, and review the goals of each of the four

sessions. These sessions were organized by methodological and theoretical issues that researchers in symbolic boundaries confront. The Emergence session focused on the construction and maintenance of boundaries, whereas the Change session moved the discussion to boundary negotiation, or how they "move, strengthen, expand, or shrink." Interplay was meant to be a room where participants examined the intersections of racial, gender, and class boundaries, however, and interestingly, much of the discussion focused on ethnicity and international migration. And finally, the Sub/Objective session examined the location of symbolic boundaries—in the words of the subtitle, "mental maps or brick walls."

The conference was open to all, regardless of membership in the symbolic boundaries network, or the culture section, or even the ASA. Participants included faculty and graduate students, including the “big names” of symbolic boundaries and novices in the field.

One question raised in multiple sessions by several participants was the value of distinguishing symbolic boundaries from social. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein first raised the issue in her opening to the Emergence session, asking whether any boundary is truly non-symbolic. Suzanne Shanahan suggested that the analytical distinction consequentially privileges social boundaries as more real than the “merely symbolic,” an outcome that researchers in the field may wish to avoid. To this, Michele Lamont responded that we need to maintain the distinction because of its analytical usefulness and that we must also address the privileging of the non-symbolic by reminding our fellow scholars that “cultural structures are structures,” in other words, that the symbolic is powerfully real. Along similar lines, Roger Friedland and Nina Eliasoph held a discussion in the Change session about the mechanics of institutional boundaries and the ambiguity of current theory on the topic.

At most conferences, entering one session means missing all the others during that same time period. Not so with the online conference, where travel between rooms was encouraged and frequent. Nina Eliasoph’s comment, “I’ve never been such an ‘internet fiend’ before,” highlights the level of intellectual energy that the conference nurtured around the study of symbolic boundaries.

The conference offered a special sneak preview of many current research projects. Sarah Corse discussed her collaboration with Bethany Bryson on artistic display practices. Al Young explained his recent work with African American scholars whose research and teaching centers on the experiences of African Americans. His project explores the possibility that boundary transcending and boundary maintenance are simultaneous and surprisingly complementary processes. Robin Wagner-Pacifici is looking at military surrenders to examine the “deep structure of transitional events” through an analysis

of moments when boundaries are in flux. Markella Rutherford is studying commencement addresses from throughout the twentieth century with an eye toward changes in views of morality.

Although many of the discussions pinpointed weaknesses in existing theory about symbolic boundaries, the conference also generated new theoretical material for the field. Paul Lichterman opened the Sub/Objective discussion by outlining four principles about the relationship between groups and their boundaries. His first principle illustrates his preference for the brick walls that the title of the session set in contrast to mental maps, arguing that boundaries are produced in “concrete settings.” Second, he argued that the symbolic boundaries of a group might vary depending on the context in which the group finds itself. Third, he claims that symbolic boundaries are at least partially constitutive of group identity, and not simply a by-product. Finally, he says that boundary maintenance takes on a ritual character in some settings, such that group members are expected to carry out their boundary work in determined ways following established scripts.

Charles Tilly began the Change discussion by defining social identities using three concepts: 1) social boundaries between persons and groups, 2) relations, practices, and representations within boundaries, and 3) relations, practices, and representations across boundaries. He went on to offer a theory of how boundaries form and change and a discussion of boundary activation and de-activation.

James Roebuck closed the Sub/Objective session with a discussion of the meaning of the word “symbol,” bringing me to the question: If a conference happens online, does that make it a symbolic conference? The answer is yes, if by symbol we mean Webster’s fifth definition of the word, quoted by Roebuck, “an act, sound, or object having cultural significance and the capacity to excite or objectify a response.” The conference allowed new networks and friendships to forge among researchers with common interests, served as a sounding board for unfolding projects, and pushed forward new approaches to the methodological and theoretical difficulties faced by the field.

M3C at Emory, August 2003

Andy Perrin, UNC-Chapel Hill (with help from Ann Mische, Rutgers, and John Evans, UCSD)

On August 20, after several days of conference activity at the ASA meetings, a group of cultural sociologists met at Emory University in Atlanta to continue a discussion begun at a similar miniconference in 1995. The “meaning and measurement” miniconference, organized by John Mohr (University of California - Santa Barbara) and Tim Dowd (Emory University), explored issues at the boundary between theory and method in cultural sociology.

Following a delicious breakfast (including the regional delicacy, Krispy Kreme donuts), the group split into two workshops: one tracing the theory and practice of coding, the other approaching mathematical modeling of cultural forms.

The coding group took a largely theoretical turn, as the question of “why do we code?” seemed to precede those of “how” and “what.” There was much discussion on two ideas of what coding means: CLASSIFYING information into meaningful piles or DISCARDING some information in order to make sense of the rest. Participants also discussed questions of how fine-grained coding should be, and foreshadowed the con-

tent analysis discussion by considering how, and to what extent, computers can assist the coding process. My own view is that we uncovered a fissure between two very different practices, each of which happens to be called “coding”: one whose point is REDUCING complex data into parsimonious theory, and another whose point is ORGANIZING complex data into relatively idiographic patterns.

In the seminar on formal analysis, mathematical sociology, and the interpretation of culture, Harrison White launched the discussion with a question about the meaning of meaning. He proposed that meaning is to be found in switches between networks of relations, i.e., in movements between social formations rather than in individuals, groups, or relations themselves. That set off an animated discussion about how to think about meaning. Suggestions included that meaning can be found in the gaps or cracks between action and institutions, as Ann Swidler proposes; in processes of elaboration and appropriation; in transgression of social boundaries; in interlocking publics; and in “critical moments” of social and cultural change.

There was a general feeling that the cultural processes we are most interested in involve dynamic processes of movement, interaction, and change.

Several people then raised the challenging question: how can we capture these kinds of processes mathematically? How can we use intrinsically reductive and static techniques to examine movement, interaction, and change? What kinds of tools can we use to measure and to map such processes? Some participants lamented that our methodological tools seem to be way behind our theoretical and substantive interests. Before we all succumbed to despair, however, several people offered concrete suggestions of ways in which they are using formal methodologies to capture such dynamics—by, for example, looking at relations that converge in “critical moments,” at the structure of micro-interactional sequences, and at the intersections of actors and discourse across a series of events.

A return to the large group yielded productive discussion of the theoretical implications of method selection. We discussed the tension between “new” and “old” analytic methods, as well as the same tradeoff between complexly describing complex data and parsimoniously analyzing theoretically important trends among them.

The second breakout session found one group discussing the relation between theory and meaning and measurement, and the other discussing the state of the art in content analysis. The two groups diverged substantially, with the theory group debating abstract questions on the nature, extent, and location of culture. The discussion followed relatively

well-trodden paths, dealing principally with supra-methodological problems of embeddedness and causality in the discussion of culture.

The content analysis group, by contrast, discussed specifics of techniques and software packages for the systematic analysis of text.

The afternoon session on current directions in Content Analysis programs began with the pragmatic — drawing up a list of programs that participants had used. After some grouping of programs by their primary uses and assumptions, we had a basic conversation about the pros and cons of each approach. We had a preliminary conversation about the deepest assumptions of these programs, such as that they are focused on disambiguation instead of ambiguity, and that “improvements” in the technology are focused upon increasing the accuracy of what the speaker “means” to say. Both were questioned. In the end, we agreed that the holy grail of content analysis had not been revealed to us, but that there were plenty of further conversations to have on the topic.

By the end of the meeting, we seemed to agree, at a pragmatic level, on a certain diversity of data, method, and theory. The participants are very sensitive to the interplay of the three questions, but also to the likelihood that these questions must be worked out in the practice of research, not in the abstract. The conference hopes to morph into a virtual network, swapping ideas, problems, solutions, and thoughts on the problem of merging theory and method into exciting new empirical cultural sociology.

Music Mavens Mass at Minconference

Timothy J. Dowd, Emory University

On August 20th, more than fifty people gathered at Emory University for the Sociology of Music MiniConference — an event sponsored by the Sociology of Culture Section and partially funded by Emory Sociology. On the one hand, this group of people represented an interesting mix. Participants ranged from graduate students to full professors; they comprised mostly sociologists but also scholars from American studies, ethnomusicology, literature and organization studies; and they represented primarily the U.S. but also the nations of Canada, England, Germany, Hungary, and the Netherlands. On the other hand, this group was marked by its singular focus on music and its sociocultural context.

The MiniConference was organized with three goals in mind. The first was to provide a forum for ongoing work in the sociology of music. This resulted in the presentation of thirty papers during ten round-table sessions (for a listing of presentations, see <http://www.emory.edu/SOC/MiniConference/program.htm>). Though all papers focused on music, they were incredibly diverse in terms of their substance, theory and empirics. Presenters collectively dealt with such genres as blues, jazz, country, rap, techno, gospel, rock, and classical music — focusing on the production, content, enjoyment, and identity construction that accompanies and shapes musical genres. They approached these genres via a wide range of methods — such as ethnography, survey research, content analysis, network analysis, and archival research — and they drew on a wider range of theoretical frameworks. Simply put, the thirty presentations nicely demonstrated the breadth of the Sociology of Music. I'm pleased to report that Pete Peterson

and I are co-editing a special issue for *Poetics* that will feature some of the presented papers, thereby offering a hint of what was heard at the MiniConference.

The second goal was to hear of cutting-edge work in the Sociology of Music. To that end, we were fortunate to hear a panel of sociologists describe their forthcoming books. Andy Bennett spoke of his volume that he is editing with Pete Peterson, *Musical Scenes: Local, Trans-Local, and Virtual* (Vanderbilt University Press). Tia DeNora described her theoretical work, *After Adorno: Rethinking Music Sociology* (Cambridge University Press). Bill Danaher told of his and Vinnie Roscigno's *The Voice of Southern Labor: Radio, Music, and Textile Strikes, 1929-1934* (University of Minnesota Press). Rather than summarize each of these presentations, I'll simply report that all three presentations were outstanding. Indeed, it was stimulating to hear where these books and authors are taking the Sociology of Music.

The final goal was to create solidarity among those interested in the Sociology of Music. As a result, much of the MiniConference involved dialogue. Participants talked about their mutual and divergent interests in music, and they spoke of their ongoing efforts in the Sociology of Music (both in terms of teaching and research). Perhaps most importantly, they became better acquainted. As Paul DiMaggio noted, there was something heartening about seeing all these music sociologists gathered in one room. Hopefully, the connections that participants established at MiniConference will extend well beyond that gathering. In fact, I've already seen signs of that occurring.

Announcements and Reminders

Call for Papers and Reviewers for special issue of *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research* (Sage). "Children and Global, Commercial Culture." Dan Cook. University of Illinois, Guest Editor. We invite the submission of papers that will focus on commercialized children's culture and practice in the context of an increasingly globalizing marketplace. We especially welcome papers that examine children and their childhoods in "third-world" or "Global South" countries and contexts as we envision an issue that traverses varied ethnicities and localities. We welcome many types of work, including theoretical discussions, ethnographic-interpretive research, generational and feminist approaches. **Deadline:** April 15, 2004. For full Call for Papers either contact Dan Cook directly (dtcook@uiuc.edu), or locate his page on the departmental website (<http://www.comm.uiuc.edu/Advertising/>) where there is a link.

The Consumers, Commodities and Consumption Research Network, loosely affiliated with ASA, has been in existence for 5 years serving as forum for sociologists interested in the study of consumption. We have a website, a biannual newsletter and a listserv. Members have organized ASA sessions, published teaching materials through the ASA, and attended receptions and dinners together. We are currently soliciting petitions from those interested in making this group a full ASA Section. If you are interested, contact Dan Cook directly (dtcook@uiuc.edu) or download a petition from the group's website (<http://list-socrates.berkeley.edu/~nalinik/ccc.html>).

CULTURE SECTION COMMITTEES WANT YOUR NOMINATIONS!

Nominations Committee

Chair, Ron Jacobs (rjacobs@csc.albany.edu)
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Book Prize Committee

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