

Theory/Policy: Introduction

As an interdisciplinary forum, *Cultural Analysis* interweaves and overlaps a variety of vantage points on expressive and everyday culture. This fifth volume stands at a crossroads where theory meets policy, and where academic and public interests converge. The contributors come to this intersection from the fields of folklore, anthropology, and cultural studies. All these fields have been interdisciplinary highways at one time or another, but they have also been torn by conflicts between "applied" or "public sector" practitioners and academic purists.

In the United States, the debate over the legitimacy of public folklore began in the middle of the 20th century. In seeking to establish the study of folklore as an autonomous academic discipline, Richard M. Dorson, director of the Folklore Institute and first American department of folklore at Indiana University, disparaged the "application" and "popularization" of the field in the public sphere (e.g., Dorson 1950, 1969; see also Bendix 1997, 188–194). Later, Dorson even went so far as to combat the creation of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress (Bulger 2003). The establishment of folklore in higher education in the latter half of the century, however, produced far more experts in the field than could hope to find academic positions. It has thus contributed to the expansion and sophistication of public folklore practice in cultural in-

stitutions and apparatuses, from museums to folklife festivals, and from the offices of "city folklorists" to the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988; Baron and Spitzer 1992). Indeed, in spite of such tensions, the study of folklore has longstanding ties to the government of social life, going back at least to the 19th century, as an instrument for mapping populations and for representing provincial peripheries to metropolitan centers (Linke 1990; Noyes 1999).

The split between theory and public practice remains a leitmotif in the discipline, however, though the two are certainly no longer as bifurcated as they once were. In particular, questions of cultural politics and representation have created common ground between folklorists at universities, arts councils, museums, and various other public and private agencies and institutions. This theoretical reorientation has encouraged a reassessment of the division of labor in the field and has helped to heal the split between academic and applied traditions (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988; cf. Baron 1999).

As Barbro Klein demonstrates in this volume, similar tensions marked the development of the sibling discipline of folklife studies/ethnology in Sweden, in that case between scholars oriented towards social planning in the welfare state and those more concerned with historical analysis or cultural critique. Indeed, such debates are attested in various national disciplinary histories as well as those of international forums. Thus, for example, ethnologist Bjarne Rogan has brought to light how the International

Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) was born out of just such a creative tension between theory and policy, first as a subsidiary body of the Comité Internationale de Cooperation Intellectuelle (CICI) in Paris and of its successor, UNESCO, but later got rid of the policy agenda and refashioned itself as a "purely" academic organization (Rogan 2004). UNESCO, meanwhile, continues its ambitious cultural policy programs, which both re-present and refashion local culture as Dorothy Noyes reveals in her article here on "The Judgment of Solomon," where she examines some effects of the organization's efforts to safeguard "intangible cultural heritage" and the work of its sister organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in the field of folklore and traditional knowledge.

Anthropology, meanwhile, has perhaps made a smoother transition into the acceptance of the applied realm. Maybe this stems from its colonial past—after all, anthropology gained its institutionalized beginnings precisely from its promise to enable policy planning. Whether one considers the American Bureau of Ethnology (explicitly trying to both understand and control restive Native American groups, as outlined in the foundational report by its founder, John Wesley Powell, "The Need of Studying the Indian in Order to Teach Him" [1869]), or British social anthropology's emphasis on understanding power structures in its colonized territories (see, e.g., Asad 1973; Harris 1968; Leach 1984), anthropology has deep roots in practical applications (for a much fuller account, see Pels and Salemink 2000). Ruth

Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), a tract on Japanese national character undertaken during World War II for the U.S. government, proved a sort of watershed. After the war, many anthropologists maintained strong misgivings on working in the interest of the state—an understandable position, given the frequent antagonism between states and the minority groups that provide the staple of anthropological studies.

Instead, the modern growth in "applied anthropology"—which is often to say those anthropologists working outside the academy—has emphasized working with indigenous groups, NGOs, and educational groups rather than with state governments (see, for example, the highly influential society and journal "Cultural Survival"). Applied anthropology continues to be a large and important part of the anthropological discourse, but is often left theoretically framed in terms of simple advocacy for minority groups.

It is on the French school of thought and Foucauldian notions of power (*pouvoir*: literally, "to be able to"), that most of the current anthropological work on policy has depended. Such work remains estranged from the mainstream, however, and there appears to be a dearth of dialogue dealing with this critical juncture (with notable exceptions, such as Cris Shore and Susan Wright's 1997 *Anthropology of Policy. Critical Perspectives on Governance and Power*). Cris Shore continues his work in this volume of *Cultural Analysis* with his article investigating the cultural policies of the European Union.

In cultural studies, the so-called "cultural policy debate" began in the 1980s and continued well into the 1990s, as the field was carving out an institutional niche for itself in academia (see, e.g., Bennett 1992, 1998; Cunningham 1992; Lee 1992; O'Regan 1992; Miller 1994). The movement towards a practical engagement with cultural reform came largely out of Australia, but spilled over to British and American contexts, and it emphasized productive relations between intellectuals at universities and intellectuals within cultural institutions, bureaus, and agencies.

The movement within cultural studies towards practical engagement met with particularly vitriolic response in some circles in the United States, epitomized in Fredric Jameson's 1993 review of Tony Bennett's contribution to a collection of essays on *Cultural Studies* (1992). Here, Jameson expresses repugnance at the prospect of "talking to the ISAs" (i.e., the Ideological State Apparatuses, a term borrowed from the writings of Louis Althusser), apparently oblivious to the fact that he is speaking from within just such an apparatus—the university.

It may be that the American context is particularly conducive to the sort of bifurcation of academic and practical concerns that is evident in the "cultural policy" and the "public folklore" debates. As Tony Bennett has suggested, "the sheer size of the higher education sector [in the U.S.] and the significant role of private institutions within that sector provide the kind of institutional conditions which allow critical debate to circulate in a semi-autonomous realm which might seem removed from those

of government and administration" (Bennett 1998, 35). This is hardly the case elsewhere. In this volume, Tony Bennett challenges Habermas' theories on the public sphere, to assert that the dichotomization between academics and bureaucrats, between the theoretical and the practical, is overwrought; he argues that both belong in the more inclusive category of "intellectuals."

It has been said that the "cultural policy debate" produced more heat than light (Frow and Morris 1993, xxix), and much the same holds true of the debate surrounding public folklore. We think it is fair to say, however, that now that most of the heat has dissipated, what is left is a commitment to public engagement that has not corrupted or corroded the intellectual endeavors of either field but rather expanded and strengthened them. It is in this spirit that Cultural Analysis has undertaken this special volume. We believe that the past tensions and lacunae illustrate the need for an operational nexus between theory and policy, and for an open channel of communication between intellectual workers in higher education, in government, and in administration. Maintaining autonomy from advocacy as well as bureaucracy, critical engagement with cultural policy can contribute not only to a better government of culture and to a more effective contestation of that government, but also to the frameworks and tools of cultural analysis.

Each in its own area, the articles in this volume clear a space for critical thought within which cultural policies may be analyzed, explored, refined, reflected on, evaluated, questioned, and

contested. In part, this is the role played by the discussion piece—written on the volume's articles as well as its larger theme—by Toby Miller, who is one of those scholars who have led the way in the critical analysis and theorization of cultural policy. We invite our readers to participate in the exploration of these spaces, and we hope that this volume may contribute towards an increased understanding of this critical juncture between cultural theory and policy.

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