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Multicultural Geography versus Multicultural Genealogy: Ancient Distinctions with Contemporary Impacts *

Arguments about identity themselves often rest on claims about trans-historical realities that lie buried deep in history far beyond the purview of ordinary social analysis. In such contexts and because so much is often at stake, social researchers must exercise great care with their own historical constructions. In recent years, it has become academically fashionable to accept the reality and importance of multiple constructions of identity. While any view that welcomes the multiplicity and complexity of human realities is worth entertaining, such views can become a form of permission for analysts to abandon the development of critical historical positions. One effort social research that cannot abandon in these arenas is the systematic attempt to contrast the «inside» views of identity with those that academic theories and methods applied to contemporary and historical materials create. This contrast creates a unique space for social analysis. It also may become, under certain conditions, essential to political rapproachment among opposed groups [1].

These initial remarks are evidence of a concern over some dimensions of the current debates about identity in anthropology. The anthropological discussions are not informed enough about the pre-nineteenth century deployments of concepts and infrastructures surrounding identity, even in Europe and the United States. Many of the arguments made about the relationship between identity, ethnicity, and politics either operate at too

* I would like to thank Don Antonio Cea Gutiérrez for organizing this collection. This essay was stimulated by Julio Caro Baroja's idea of "ancient commonplaces" and revising it for publication once again reminded me of the personal debt I owe to my great teacher and friend. I would like to thank Michael Herzfeld for the invitation to join in the conference *European Identity and its Intellectual Roots* (Harvard Center for European Studies) that produced this paper, for his bounteous encouragement in its development, and for his permission to publish it in this collection dedicated to the memory of Julio Caro Baroja.

[1] While histories are often used to separate groups and legitimate opposition, another version of history emphasizing the ongoing historical changes in identities and the social interests of some who profit from fomenting social conflict could be used to modulate conflict as well.

great a level of generality when rooting the subject in history or at too limited and positivistic a level of analysis when referring ethnographically to particular contemporary situations [2].

The less than modest aim of the present paper is to refocus attention on certain historical dimensions of phenomena related to identity in an effort to persuade some scholars to devote more work to these crucial materials [3]. Specifically, this paper argues that the ancient infrastructure of notions of identity in the Western world contains certain elements of very long duration that remain important in nineteenth and twentieth century discourses. Of course, modern and contemporary discourse adds new elements and many scholars are attending to these. Still these new dimensions are difficult to analyze, perhaps even to notice, until they are distinguished from what has come before. Thus the specific analytical task here focuses on sorting out some pre-existing structures and ideas about identity from those that abound in modern and contemporary discourses. These efforts can sharpen our sense of what is unique in contemporary discussions of identity because it seems that there is no other way to make persuasive links between particular institutional contexts and conditions and specific discourses on identity.

A second, less developed, theme of this paper is the reminder that discourses on identity are not uniquely the monopolies of elites or of local communities. Identity formulation is a complex, often competitive process in which a wide variety of groups and institutional actors play a role. The current literature provides very little guidance for this kind of analysis and so, turning back the clock, the paper recommends reconsideration of the vision that led to Redfield, Singer, and Marriott's formulations of the ideas of «great» and «little» traditions. While the paper does not endorse this particular perspective, it does advocate a return to the complex dynamics of «parochialization» and «universalization» of elements in identity that they tried to untangle. This is nothing less than the challenge that we again examine how conceptual systems and practices from political and cultural centers often move down to the local level and how widespread local

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[2] As admirable and widely read as it is, Eric WOLF'S *Europe and the People without History* (1982) suffers from this kind of generality. A contemporary perspective that virtually rules out history, other than transactional histories, is Fredrik BARTH'S *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969).

[3] Two works by Michael HERZFELD are particularly relevant to my task. His *Anthropology Through the Looking Glass* helped me to see the connection between my ethnographic work and my work on determinist ideologies (HERZFELD, 1987) and his more recent *Social Production of Indifference* (HERZFELD, 1992) traces another anthropological path toward the issues that concern me in the present paper.

phenomena occasionally find their way into national and metropolitan discourses and statist ideologies. If issues of identity are conditioned by the interactions among global, national, regional, and local orders, then we cannot limit ourselves to the scrutiny of a few key literate texts or a few cases in studying these phenomena.

Set in the above contexts, the key argument of this paper is that there can be no doubt that the emergence of the liberal state is a key ingredient in the structuring of modern and contemporary issues of identity. The notion of national identities and their implications for citizen's rights indeed became a dominant theme in the nineteenth century. However, the twentieth century failure of this form of nation-state to provide sufficiently compelling and well-distributed improvements in social justice has led to a new set of claims to rights through group cultural identities. This paper suggests connecting the emergence of modern and contemporary discourses on identity to the failure of claims for social justice based on a broader human rights discourse couched in terms of social class. The argument is particularly influenced by the views of Charles Taylor (1989, 1992a, 1992b) and Iris Marion Young (1990). From these vantage points, new claims connect identity, authenticity, and rights in new and newly contradictory ways. In particular, they move away from a class and individual rights view of social justice to a view based on group membership.

Despite this apparently new trend, many of the concepts and arguments deployed politically and analytically themselves are complex replays of ancient themes and ideas about identity. As an observer of the increasingly racialized version of U.S. democracy, the increasingly regionalized version of democracy in Spain, the mixed racial and regional discourses in locales like the former Yugoslavia, and emergent conflicts elsewhere, I am struck to find ancient ideas finding their way into contemporary discourse. These contemporary claims to rights through identity connect identity, authenticity, and rights both in new ways and also inherit some predictable tensions and contradictions from the past. The old and new problems interpenetrate in a fascinating and perhaps dangerous way that all but an historical long view is likely to miss.

ANCIENT DISTINCTIONS: «NATURE» AND «NURTURE» (DETERMINISTIC THEORIES OF IDENTITY

One of the most productive notions I have found for dealing with the complex and vexing subjects of long-term cultural continuities is the concept of «ancient commonplaces» as developed by Julio Caro Baroja (Caro

Baroja, 1963). This concept does not refer uniquely to issues of identity but rather to a broader set of moral/classificatory dichotomies widely deployed throughout Western history. These are moral classifications that powerfully construct empirical objects as unproblematic realities upon which to build particular kinds of moral claims. Among them are the notions of urban versus rural society (the city and the country), upland versus lowland societies, traditional versus modern societies, communalism versus individualism, equality versus hierarchy, and nature versus nurture as causes for human action.

Caro Baroja's point is that these essentially moral dichotomies are repeatedly deployed throughout Western history as if they were analytical distinctions. Their effect is to buttress interested moral and political arguments on demonstrably inadequate views of the phenomena in question. They resist empirical analysis by supplanting it. Indeed, a key dynamic in such commonplaces is that one pole cannot exist without the other. The urban is defined only in opposition to the rural, the traditional in opposition to the modern, and so on. These classifications are thus not analytical models, but moral and political arguments, just as Mary Douglas so eloquently demonstrated years ago (Douglas, 1966).

In the present paper, the key ancient commonplace is the radical distinction between nature versus nurture, a commonplace that remains vigorous in our civil society and is a continuing presence in the halls of academe as well. A fuller analysis of this commonplace is not appropriate here, particularly because this analysis is contained in a book (Greenwood, 1985a) on deterministic ideologies. Here this commonplace will be developed only enough to link it to the debates on identity in a way that can help recast some of the framework of current analyses.

Virtually everyone is familiar with the nature/nurture distinction, learning it at the dinner table, in the lecture hall, and in the streets. This endlessly productive moral distinction allows, among many things, articulations of cultural pride and prejudice and the creation of historical ideologies to explain virtually the whole human world before our eyes. In this regard, the nature/nurture distinction is among the most protean and complex used, and finds its way into all discourses on race, gender, ethnicity, and environmentalism.

Its popularity is based solidly on its complete ambiguity. While it appears to be a clear dichotomy, radically separating that which is natural from that which is cultural, closer inspection reveals an ambiguous infrastructure that permits arguments of all kinds to be incorporated under its aegis. Justifying almost any kind of analysis, it suits nearly everyone's purpose to use it, and opposing sides of ideological arguments deploy the dichotomy in their mutual critiques.

One of the most intriguing features of this particular dichotomy is its hidden materialism. The nature/nurture argument rests on a «materialist» infrastructure even when it is used to advocate the superiority of culture over nature. To see the material foundation of this argument, one needs only turn to the literate texts of the cultures of ancient Greece, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as to the villages and cities of those areas throughout documented history. The Greek version is best known to us, principally because of our cultural biases and experiences [4] The following lays out just enough of the argument for purposes of this paper.

In the Greek version given to us in the Hippocratic corpus and other texts, the world is divided into properties, elements, humors [5]. The properties are the underlying constitutive principles of the material world: dry/moist and hot/cold. The system works via combinations and recombinations. Thus the combination of dry and cold yields the element Earth. Dry and hot yields Fire. Hot and moist creates Air and moist and cold, Water. All of the known universe is composed of these four elements [6] and the character of each object/entity in the world is attributed to the combination of properties creating the elements that yields its exact composition.

The elements, when combined in living organisms, give rise to the humors. Fire yields yellow bile, earth yields black bile, air yields blood, and water, phlegm. Each of these humors has associated behavioral attributes. Yellow bile yields choleric behavior, black bile moves toward melancholy, blood to bravery or nobility, and phlegm to a phlegmatic or passive/intellectual temperament. Thus the temperaments and individual personalities are viewed as the result of the predominance of particular combinations of humors, arising directly from the material composition of the elements which in turn express materially the underlying properties of the world.

The complexity of this system is created through the continuing combination and recombination of the polarities of the underlying properties, each yielding a new reality which, in turn, recombines to yield other realities. Everything in the world can be accounted for in these terms and all things can be analyzed according to their material composition.

The system, however, also can be deployed in the worlds of action and politics. The humoral model readily yields patterns of action since

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[4] Just whose ideas are whose is not clear. Certainly a good case can be made for Islamic influences and for Asian cultural productivity in this arena (LESLIE and YOUNG, 1992).

[5] See GREENWOOD, 1985b for references.

[6] As in any complex system that is widely deployed, there are hundreds of permutations, including systems with more elements.

the materialism of the system admits modification of the behavior of an organism by means of material manipulations of its environment and thus its internal humoral balance. Humoral medicine rebalances humoral systems by material treatments designed to shift the balance to more favorable («natural» for the individual) states. The character of places, individuals, and groups can also be explained by this system. The predominance of particular properties, elements, and humors forms the basis of an explanatory system that links environments, groups, and behaviors into an apparently seamless materialism.

Another way to understand the workings of this system is to view it as enacting a particular way of linking macrocosm and microcosm in explanation. The properties, elements, and humors provide a consistent materialism that moves from the inner reaches of the human psyche to the outer reaches of the known physical universe. Thus the movements of the stars, the changes of the seasons, the life cycles of plants and organisms all express or embody principles found everywhere. Of course, the material interpenetration of the system also encourages a pattern of thinking that links the movement of stars, seas, seasons, and human affairs, thereby linking science, astrology, medicine, psychology, cultural studies, and history into a related set of inquiries.

When I began to work with this literature, I was struck by both the symmetry and the integration of these models. They domesticate all exceptions into a system that appears to remain inviolate. And that may well be the key. In ancient commonplaces, no empirical counter-example can overturn the formulation.

In trying to understand how the argument is applied to humans, I found it necessary to distinguish two major analytical trends which may have been well differentiated in classical studies. Unfortunately, I have yet to discover the relevant references. As a result, with full knowledge that amateur classicism is a dangerous enterprise, I found it necessary to distinguish what I call the «environmental principle» from the «genealogical principle» in this system of thought.

Simply put, the environmental principle emphasizes the force of the elements in the environment in creating the behavioral make-up and cultural propensities of the humans living there. This is simply a particular variety of environmental determinism. In this sense, the material macrocosm reaches inward to affect the character and behavioral propensities of groups directly.

Contrasting with this is the genealogical principle. Here the behavior and character of groups and individuals is determined by their humoral composition, a composition passed materially to them by their ancestors.

This genealogical principle is fully material and inheres in the body, but yields behavioral characteristics and temperaments that can conflict with the environment's requirements. This principle also works from the macrocosm inward, but in this case there is a primordial formative period in which the ancestors' makeup was materially determined. Subsequently they have passed it on materially through genealogical transmission of their humors.

By now it is probably clear that neither of these arguments is fully credible without elements of the other. The genealogical principle is materialistic, but the genealogy is credited with the capacity of fending off the material environment to a degree. The environmental principle seems plausible enough, but when there is marked diversity within groups and when people move around thereby changing environments, the application of the principle becomes difficult.

Put simply, neither principle can be applied without modification supplied by the opposite principle. The historically-noted resistance to change by mobile people requires some kind of genealogical principle to explain this exception to the pure materialism of the environmental argument. The diversity of populations in a single environment turns to genealogical history to cover up the inconsistency in environmental determinism. Thus the materialism of the genealogical argument, combined with the movements of people into new environments, creates a tension within the model. The materialism of the environmental argument, in the facte of the diversity of human groups and behaviors in the same environment, creates a similar tension. If these were not sufficient inconsistencies, practical material action, such as medical practices that alter the balances, necessarily rest on the premise that imbalance is possible, even though a pure materialist would make this unthinkable.

To put it briefly, a commitment to these principles eventually requires the development of a kind of bi-directional lamarkianism. People whose ancestors are from one environment will, over time, incorporate changes wrought by their new environment. People who migrate into an area can marry into local groups and gradually change the behavior of the groups to some degree. The Hippocratic texts also give us examples of people who, unaccountably, adopt some cultural practices, such as binding their heads. These eventually result in genealogical change through consistent environmental manipulation.

By now these arguments should be familiar. They are no less than the nature/nurture argument. This dual set of materialist principles has basically channeled a protean and logically incoherent discussion about identity and location in the Western world for the past 3,000 years. To

this day, in accounting for cultural differences, Westerners refer to environmental or genealogical determinants. In accounting for the infinite number of inconvenient exceptions to logic and history that this practice introduces, Westerners then appeal to transformations of genealogy by environment or viceversa.

In some cases, genealogy and environment are superimposed and hyper-materialist arguments are made to justify the transhistorical identities of some groups. For example, the Guipuzcoan Basques' customary law codes state that the Basques were the first inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula after the universal flood (genealogy). Later in the same codes, they link their behavior and character to the impact of the environment in the region, which makes them ferocious and defenders of the Faith.

The nature/nurture ancient commonplace is not some historical curiosity. It is with us today, found in many renderings of the phenotype/genotype distinction in putatively modern evolutionary biology (Lewontin, 1974) and it abounds in ordinary discourses about what is innate and learned, determined and free, natural and cultural. If these arguments are familiar, it seems that their connection to this earlier classical context is not as well understood. Reaching back to the classical context for a review of the structure of these ancient commonplaces and then forward to their consequences for modern and contemporary discussions of identity is the historical project here. Until anthropology comes to terms with this, it risks remaining prisoner of these commonplaces itself.

This ancient infrastructure of ideas permits deterministic arguments of all sorts, arguments that are widely used to control political agendas, acquire resources for political and cultural causes, and assert moral superiority. Under the aegis of these ancient commonplaces, some groups can argue from geographical causes to racial differences to cultural distinctiveness. This is the racializing option. But it is equally possible to argue from cultural differences to privileged connections to a particular geography which thereby «belongs» to a particular group. This is the regionalist option.

These arguments also map comfortably onto the vast and centuries-old national character stereotype literature and are found in contemporary literature promoting ethnic stereotypes both in favor and against the interests of particular groups. That this vast literature is so successful and so resistant to anthropological critique ought to signal to us how deeply embedded this humoral infrastructure is [7].

Versions of these arguments support ideologies about political exclusion of co-resident populations on environmental grounds, such as the

[7] See Julio CARO BAROJA (1970) for an excellent review of these literatures from an anthropological perspective.

gypsies in Germany or the Moroccans in Spain and France. Perversely, they also permit arguments about political exclusion of co-resident populations on genealogical grounds (*e.g.* the Turks in Germany are said not to be «really» German because of their genealogy, while «Germans» living for generations outside of Germany are; or the non-Basques living in the Basque Country). There are also examples of the use of this framework to argue for regional identity; while in the same place, and occasionally from the same source, class-based arguments are mobilized to defend that identity [8]. Thus these arguments simultaneously create dynamic and permeable cultural boundaries that masquerade as static ones and permit deterministic arguments for the goodness of some peoples (Native Americans) and the weakness of others (Croats, Africans, WASPS). Of course, we know that who is good and who is not changes radically and often.

As argued before, these ideas are popular because of their intrinsic ambiguity [9]. Their success derives from their adaptability to nearly any purpose. They appear to ground arguments in «natural» realities beyond negotiation while embodying interests that are submerged under the apparent reality being «described». Thus the lack of a Western commitment to the critique of these notions leads to the continuing acceptance of these arguments in public and in academic discourse. This, in turn, permits deterministic arguments to emanate from any quarter, so figure/ground relationships can shift any time the ideology meets an inconvenient practical or ideological problem. As social researchers, we need to develop an analytical language that does continually reinvent these ancient commonplaces and the first step is to recognize how often we speak in such commonplaces ourselves.

SAMPLE DEPLOYMENTS

It is one thing to make such general arguments; it is quite another to root them in cases. Given the scope of the current paper, it is only possible to allude a case analyzed elsewhere that forms the basis of a collaboration with Carol Greenhouse on regime structures and the construc-

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[8] The case of Andalucia in Spain is instructive. Now an Autonomous Community under the new Spanish Constitution, the region is defended as having a unique regional cultural and historical identity. Yet the ame region occasionally presents itself as the «underclass» of Spain, justifying its regionalist politics in class terms.

[9] While some would call this «multivocality» or «productivity», I think ambiguity is more to the point.

tion of difference in anthropology (Greenwood, 1976, 1977,1985a, 1985b, 1993; Greenhouse and Greenwood, forthcoming).

Concepts of blood nobility in Europe and the European and U.S. notions of «race» are examples of the deployment of the genealogical modality of the nature/nurture commonplace. In blood nobility (Greenwood, 1985b), the argument is that social hierarchy directly expresses the purity of the substance that conditions noble behavior —the blood. Social hierarchy is not a matter of societal competition but the expression of underlying moral goodness arising from humoral purity. Of course, only those who could place their claims to purity beyond dispute by dealing with the legal system and documenting their claims generally could accede to this form of honor. While Spanish Golden Age poets, playwrights, and ordinary people all speculated about the nobility of the poor and honest, such counter-arguments did not alter the system.

When nobility was «recognized» by the crown, it was treated theoretically as the recognition of what was there to begin with. Noble behavior was not an option, a choice. It expressed the «nature» of the person. Hence the kinds of acts that led to the «recognition» of nobility simply called attention to what was already present. Otherwise, nobility would be viewed as an honor for which one could compete —which is, of course, exactly what nobility was as a social fact.

The elaborate bureaucracy that managed nobility claims gradually gave rise to detailed philosophical and administrative arguments about nobility, including a variety of competing schools of thought. The investigation of claims to nobility created tribunals with complex standards and investigative procedures. Impediments to nobility were systematized, among them Jewish ancestry, heretical beliefs, or having held a manual occupation. Eventually, the system became a set of perks to be purchased and impediments could be removed for a price, all still under the aegis of «recognition» of the natural nobility on an individual.

European and U.S. notions of race are similar. Races are cultural constructions dating back to very early periods in Western history. The terminology of races, lineages, breeds, and stocks has considerable historical depth. It is worth noting that this entire vocabulary was available well in advance of modern biology, yet biology continues to use much of it, with predictable consequences.

Yet cultural concepts of racial differences (in the blood or imposed by the environment) bear no relationship to the biological taxonomic concept of race. Still, to this day, the concept of race feeds off a cultural legitimacy that is almost beyond question. When I point out in my classes that many biological classifications of human races involve scores of races,

the students react with disbelief. For them, there are four races (matching the four humoral colors: red, white, black, and yellow, Greenwood, 1985a). While the problematic empirical referents of such a classification should be evident to any human being with reasonable eyesight (and insight), the cultural hegemony and political importance of these notions suspends this line of inquiry for most people. Even noticing the ongoing multiplication of racial groups in the U.S. census has not caused the concept of race to appear any less «natural» to many people than it once was. Allocating significant resources and redressing wrongs by using a «natural» classification seems quite «natural».

In Europe, the concepts of race also have a venerable ancestry on which the U.S. has built its own infrastructure. The «races of Europe» is an old locution with multiple referents. It can refer to countries, regions, classes, occupational groups, and genders [10]. Racial theories of European history have abounded for centuries, though their public use has been eclipsed by the Holocaust. Now it seems to me that the word «ethnicity» occupies much of the semantic space created by political correctness. As a result, we speak of the «Autonomous Communities» of Spain or of «ethnic cleansing» in Bosnia-Herzegovina instead of racial groups and race wars.

These concepts are used to refer to what people «are», beyond the realm of the will. It is about what is «natural» to them, in opposition to what is learned. The language of race makes events and behaviors into the outcomes of forces over which people have no control. In the U.S., race concepts are used both to explain the causes and the effects of history. The history of slavery, oppression, and prejudice is explained as the outcome of the confrontation between the many «races» that make up the U.S. But then racial classifications are built to enact the redress of these evils. These, in turn, stabilize and further «naturalize» these very notions, creating an uneasy interlinking of racial categories, ethnic identities, grievances, and rights. All these ambiguities notwithstanding, it appears that most people in the U.S. still think that racial categories are «real» enough to be able to fill out the U.S. census form and to accept social justice programs that rest on these categories.

Of course these practices yield some serious problems. White is the only color category in the U.S. list. It is the perfection from which all others deviate. The former «black» category is subdivided in complex linkings of genealogical and environmental ideas. Hispanic multiplies the ambiguity more and Asian is begining to subdivide and proliferate as well. In the end, the classifications become complex amalgams of genealogical

[10] Francis GALTON even called judges a «race» (GALTON, 1962 [1869]).

and environmental ideas, the infrastructure of which is completely unintelligible without a knowledge of the much earlier history of these concepts [11].

Environmental determinist arguments are also widely deployed. In Europe, the different groups within Spain, the United Kingdom, and the Bretons, the Corsicans, the Sicilians, the Serbs, the Croats, and hosts of others are connected to geography by a variety of naturalistic arguments that convert political claims into the expression of «natural» laws. «We are from here and therefore we are... and we deserve...» has become the common currency of politics. A «Europe of the regions», once a widely-held dream, also was based on some kind of sense of the «natural» link between place, culture, and political community. This kind of conceptual legacy to politics, culture, and geography influences the European scene to a considerable degree, including interactions among members of the European community in such putatively rational arenas as international space science and technology [12].

Environmental determinist ideas are often used to assert the superiority of one group over another. We have Alexander Dumas to thank for the scurrilous epithet about Spain that «Africa begins at the Pyrenees». We have endless academic and popular accounts of the impact of the landscape on culture. While no group escapes from these exercises, those who have the power and will to contest these stereotypes are often spared the excesses routinely committed against the people of Africa, India, and Latin America.

Such arguments appear even in popular texts written by academics. As I pointed out years ago (Greenwood, 1985a), Marvin Harris' famed argument about sacred cows in India is based on indefensible homogenizations of the environment, cultures, peoples, and cows of India. Yet it seduces more readers than it offends, apparently because its determinism is so appealing as an explanation for rationalized poverty.

Such follies are not trivial. If living in the U.S. were not instructive enough, my experiences in the Spanish Basque Country supply an additional example. Beginning with deterministic arguments advanced by Pliny and Strabo in their texts, the Basques have been associated with the mountainous and forested area called the *saltus vasconum* (Caro Baroja, 1958). The environmental configuration of this area has been used throughout the history of the area to explain their unique language and their

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[11] In GREENHOUSE and GREENWOOD (forthcoming), Dvora YANOW provides a comprehensive and telling history of these census concepts.

[12] See Stacia ZABUSKY, 1995.

special legal rights. It has been incorporated in their customary laws and legends to the point that no one can spend time there without being told about the connection between environment and culture.

From this it was a short step to the racism of the turn-of-the-century founder of the Basque Nationalist Party, Sabino Arana y Goiri (Arana y Goiri, 1980). Arana linked the unique language and history of the Basques to their unique «blood», and the party he founded is still a dominant force in Basque politics. Recently, the current leader of the party, Xabier Arzallus, affirmed his belief that the Basque population was biologically distinct, arguing that they have a higher incidence of Rh negative blood factor and making a clear connection between Basque nature and Basque culture. Notwithstanding the storm of protest that was unleashed, it was clear that Arzallus articulated an ideology that is an important principle of ethnic politics in the Basque Country. It also sets the Basques off from the 30 per cent of residents in their region who are non-Basques. By his argument, these immigrants come from the rest of the regions of Spain, regions which may be «culturally distinct» under the new constitution but which are not «naturally» different. A famed Spanish cartoonist captured this idea in a cartoon map of Spain which divided the Basque Country from the rest, naming it «Race» and naming the rest of Spain «Etnias». Before we recoil at this, it is worth remembering that it is not so conceptually different from North Americans calculating Hawaiian blood fractions and allocating public resources according to racial census categories.

MACRO/MICRO PERSPECTIVES

To this point in the essay, nothing in particular has been said about anthropology as a field, even though anthropological perspectives have been employed. Now it is time to turn attention on ourselves because the study of identity presents a serious, perhaps the most serious, challenge to us as a discipline, particularly in the context of the way we have allowed our field to develop in the post-World War II era.

Anthropology claims a privileged perspective on the study of human universals and differences. The initial institutionalization of our discipline in the U.S. and much of the early writing made clear a connection between the anthropological study of «race, language, and culture» and public policy. Many anthropologists saw emancipatory dimensions in the knowledge they had to offer, and believed that their work was a contribution to democracy. Though most of the non-theoretical discourse was contained in studies of small groups and local communities, the larger discourse on

the relationship between cultural difference and human biology and on the role of prejudice in society was present, if only by implication.

This no longer seems to be the case. Carol Greenhouse and I formulate this issue in the following way. It seems to us that anthropology has come to take the difference it studies for granted, reifying it and accepting it without studying the larger forces that condition it. Having no organized vantage point from which to examine the legal, administrative, and political economic forces that channel and affect identity, anthropology has allowed itself to become a prisoner of ethnographized local difference (Greenhouse and Greenwood, forthcoming).

Annette Weiner's impassioned editorial in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* points out that anthropology should have center stage in discussions of multiculturalism, but is on the sidelines while «cultural studies» in literature and ethnic studies departments monopolize the discourse (Weiner, 1992). In our view, we are on the sidelines because we have chosen to sit there for two reasons. First, many anthropologists do not want to involve themselves in the complex and painful politics of identity in our society and fear the impact of so doing in other societies. Second, absent sensible frameworks for linking local expressions of identity to the larger social forces of which they are a part, we have no persuasive way for talking about the subject [13].

There is no doubt that this is a complex problem. The venerable school of culture trait distribution studies dealt with it in one way. And, over the years, anthropology has imported Weberian frameworks, marxism, modern world systems theory, and now «cultural studies» to cope with these problems. There are a number of anthropologists who have struggled with these issues, among them Wolf (1982), Sahlins (1985), and Louis Dumont (1970, 1977). While for decades anthropology has had some frameworks for discussing these subjects, it has not deployed them around the issues of identity to any significant degree.

Doing so is certainly worth our effort. I will adduce only one curious example in support of this contention, the great and little tradition framework [14]. I use it because its analytical intention was resolutely cultural in

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[13] This is a dauntingly large topic which requires the collaboration of specialists groups of to try to focus these issues.

[14] At the conference where this paper was presented verbally, I was astounded by the echo this discussion of the Great and Little Tradition idea had. Some participants were non-plused by what they took to be a resurrection of a justly dead framework. Others continued to bandy the terms around throughout our discussions. By the end, I was very nearly sorry I had even mentioned it. In retrospect, I interpret this as the result of the lack of satisfactory frameworks for dealing with what I per-

focus and thus suited to my own analysis of the ancient commonplace of nature/nurture.

Though amply and effectively criticized, the Great/Little Tradition framework gave rise to an original and perhaps useful view of the problematics centering on the ways patterns of thought move around within societies. Since we know that ideas about identity exist in international administrative structures, national regimes and laws, national cultural symbols, and in the lives of local communities and individuals, the character of the connections between levels is a necessary part of the analysis.

Patterns of thinking/perceiving persist both on the grand scale and on the local level in ways that are often mutually reinforcing, occasionally conflicting, but always interactive. While we are aware that notions like nature/nurture persist over long periods, we have not made the effort needed to look at the global-national-regional-local interplay in such ideas. This is the beauty and productivity of McKim Marriott's rendering of the ideas of Singer and Redfield about the Great and Little Traditions (Marriott, 1955).

Redfield and Singer formulated the notion that, within a «civilization», communities could be viewed as «one of a series of concentrations and nucleations within a common field». (Marriott, 1955: 173). In one sense, the community has a kind of organization and integrity of its own, yet in another, many of the elements it contains come from the surrounding and superordinate cultures. Among these are religious systems, literature, cosmopolitan art, etc. Local communities, too, have their own religious beliefs and popular arts, as anthropologists have pointed out for generations. Still influences from beyond the local level are obvious.

To focus on this, Redfield and Singer formulated the notion of a linkage between the Great and Little Traditions. While the linkage between them was variously defined, the terms «universalization» and «parochialization» are perhaps the most productive. Universalization refers to the process by which local ideas and practices become part of the Great Tradition. Parochialization refers to the diffusion of cosmopolitan practices and ideas to the local level. The flow is bidirectional and far more complex than any simple polarity would suggest, as both Marriott and Eidson, in a recent analysis of Germany, point out [15].

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suasively made into an issue. The reaction to such discomfort should be a greater future effort.

[15] Recently John EIDSON conducted a study in Germany focusing on the national/local interaction and produced sufficiently powerful results that it suggests the need to study these issues from such a perspective (EIDSON, 1983, 1992).

Marriott and Eidson's analyses of their cases show how productive looking from top to bottom and bottom to top can be in adding dimensions to both levels of analysis. In both works, a complex interplay of elements is continuously underway by which Great Tradition ideas become embodied in local thought and practice and local/regional ideas and practices become generalized into the Great Tradition.

This framework can be relevant to the subject of this paper because it is already clear that the complexities of the deployments of racial/humoral thinking will yield to analysis, unless treated in a historically, geographically, socially, politically, and culturally specific manner. To comprehend what is happening with identity, anthropologists must examine the national systems that structure and organize relevant ideas and practices, especially those attached to significant political and economic resources. At the same time, we must also look into the lives of communities and people on the ground and examine how concepts of identity are structured and understood. Thus prepared, we can begin to cast lines across the levels and take on the necessary challenges that arise from attempts to understand how these notions diffuse and are transformed, intentionally and unintentionally, by the wide variety of social actors involved with them.

In practice, anthropologists have concentrated on the local meanings of identity or on grand theorizing about this subject. Much of the literature on ethnicity and identity is either idiosyncratically ethnographic or it is abstract. National regime structures and legal and administrative systems are not well studied, and shortcuts are taken by citing non-anthropological texts. Though I much admire Ben Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (Anderson, 1983), its broad popularity suggests it is a useful source for many anthropologists who do not themselves have views about how societies work at these broader levels. In any event, Anderson's work and many others —focused on the large scale political economy of identity— lack a sufficiently multi-dimensional perspective on cultural phenomena for anthropological purposes. It is up to us to rise to this challenge.

The effectiveness and difficulty of this perspective is nowhere better demonstrated than in the work of John Eidson on local club life in a German town on the Rhine (Eidson, 1983, 1992). Eidson was fascinated with the proliferation and broad social importance of a variety of local clubs in this town. Studying the practices and ideologies of these clubs, Eidson eventually was able to discover clear connections between the development and practices of the clubs and a diverse set of national ideologies about identity, modernization, and community. He then demonstrated the historical interplay among the local and national discourses in a way that clarifies both.

There is no particular reason for this to be limited to a «culturalist» perspective or restricted to local/national interactions. We can connect these processes of diffusion and mobilization to political economic forces and administrative/legal structures which are themselves analyzable in anthropological terms. In the case of humoral/racial ideas, we may well be able to link our direct experiences to an immensely complex cultural system shared locally and nationally across the West and much of the Middle East and Far East. At least, these are the contours of the project I propose.

The purpose of this argument is to open up the discussion, not to foreclose it. Anthropologists, without a much more significant effort to cope with larger cultural, administrative/legal, and political economic systems, have reached an impasse in which our role in discussing identity and cultural difference is much diminished. Claiming expertise and demanding attention via editorials is not likely to work. We have to provide more persuasive and critical analyses and let the chips fall where they may. Doing this, however, would be an intentional reform of our practice as anthropologists.

SOCIAL ROLES BUILT ON ANCIENT COMMONPLACES

Everyone knows that ideas and cultural systems do not diffuse themselves. They are enacted by people playing social roles. Understanding the roles we play as anthropologists is essential to intentional reform of our practice. This understanding can be aided by contrasts with other roles that we do not and would not play, among them the censustaker and the civil rights lawyer.

We increasingly recognize the crucial role of the censustaker in the field of regime creation and management. If rights are to be allocated by census categories, then all those who fit into the categories must be identified and classified appropriately. It is not possible to redress a grievance without identifying to whom the past injustices have applied. In the United States, affirmative action is not possible without census data on many levels. Aggregate numbers are needed; the distribution of resources by group; the representation of groups in particular social roles, etc. All of this requires censusing of various sorts.

Counting becomes a step in the implementation of social justice; but, of course, counting depends on the clarity of the categories and censusing reifies categories. In Europe, the complex politics of «harmonization» of different group needs and rights requires a censustaker as well. Yet the socially active force of the categories that make up the census, their defi-

nition and alteration, and the ongoing resolution of ambiguity in them is carried on pretty much outside of the arena of public scrutiny. So here a critical democratic social role is played without much public scrutiny.

Once the censustaker has established the demographics and the lawmakers have created the rules, the civil rights lawyer enters. Without the law, rights allocated to groups for redress of injustice are not guaranteed. Lawyers litigate and courts make precedent-setting decisions, further adding to the legaladministrative realities of the initial categories. Lawyers are also essential participants in the development of home rule regimes in other countries. Developing and harmonizing statutes, mediating the cultural demands of the regional leaders and the political and economic demands of national systems places the lawyers in the position of creating a body of arguments and precedents that further refine and stabilize cultural identities.

The culturally-crucial role of lawyers is not much discussed. What lawyers think about identity, rights, duties, and civil society is less in the public eye than their salaries, lifestyles, and the general commonplace that lawyers are ruining our society. Yet a conscientious lawyer does not face an easy task. The law is fraught with ambiguities. Empirical situations are more complex still and justice is always elusive. Still, case after case gradually creates definitions and processes that channel our thinking about identity and affect future lawmaking and litigation.

In what way do we as a society prepare lawyers for a formative role regarding issues of identity? Do we recruit law students for their knowledge of cultural difference? Do we reward them for emphasizing the dynamic and ambiguous nature of the phenomena they litigate? Here again we appear not to train important professionals to play a crucial social role as well as they might.

There are other figures as well. Affirmative action requires minority affairs administrators. Regional home rule requires regional affairs administrators on both sides. And, of course, there are the politicians who both generate the legislation that gives rise to so much of this and who also survive, in part, thanks to the consequences of their legislative activities. And there is the local folklorist, and just perhaps, the anthropologist.

This leads me to a final point. Anthropologists belong on the list of professionals whose activities relate to issues of identity for at least two reasons. First, anthropologists have unique responsibilities in discussing matters of cultural difference, responsibilities that need to be fulfilled more adequately. This argument forms the basis of other work in progress (Greenhouse and Greenwood, forthcoming). Second, anthropology can play a uniquely constructive role in linking the local meanings of identity to the larger symbolic, legal, and administrative contexts to which they relate.

While others are adept at handling the larger regime discourses surrounding identity, anthropology's capacity for examining how these larger systems fit into and are countered by ordinary people in the business of their everyday lives is an essential ingredient in the understanding of the ways our society works, or fails to.

This role would not be new to anthropology if we had continued to play the social role in the U.S. that we had early in this century. Operating in a society with Indian reservations, a legacy of slavery and Jim Crow laws, and immigration quotas, U.S. anthropology did focus for a time on the issues of cultural diversity and identity from a combined perspective of theory and method and public debate. Since then, however, the core of the profession generally has moved to a position aloof from these matters. So, despite these origins, by the late 1950s anthropology had become a field that was identified with primitive societies beyond our borders. Professional debate centered on issues of theories of human nature and cultural difference, and of ordering a house with four fields in it: biology, culture, language, and archeology.

Because anthropology long ago abandoned the controverted subject of identity and ethnic conflict as a centerpiece of disciplinary discourse, public debates about difference and their underlying meanings have not relied much on anthropologists. Instead, new programs in ethnic studies and women's studies took the perfectly logical course of contesting these issues in public. More recently, departments of literature have moved into «cultural studies» and are gradually gaining a dominant place in the discussion of difference in higher education.

ANTHROPOLOGY IN SOCIAL CONTEXT: THE UNITED STATES AND SPAIN

Multiculturalism and the study of difference have become the property of other groups in U.S. academic institutions. Whether or not this was a failure of nerve or simply the incarnation of the standard trajectory of a social science is hard to know. Certainly most academic social sciences have started, at least putatively, as reform movements for the public good. When they become legitimate academic disciplines, they generally sever their ties to the social universe in which they arose.

The case of anthropology in Spain is quite different. There the field began with the early colonists in the New World, with Philip II's attempts to understand the concept of «natural lords of the earth» in Sicily and then in the New World, and with the chroniclers and the *visitadores* to the colonies in the sixteenth century. Their ethnographic acumen was often

remarkable, as was their zeal for collecting information. In their vast horizontal space, they mapped the relationships between culture, language, and «race», opening up elaborate dialogues about the common humanity, or lack of it, in the native populations.

At the same time, the monarchy was a system in which regional rights were the basis for incorporation into the polity. Each regional group developed an agreement *(fueros)* with the crown about rights and duties. In so doing, regional elites often asserted regional rights through compilations of customary law, stories, and other documents which served as a basis for negotiation with the crown. From these activities to folklore studies and local community studies there was a short step, one that is again being taken in the new Spain of the Autonomous Communities.

In vertical social space, issues of race, religion, and social class were played out, producing an immense literature on nobility, concepts of hierarchy, and concepts of purity. Ideas about the relationship between «natural nobility» and social hierarchy were argued in a wide variety of social arenas, and a complex bureaucracy for the management of these systems developed. Throughout these activities, issues of parallel cultural developments around the world, the «humanness» of the «other», and «natural nobility» were widely discussed and debated in a variety of anthropological ways.

In the contemporary period, with the fusion of genealogy and environment in a kind of racialized regionalism, anthropologists have become active participants in the description and analysis of regional cultural expressions [16]. Some champion these developments, others criticize them, but all must deal with them. To understate the case, the rapid professionalization of anthropology as a discipline in recent years has been heavily conditioned by the ethnic regional agenda created by the new Spanish Constitution.

Thus in both the U.S. and Spain, professional anthropology, a relative latecomer to these issues, emerges in this century with a mixed stance. In some cases, anthropologists become a kind of cultural administrators for existing regimes or folklorists of disappearing cultures. In others, anthropologists have become advocates for local and regional cultures against the designs of state authority. In both cases, the impact of larger forces and institutional structures on the subject matter of anthropology is evident. It is also obvious that some naive notion of professional neutrality is out of the question.

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[16] For an extended example, see the issue of *Antropología* devoted to analysis and debate of an article I wrtoe on the social role of anthropology in Spain (*Antropología,* 1992).

WHERE TO NEXT?

In this paper, I have argued that certain basic notions on identity are visible in the «Western» scene (and far beyond) since pre-Socratic times and can be found more broadly in the Mediterranean basin and into Asia from the earliest records. The processes of universalization/parochialization of these notions have been going on for millennia. Anthropology, as a consolidated profession, is basically a twentieth-century phenomenon. What then is our connection to this history?

While it would be tempting for us to try to limit the issues of identity to a shorter time framework, a narrower geographic perspective, and to studies of local behavior, I have urged resisting these shortcuts. Limiting our history to the nineteenth century origins, our geography to the West, and our background texts to the «intellectual» texts on identity would be a mistake, but one that is tempting for practical reasons. As important as Hippocrates, Bodin, Gobineau, Chamberlain, and Galton have been, they are only part of the story. To them one would have to add the great Middle Eastern and Asian thinkers on these subjects. In addition, the rest of the story is found in an almost infinite number of local texts and activities that define identity in a variety of ways, some influenced strongly by the Great Tradition texts and others strongly influencing those texts.

In this regard, I can only agree with the thrust of Jonathan Friedman's recent article (Friedman, 1992) which argues that we should resist modernism, primitivism, traditionalism, and postmodernism in studying ethnicity. We have to tease out what is unique in the nineteenth and twentieth century European inflections and social embodiments of these issues, compared to the larger sweep of their deployment since at least pre-Socratic times. That is the larger project. It is so daunting that our response will be a genuine test of the mettle of anthropology.

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En este artículo, el autor aplica el concepto de «viejos lugares comunes», de Julio Caro Baroja, al estudio de los conceptos sobre la relación cultura-naturaleza usados en la reflexión actual sobre la etnicidad. Concentrándose en una comparación de las nociones «racializadas» de etnicidad que dominan en los EE.UU. con las «regionalizadas» que son ahora hegemónicas en España, el autor sostiene que hace falta tener en cuenta una historia profunda de los conceptos usados en este discurso, si se quiere lograr una aproximación antropológica al mismo de mejores resultados. El artículo pone de relieve la necesidad de examinar estos conceptos en el marco de todo el movimiento de ideas y conceptos que tiene lugar en una sociedad desde su cúspide a su base, en su contexto histórico y geográfico; y lo pone de relieve mediante una reconsideración de los modelos de análisis basados en la oposición «Gran Tradición» / «Pequeña Tradición» que aparecieron en los años cincuenta.

This paper applies the concept of ancient commonplaces developed by Julio Caro Baroja to the study of nature-nurture concepts as they are employed in thinking about ethnicity. Centering on a comparison of the racialized notions of ethnicity prevalent in the United States and the regionalized concepts of ethnicity that are now hegemonic in Spain, it argues that a much deeper history of the concepts that underlie arguments about ethnicity is necessary for a meaningful anthropological approach to the subject. The essay stresses the need to examine these concepts against the field of the movement of concepts and ideas from the apex of a society to its base and viceversa in historical and spatial context by re-considering the value of the Great Tradition-Little Tradition models of analysis created in the 1950s.