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Social Cohesion, Reproduction, and Change
in Anthropological and Social Theory

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Anthropology

by

Clayton Thomas Robertson

2015

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Social Cohesion, Reproduction, and Change in Anthropological and Social Theory

by

Clayton Thomas Robertson

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2015

Professor Akhil Gupta, Co-chair

Professor Hannah C. Appel, Co-chair

This thesis examines social cohesion, reproduction, and change through three complementary perspectives. The first part of the paper discusses the topics of resistance and social change, as addressed by several prominent social theorists, as well as how the “agent” or “subject” of resistance is constituted and how “the social” is constructed and reproduced. The second part of the paper discusses some historical foundations of social cohesion and change by examining theories regarding the movement from “traditional” forms of social solidarity to a so-called “modern” emphasis on individualization and “rationalization,” which has been accompanied, according to some social theorists, by the progression from social harmony and effervescence to anomie, alienation, and disenchantment. Lastly, the role of language and how subjects are constructed and emerge through discursive practices (and the interdependent relationship between language and social structure and social relations) is considered in the third part of the paper.

The thesis of Clayton Thomas Robertson is approved.

Christopher Jason Throop

Hannah C. Appel, Committee Co-chair

Akhil Gupta, Committee Co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2015

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I. Introduction

This paper originated as a discussion of the topic of resistance as addressed by several social theorists. Any discussion of resistance in the first part of this paper must, however, consider themes related not only to resistance and “social change,” but it must also examine how the “agent” or “subject” of resistance is constituted and how “the social” is itself constructed and reproduced. The second part of the paper discusses some historical foundations of social cohesion and change (including the role of religion or the “sacred”) by examining theories regarding the movement from “traditional” forms of group solidarity to a so-called “modern” emphasis on individualization and “rationalization.” This transition has been accompanied, according to some social theorists, by the progression from social harmony and effervescence to various forms of anomie, alienation, and disenchantment. This section also examines in some detail the role of social cohesion, agency, and “the law” within one society using a classic ethnographic text. Lastly, the role of language and how subjects are constructed and emerge through macro and micro discursive practices is considered. The interdependent relationship between language and social structure and social relations at multiple scales is therefore discussed in the third part of the paper.

II. “Subject” and “Agent” and Theories on Social Cohesion and Change

This section first analyzes some of the relevant contributions of several major social theorists (Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Louis Althusser, and Gayatri Spivak) on the subject of social cohesion and change and the role and ability of the “subject” (or “agent”) to serve as a source of resistance or change. It then examines how several ethnographers or contributors (Sherry Ortner, Saba Mahmood, and David Harvey) have dealt with these topics.

A. Michel Foucault and the Regulation of Society and Self

How do society and subjects come to regulate themselves? Michel Foucault defines government as “the right disposition of things arranged so as to lead to a suitable end” (Foucault 1978:96). In Foucault’s paradigm, this suitable end ultimately becomes the management of the health, longevity, and wealth of the population itself, including in its more abstract form the “economy” (Foucault 1978:105-106). Government thus refers not just “to political structures or to the management of states” but also to “the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick” (Foucault 1982:790).

This idea of government, according to Foucault, is consubstantial with the associated concept of “governmentality,” which includes technologies of government and power that rely less on the state per se and more on “the rise of a new formula for the exercise of rule, which one can call ‘social’” (Rose 2006:146). This “social” includes a “complex assemblage of diverse forces (legal, architectural, professional, administrative, financial, judgmental), techniques (notation, computation, calculation, examination, evaluation), devices (surveys and charts, systems of training, building forms) that promise to regulate decisions and actions of individuals, groups, organizations in relation to authoritative criteria” with these “mechanisms and devices operating according to a disciplinary logic, from the school to the prison, seek[ing] to produce the subjective conditions, the forms of self-mastery, self-regulation and self-control, necessary to govern a nation now made up of free and ‘civilized’ citizens” (Rose 2006:148, 149). Foucault relates governmentality to a distribution of power within the social nexus:

What, therefore, would be proper to a relationship of power is that it be a mode of action upon actions. That is to say, power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted “above” society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. In any case, to live in society is to live in

such a way that action upon other actions is possible—and in fact ongoing.
[Foucault 1982:791]

Foucault concludes that “a society without power relations can only be an abstraction” (Foucault 1982:791).

Where is resistance and social change, then, in the context of technologies of power that are distributed into or located within every facet of society? Foucault foregrounds this issue when he states that “one sees why the analysis of power relations within a society cannot be reduced to the study of a series of institutions, not even to the study of all those institutions which would merit the name ‘political.’ Power relations are rooted in the system of social networks” (Foucault 1982:792-793). Forms of social regulation therefore occur in many deceptively innocuous everyday interactions within these institutional, group, or networked contexts, with the individualization (and, therefore, the totalization) of the state embodied in and throughout our personal relations. This process might also be called “subjectification through the mundane,” where (per Foucault) self-control and other-control now interact in our personal and social relations to constitute an ostensibly (and disingenuously) decentralized and dispersed form of social regulation and homogenization, which consistent with Foucault is still every bit as powerful as if it were directed from a formal, centralized authority. Within this paradigm, to the extent that power is distributed (or, rather, increasingly distributed) across the social network, then “resistance” must be negotiated and practiced in our daily affairs among the institutions, structures, groups, and networks that envelop us and cause us to self-regulate ourselves. Indeed, “if power is dispersed in a multiplicity of networks, resistance [in the Foucauldian tradition] can only be realized through a series of localized strategies” (Kritzman 1988:xv). This interpretation that “social resistance” occurs within these distributed social networks and in our ordinary daily practices is arguably supported by Sherry Ortner when she writes: “The newer practice approaches,

by contrast, place greater emphasis on the practices of ordinary living. Although these were not by any means ignored in earlier work, they assume greater prominence here” (Ortner 1984:154). The importance of daily practices as potential acts of resistance is supported by feminist critiques that “the personal is the political” (Rose 2006:144) and by Ortner’s recognition, as part of her definition of “practice,” that “almost anything people do” has “intentional or unintentional political implications” (Ortner 1984:149).

More detailed references to resistance (and, more generally, to forms of social change) in the Foucauldian literature emerge in the context of forms of power. “Power” is defined by Foucault as the “total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action” (Foucault 1982:789). Power is “a set of actions upon other actions” (Foucault 1982:789). Foucault thus perceives power not in its abstract form, but as embedded in (and as emerging from) the social – that is, power defined as relations of power. Foucault uses resistance as a means “to bring to light power relations” because “in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations” (Foucault 1982:780). This technique appears to constitute an analytic or diagnostic methodology as opposed to a critical or prescriptive program.

Foucault starts by noting a series of oppositions which have developed over time that help shed light on power relations and forms of “resistance,” including the “opposition to the power of men over women, of parents over children, of psychiatry over the mentally ill, of medicine over the population, of administration over the ways people live” (Foucault 1982:780). Foucault notes that “it is not enough to say that these are anti-authority struggles” and seeks to describe their

common characteristics. These characteristics include: (1) these anti-authority struggles are “transversal” struggles that span more than one country or government; (2) the concern of these struggles is with the effects of power; (3) these power struggles typically concern immediate issues closest to those experiencing them; (4) these struggles often involve the status of the individual (including the right to be different and the individual’s relationship with the rest of the community); (5) they oppose “the effects of power which are linked with knowledge, competence, and qualification” and constitute “struggles against the privileges of knowledge”; and (6) they concern the central question of “who are we?” (Foucault 1982:781). Foucault sums up by speaking about the objective of these struggles in the context of “the subject”:

The main objective of these struggles is to attack not so much “such or such” an institution of power, or group, or elite, or class but rather a technique, a form of power. This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word “subject”: subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to. Generally, it can be said that there are three types of struggles: either against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious); against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the individual to himself and submits him to others in this way (struggles against subjection, against forms of subjectivity and submission). [Foucault 1982:781]

Foucault provides examples of these forms of exploitation and resistance, which include “struggles against the forms of ethnic or social domination” in feudal societies, “the struggle against exploitation” that arose in the nineteenth century, and “the struggle . . . against the submission of subjectivity” in the twentieth century (Foucault 1982:782). Foucault relates these forms of struggle to the concept of governmentality in its extended or dispersed form or role as a “government of individualization” (Foucault 1982:781), which itself represents the pastoral power

of the church that allegedly was co-opted by the state and that reaches into the lives of citizens through the social body and through a “multitude of institutions” (Foucault 1982:784). That is, “instead of a pastoral power and a political power, more or less linked to each other, more or less rival, there was an individualizing ‘tactic’ which characterized a series of powers: those of the family, medicine, psychiatry, education, and employers” (Foucault 1982:784).

To the extent that Foucault articulates a theory of resistance, his argument implies that it is this type of totalizing and individualizing “tactic” of power permeating the social body that should be one’s focus of resistance, rather than its specific institutional embodiments (though the specific modes of activism would inevitably occur within the social fields in which actors function). Of course, even with the tactic (or ideology) of dispersed governmentality, one wonders whether the state is always-already implicated ideologically. Foucault appears to endorse this interpretation when he states that “the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state’s institutions but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state” and that “we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries” (Foucault 1982:785). Finally, this totalizing (and historical) tactic of pastoral forms of individualization might satisfy Foucault’s definition of a “discursive formation” insofar as these forms of self-regulation constitute “a field of statements and practices whose structure of possibility is neither the individual, nor a collective body of overseers, but a form of relation between the past and present predicated upon a system of rules that demarcate both the limits and the possibility of what is sayable, doable, and recognizable as a comprehensive event in all its manifest forms” (Mahmood 2005:114-115).¹

¹ Foucault’s concept of the “discursive formation” and additional related matters pertaining to a Foucauldian theory of language are addressed in more detail in the third part of this paper.

Foucault's theory of resistance is further articulated in some detail in *The History of Sexuality*. In this text, Foucault elaborates at some length on this idea of resistance within the context of the social and of these distributed networks of social power. Foucault states that "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1976:95). The Foucauldian subject, which emerges from the social, thereby acts out specific forms of resistance, however constituted or manifested, which are entangled in the social and in these power relations, never separate from them. These acts of resistance, like the social network itself, are distributed:

These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. [Foucault 1976:95-96]

Foucault goes on to describe in much more detail the operations of resistance:

Hence they too are distributed in irregular fashion: the points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities, at times mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behavior. Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds. Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities. [Foucault 1976:96]

Foucault concludes with a reference to the possibility of revolution – presumably constituting the ultimate form of social change – resulting from these distributed acts of resistance (as opposed to resulting from a single, identifiable "radical rupture" or a "massive binary division" without any such foundation): "And it is doubtless the strategic codification of these points of resistance that

makes a revolution possible, somewhat similar to the way in which the state relies on the institutional integration of power relationships” (Foucault 1976:96). If Foucault has a specific form (or content) of revolution in mind, it remains unclear.

B. Pierre Bourdieu and Social Reproduction

The Foucauldian subject is distinguished from the Bourdieudian subject whose interiority pre-exists the exterior, but who is embodied with a particular habitus and who unconsciously adopts a class-specific, gender-specific, education-specific, or some other distinguishable or discrete assemblage of dispositions that come to connote (or denote) a range of attributes that index particular forms of social, cultural, or economic capital. Bourdieu defines habitus as follows:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representation which can be objectively “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. [Bourdieu 1977:72]

In the Bourdieudian paradigm, the individual subject’s interiority must synchronize with the exterior social field in an iterative process that leads to individual change, though it appears doubtful whether this iterative process also leads to exterior change. This iterative process arises as the individual enters into a new social field in which this adjustment between internal dispositions and external objective structures must occur (and, if not, social punishment potentially results) (see, e.g., Bourdieu 1977, 1993).

Pierre Bourdieu’s central concern appears to be the reproduction and naturalization of social conditions, but he does so without necessarily providing entirely satisfactory explanations for how habitus (and its accompanying assemblage of dispositions) is inculcated or learned

(Mahmood 2005:138). This was described as Bourdieu's emphasis on the socialization of dispositions or the reproduction of the social (including forms of inequality) rather than reflecting concerns about the agency of individuals (Seminar Discussion, Anthropology 203C, Spring 2013). Even so, individual agency within the Bourdieuan paradigm occurs insofar as every individual has a different history and a different assemblage of predispositions that constitutes a habitus that, in turn, interprets and generates behaviors (Seminar Discussion, Anthropology 203C, Spring 2013). There also appears to be agency (and thus the possibility for some individual-specific flexibility) insofar as the inculcation of the habitus is not complete or perfect (and does not constitute an inflexible set of "rules"). According to Bourdieu:

The imposition and inculcation of the structures is never so perfect that all explicitness can be dispensed with. And inculcation is itself, together with institutionalizing, which is always accompanied by a certain amount of objectification of discourse (oral or written) or some other symbolic support (emblems, rites, etc.), one of the privileged moments for formulating the practical schemes and constituting them as principles. [Bourdieu 1977:19-20]

That said, we see materials in Bourdieu that suggest that habitus, once inculcated and acquired, rather firmly imposes a lack of agency on the individual. These references include, for example, Bourdieu's assertion that the "rejection of mechanistic theories in no way implies that, in accordance with another obligatory option, we should bestow on some creative free will the free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation by projecting the ends aiming at its transformation, and that we should reduce the objective intentions and constituted significations of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors" (Bourdieu 1977:73). They also include Bourdieu's contention that "because the dispositions durably inculcated by objective conditions (which science apprehends through statistical regularities as the probabilities objectively attached to a group or class) engender aspirations and practices objectively compatible with those objective requirements, the most improbable practices

are excluded, either totally without examination, as *unthinkable*, or at the cost of the *double negation* which inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway refused and to love the inevitable” (Bourdieu 1977:77).

Given these statements, one wonders whether the distinctions between Foucault and Bourdieu are really all that significant, for in effect both suggest that, regardless of whether the individual precedes or is formed by the social, humans are bound by a certain set or range of possible behaviors or actions that essentially are either inculcated in them in childhood or later, as the case might be, as in Bourdieu, or are inherited in the first instance by them without any real separation between the social and the individual (where the individual is the social), as in Foucault. Even in Bourdieu, the individual’s habitus and accompanying dispositions are so strong that individual-to-individual interactions should rather be considered as “an *interaction* defined by the *objective structure* of the relation between the groups [to which] they belong” (Bourdieu 1977:81).

It has also been asked, “Where do we get revolution in Bourdieu?” One answer might come from *Outline of a Theory of Practice* in which Bourdieu appears to make the case that those persons who possess a habitus with a certain assemblage of dispositions that resonate with revolutionary themes are more prone to adopt those themes (presumably, this is dependent on the substance of these themes in relation to the subject’s habitus or, more generally, the subject’s proclivity for disturbing the status quo). On this point, Bourdieu states:

The conjuncture capable of transforming practices objectively co-ordinated because subordinated to partially or wholly identical objective necessities, into *collective action* (e.g., revolutionary action) is constituted in the dialectical relationship between, on the one hand, a *habitus* . . . and on the other hand, an *objective event* which exerts its action of conditional stimulation calling for or demanding a determinate response, only on those who are disposed to constitute it as such because they are endowed with a determinate type of dispositions (which are amenable to reduplication and reinforcement by the “awakening of class consciousness”, that is, by the direct or indirect possession of a discourse capable

of securing symbolic mastery of the practically mastered principles of the class habitus). [Bourdieu 1977:82-83]

One wonders, given Bourdieu's discussion of "newcomers" in *The Field of Cultural Production*, whether these newcomers are most likely to possess the forms of habitus which are most susceptible to change or to "revolution" (at least within the context of cultural capital) and who are most likely to resist the social pressures associated with banalization, orthodoxy, automatization, and routinization? On this point, Bourdieu states:

When the newcomers are not disposed to enter the cycle of simple reproduction, based on recognition of the 'old' by the 'young' - homage, celebration, etc. - and recognition of the 'young' by the 'old' - prefaces, co-option, consecration, etc. - but bring with them dispositions and position-takings which clash with the prevailing norms of production and the expectations of the field, they cannot succeed without the help of external changes. These may be political breaks, such as revolutionary crises, which change the power relations within the field . . . or deep-seated changes in the audience of consumers who, because of their affinity with the new producers, ensure the success of their products. [Bourdieu 1983:57-58]

On the role of the "newcomers," Bourdieu continues:

It is true that the initiative of change falls almost by definition to the newcomers, i.e. the youngest, who are also those least endowed with specific capital: in a universe in which to exist is to differ, i.e. to occupy a distinct, distinctive position, they must assert their difference, get it known and recognized, get themselves known and recognized ('make a name for themselves'), by endeavouring to impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the prevailing modes of thought and with the *doxa*, and therefore bound to disconcert the orthodox by their 'obscurity' and 'pointlessness'. The fact remains that every new position, in asserting itself as such, determines a displacement of the whole structure and that, by the logic of action and reaction, it leads to all sorts of changes in the position-takings of the occupants of the other positions. [Bourdieu 1983:58]²

At least within the context of cultural capital, Bourdieu adds:

The history of the field arises from the struggle between the established figures and the young challengers. The ageing of authors, schools and works is far from being the product of a mechanical, chronological, slide into the past; it results from the struggle between those who have made their mark (*fait date* - 'made an epoch') and who are fighting to persist, and those who cannot make their own mark without

² Bourdieu's treatment of language, including the concept of *doxa*, is discussed at greater length in the third part of this paper.

pushing into the past those who have an interest in stopping the clock, eternalizing the present stage of things. [Bourdieu 1983:60]

Throughout this discussion of the fields of cultural production, there is a very real sense that it is within the artistic domain where we find catalysts (e.g., the avant-garde, the experimental, the unhackneyed, the untraditional) capable of challenging and expanding existing social norms. It is therefore at the boundary (or boundaries) between the field of cultural production, with all of its permeability, and other fields of production, including the economic, political, and educational, that one is likely to observe a disruption of values created by the unconventional (Bourdieu 1983:42-43). If anything, this argues for not only the role of the intellectual, but also of the writer and the artist as subversives and as agents of opposition. In experimental and avant-garde fields of artistic and literary production, we see how the most change can potentially be effectuated in those positions that, according to Bourdieu, are “in the process of birth, still to be made (rather than already made, established, and capable of imposing its own norms on its occupants)” (Bourdieu 1983:72).

C. Louis Althusser and Ideology

With Louis Althusser one approaches somewhat cautiously the question of whether subjects are able to resist, or whether social change is possible, given his emphasis on the role of ideology. We must consider the implications of his statement that “ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: individuals are always-already subjects” (Althusser 1971:164).

Althusser elaborates on what it means to be a “subject”:

In the ordinary use of the term, subject in fact means: (1) a free subjectivity, a centre of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; (2) a subjected being, who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of

freely accepting his submission. This last note gives us the meaning of this ambiguity, which is merely a reflection of the effect which produces it: the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*, i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection ‘all by himself’. *There are no subjects except by and for their subjection*. That is why they ‘work all by themselves’. [Althusser 1971:169]

Althusser also describes the types of institutions that “interpellate” individuals as subjects, including the role of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) – as opposed to the disciplining and punishing arm of the (Repressive) State Apparatus or (RSA) – to produce and reproduce certain forms of social conformity. RSAs include the police, army, courts, and prisons. ISAs include the mass media, literature and the arts, the family, the public and private school systems, and the system of different churches (Althusser 1971:136-137). The institution that most stymies change or resistance in the modern period, according to Althusser, would be the “educational ideological apparatus,” which inculcates “‘rules’ of good behavior” and which according to Althusser has replaced the non-secular power of the Church from the pre-capitalist historical period (Althusser 1971:127, 143-145). Althusser underscores the ideological importance of the educational complex in relationship to broader social themes:

Besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the ‘rules’ of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is ‘destined’ for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. [Althusser 1971:127]

Althusser later concludes that “no other Ideological State Apparatus has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven [as education]” (Althusser 1971:148).

Where, then, do we get forms of resistance in Althusser? We might consider two phenomena: the first is the role of the “hero”; the second concerns the meaning and implication of

the “bad subject.” Within the Althusserian framework, we find one form of change at the micro-scale in the appearance of the hero and in the hero’s seemingly mundane acts of resistance. Thus, insofar as the educational complex (as the prevailing modern-day ISA) produces the “good worker” or the “conscientious citizen,” then Althusser asks “the pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they ‘teach’ against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped” (Althusser 1971:148). It is the hero who commits these quotidian acts of resistance that we heard echoed in Foucault and in Ortner. What, then, constitutes a “good subject” and a “bad subject”? Althusser observes:

Result: caught in this quadruple system of interpellation as subjects, of subjection to the Subject, of universal recognition and of absolute guarantee, the subjects ‘work’, they ‘work by themselves’ in the vast majority of cases, with the exception of the ‘bad subjects’ who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (Repressive) State Apparatus. But the vast majority of (good) subjects work all right ‘all by themselves’, i.e. by ideology (whose concrete forms are realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses). They are inserted into practices governed by the rituals of the ISAs. [Althusser 1971:169]

According to Althusser, “bad subjects” are not “self-working,” and they fail to reproduce the dominant ideology without the imposition of additional forms of social coercion, which can take the form of the overt discipline of the RSA (Althusser 1971:169). But do the “hero” and the “bad subject” give us social change (without taking into account the nature of this change)? It is unclear, except to note that particular ideologies can, similar to Foucauldian discursive formations, intersect with one other to produce conflict. It is here where, perhaps, we get some form of social movement, although the same basic hegemonic relationships, at least according to Althusser, remain in the form of a meta-historical “Ideology” that preserves structures of power and hierarchy (regardless of who happens to fill the particular roles or levels) (Seminar Discussion, Anthropology 203C, Spring 2013).

D. Gayatri Spivak and the Role of Intellectuals

Of the many issues that Gayatri Spivak addresses, her critique of Foucault's conception of the marginalized role of the intellectual is relevant. Spivak notes, in the Foucault-Deleuze tradition, intellectuals "become transparent in the relay race, for they merely report on the nonrepresented subject and analyze (without analyzing) the workings of (the unnamed Subject irreducibly presupposed by) power and desire" (Spivak 1988:279). Spivak refers to Said's "critique of power in Foucault as a captivating and mystifying category that allows him 'to obliterate the role of classes, the role of economics, and the role of insurgency and rebellion'" (Spivak 1988:280). A critical passage within the Spivak text on this point is the following:

Foucault articulates another corollary of the disavowal of the role of ideology in reproducing the social relations of production: an unquestioned valorization of the oppressed as subject, the "object being," as Deleuze admiringly remarks, "to establish conditions where the prisoners themselves would be able to speak." Foucault adds that "the masses know perfectly well, clearly"—once again the thematics of being undeceived—"they know far better than [the intellectual] and they certainly say it very well". [Spivak 1988:274]

Spivak thereafter refers to Bové's observation that "Foucault's project essentially is a challenge to the leading role of both hegemonic and oppositional intellectuals" (Spivak 1988:280). Spivak's disagreement with Foucault's characterization of the relative roles of the intellectual and the non-intellectual is probably to be expected given that the Foucauldian subject (i.e., any subject) emerges out of a social body that shapes consciousness. According to Spivak, Foucault in effect romanticizes the subaltern subject and discounts the intellectual as well as the role of ideology.

Is there support for Spivak's characterization of Foucault's "anti-intellectual" program? In "The Concern for Truth" (1984) Foucault responds to a question that his recent work appears to reflect a transition from politics to ethics with the following reply:

The role of the intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do. By what right would he do so? And remember all of the prophecies, promises, injunctions, and

programs that intellectuals have managed to formulate over the last two centuries and whose effects we can now see. The work of an intellectual is not to shape others' political will; it is, through the analyses that he carries out in his own field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to reexamine rules and institutions and on the basis of this reproblematicization (in which he carries out his specific task as an intellectual) to participate in the formation of a political will (in which he has his role as citizen to play. [Kritzman 1988:265]

Foucault's description of the ability of the intellectual "to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident" and "to disturb people's mental habits" (even if the intellectual is not proximately responsible for instigating social change or telling others what to do) seems, if anything, to valorize – not discount – the role of intellectuals and their ability to more astutely perceive the actual meaning of social conditions. This formulation of the Foucauldian new intellectual has been described by Lawrence Kritzman as the following:

If any one figure is responsible for breaking with the totalizing ambition of the universal intellectual it was Michael Foucault, who invented what he termed the "specific intellectual": one who no longer speaks as master of truth and justice and is content, nevertheless, to simply discover the truth of power and privileges. . . . The specific intellectual is cognizant of the discursive operations of the institution that he or she analyzes without aspiring to guru status. [Kritzman 1988:xiv]

Kritzman continues that, under this project, "the role of theory is therefore not to formulate a global analysis of the ideologically coded, but rather to analyze the specificity of the mechanisms of power and to build, little by little, 'strategic knowledge'" (Kritzman 1988:xiv). Through this knowledge, "this is how, in the end, possibilities open up" (Kritzman 1988:xiv-xv).

E. Sherry Ortner and Cultural Critique

In Sherry Ortner's *Not Hollywood* we witness a case being made for the role of "cultural critique" as a source of possible social change, at least as catalyzed by some participants within the field of cultural production. Specifically, Ortner's film ethnography examines the role of the

independent (“indie”) film movement to critique – either intentionally or as the by-product of other factors – the rise of “neoliberalism.”

Ortner looks at the indie-mainstream film dichotomy as a reflection of several themes discussed within Bourdieu’s *The Field of Cultural Production* (see, e.g., Ortner 2013:486-496³).

One of these themes is how this dichotomy represents the opposition between art and commerce:

At the base of the field of cultural production is the fundamental opposition between art and commerce. The world of art as a whole sets itself off from the wider social and economic world as what Bourdieu calls “an anti-economy” that “is so ordered that those who enter it have an interest in disinterestedness.” . . . “The opposition between the ‘commercial’ and the ‘non-commercial’ reappears everywhere.” [Ortner 2013:490-493]

Ortner also appeals to an additional Bourdieuan distinction within the field of cultural production, which “Bourdieu divides . . . into two subfields, a ‘field of restricted production’ and a ‘field of large-scale production.’ . . . The opposition between large-scale and restricted fields obviously maps reasonably well onto the Hollywood/indie opposition” (Ortner 2013:494-498).

In the case of the indie film movement, the role of restricted-production art (including in particular experimental, avant-garde, documentary, and other forms of artistic realism) is to act as a form of cultural critique or political activism. According to Ortner:

The point can also be made, with little adjustment, about the ambitions, if not always the achievements, of American independent film in general. In telling harsh or strange or otherwise disturbing stories about other people’s lives, they seek to ‘disrupt common sense and make us reexamine our taken-for-granted assumptions’ about our lives and the world around us. [Ortner 2013: 957-958].

Ortner draws a distinction between “cultural critique” and “political critique” when she states that “cultural critique is not full-fledged political critique” and that “political critique . . . is ideally a call to action, while cultural critique is a call to see/think/feel in reflective and critical ways” which according to Ortner “is no small thing in itself” (Ortner 2013:958-960). On the other hand, Ortner

³ All page citations to Ortner’s *Not Hollywood* are to Kindle page locations within the standard Kindle Edition.

appears willing to describe artistic critique as a form of “political activism” and, by implication, a form of resistance by providing that “the commitment of independent film to truthfulness and realism should be seen as a kind of political act” and that the “view of realism as an unsophisticated form of artistic expression fails to appreciate the political significance that sheer representation can carry” (Ortner 2013:961-963).

Ortner relates these oppositional themes to her thesis that the contemporary United States indie film movement can be viewed as a manifestation of and as a response to the seismic socioeconomic shifts or transformations that have occurred as a result of neoliberalism. Ortner relates these oppositional themes to the work of Raymond Williams, who she states “has classically argued, no hegemony remains uncontested, and there are both old (‘residual’) and new (‘emergent’) cultural forces that challenge the existing (‘dominant’) arrangement” (Ortner 2013:146-147). In a continued reliance on Williams, Ortner observes that “important cultural shifts are generally tied in some ways to class transformations in capitalist societies, usually to the emergence of new classes” and that “the formation of a new class, the coming to consciousness of a new class, and within this, in actual process, the (often uneven) emergence of elements of a new cultural formation. . . . A new class is always a source of emergent cultural practice” (Ortner 2013:193-197 quoting Raymond Williams).

Regarding the role of the intellectual, Ortner connects these themes to her own work and to the work of other anthropologists by affirming that it is the intellectual (in this case, the anthropologist) who disrupts the “common sense” of our cultural assumptions. Ortner states:

I adapt this idea from George Marcus and Michael Fischer’s valuable work *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986), in which they argue that one of the promises of social and cultural anthropology has been “to serve as a form of cultural critique for ourselves. In using portraits of other cultural patterns to reflect self-critically on our own ways, anthropology disrupts common sense and makes us reexamine our taken-for-granted assumptions.” [Ortner 2013:954-956]

In this light, the intellectual plays the role of the “hero” by revealing to us these alternative life ways and life paths that help us to deconstruct and reconstruct our own social norms.

F. Saba Mahmood and Subjectivation

Saba Mahmood’s approach is Foucauldian as she describes and relies on the double nature of the Foucauldian “subject” as both subjected to and created by the social or the exterior. Foucault’s approach is historically-situated because “the subject is formed within the limits of a historically specific set of formative practices and moral injunctions that are delimited in advance—what Foucault characterizes as ‘modes of subjectivation’” (Mahmood 2005:28). The Foucauldian notion of the “paradox of subjectification” is described by Mahmood as “the very processes and conditions that secure a subject’s subordination are also the means by which she becomes a self-conscious identity and agent” or “stated otherwise, one may argue that the set of capacities inhering in a subject—that is, the abilities that define her modes of agency—are not the residue of an undominated self that existed prior to the operations of power but are themselves the products of those operations” (Mahmood 2005:17). The Foucauldian subject, therefore, does not pre-exist separate and apart from the social exterior, but emerges from it with boundaries of interiority and exteriority which are illusory.

There is “choice” within these Foucauldian fields of power relations, but arguably one’s range of choices or possibilities is constrained by these same social fields. It was mentioned that “subjects have agency, but subjects are not agents” (Seminar Discussion, Anthropology 203C, Spring 2013). If constrained choice is considered the equivalent of a freedom to choose within the possibilities provided by the social medium, then actors within a Foucauldian discursive formation are agents; however, if limited or constrained choice (i.e., a choice restricted in degree by a particular ideology) is a form of subjugation, Foucauldian subjects have agency but are not agents.

The implication of Mahmood's argument is that while Western and non-Western subjects might possess disparate conceptions of what it means to be free (or what it means to resist) or the relative value or role of freedom (or resistance) within society, because these inherited ideals emerge out of pre-existing social mediums and norms, it is not clear for Mahmood that Western subjects are any more "free" than non-Western subjects since Western subjects are essentially not free to choose their conception of what it means to be free or to resist (or so her argument goes).

Mahmood argues that social actors within the mosque movement not only emerge, in a Foucauldian sense, from the social structures, including in particular the forms of agency (and "resistance," however defined) adopted by them, but these actors often also work within existing norms to set limits to the forms of subjectification that exist within any particular social structure or setting. In a discussion of Janice Boddy's anthropological fieldwork in northern Sudan studying certain *zār* cult practices, Mahmood refers to Boddy's argument that these practices might be better understood as "a kind of counter-hegemonic process . . . : *a feminine response to hegemonic praxis*" and notes that Boddy concludes that "the women she studied 'use perhaps unconsciously, perhaps strategically, what we in the West might prefer to consider *instruments of their oppression* as means to assert their value both collectively, through the ceremonies they organize and stage, and individually, in the context of their marriages, so insisting on their dynamic complementarity with men'" which "*in itself is a means of resisting and setting limits to domination. . . .*" (Mahmood 2005:7). Mahmood further claims that an attempt to argue that any such practices either reinforce or undermine structures of male domination "remains encumbered by the binary terms of resistance and subordination" (Mahmood 2005:15). While it does seem realistic that "resistance" often effectively takes shape by using existing structures (or laws or norms) against that structure in ways that are at first only vaguely apparent but which later produce more

significant consequences as social norms reflect an increasingly more expansive set of acceptable behaviors, Mahmood's argument can be critiqued for overprivileging existing norms at the expense of "other" norms produced by alternate discursive formations.

This philosophy of social change is consistent with Mahmood's description of Judith Butler's location of "the possibility of agency" as positioned within (not outside of) structures of power (Mahmood 2005:20). According to Mahmood, Butler "suggests that the reiterative structure of norms serves not only to *consolidate* a particular regime of discourse/power but also provides the means for its *destabilization*," and, therefore, "there is no possibility of 'undoing' social norms that is independent of the 'doing' of norms" (Mahmood 2005:20). One hears slight echoes here of a passage from Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* in which Bourdieu observes that "the agent who 'regularizes' his situation or puts himself in the right is simply beating the group at its own game; in abiding by the rules, falling into line with good form, he wins the group over to his side by ostentatiously honouring the values the group honours" (Bourdieu 1977:22). Through this conformation, the agent presumably accumulates forms of social or cultural capital that in theory allow the agent to effectuate some change in some circumstances. Bourdieu elaborates:

In social formations in which the expression of material interests is heavily censored and political authority relatively uninstitutionalized, political strategies for mobilization can be effective only if the values they pursue or propose are presented in the misrecognizable guise of the values in which the group recognizes itself. It is therefore not sufficient to say that the rule determines practice when there is more to be gained by obeying it than by disobeying it. [Bourdieu 1977:22]

The apparent downside of this conformation, however, is that the "rule's last trick is to cause it to be forgotten that agents have an interest in obeying the rule" (Bourdieu 1977:22).

Mahmood's discussion of Butler's conceptualization of agency ("the iterability of performativity *is* a theory of agency") means that "to the degree that the stability of social norms is a function of their repeated enactment, agency for Butler is grounded in the essential openness

of each iteration and the possibility that it may fail or be reappropriated or resignified for purposes other than the consolidation of norms” and “since all social formations are reproduced through a reenactment of norms, this makes these formations vulnerable because each restatement/reenactment can fail,” which also means that “the condition of possibility of each social formation is also ‘the possibility of its undoing’” (Mahmood 2005:19-20). This formulation of agency is quite similar to one described by Ortner when she examines one of the ironies at the core of the practice model, which is that the consequences of human behaviors are often not only not pre-determined but can be indeterminate and stochastic:

The irony, although some may not feel it as such, is this: that although actors’ intentions are accorded central place in the model, yet major social change does not for the most part come about as an intended consequence of action. Change is largely a by-product, an unintended consequence of action, however rational action may have been. Setting out to conceive children with superior mana by sleeping with British sailors, Hawaiian women became agents of the spirit of capitalism in their society. Setting out to preserve structure and reduce anomaly by killing a “god” who was really Captain Cook, the Hawaiians put in motion a train of events that ultimately brought down their gods, their chiefs, and their world as they knew it. To say that society and history are products of human action is true, but only in a certain ironic sense. They are rarely the products the actors themselves set out to make. [Ortner 1984:157]

Ortner references Foucault on the same point: “Michel Foucault, whose later work . . . is certainly part of the current practice trend, and who is making an impact in at least some quarters of anthropology, has put this point nicely: ‘People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does’” (Ortner 1984:157 n18).

Mahmood in effect argues we should not romanticize one form of agency over another because these alternative worldviews only articulate alternative structures of power (Mahmood 2005:8). Mahmood provides the example (from Abu-Lughod 1990) of a “young Bedouin women who wear sexy lingerie to challenge parental authority and dominant social mores” which,

according to her, “should also be understood as reinscribing alternative forms of power that are rooted in practices of capitalist consumerism and urban bourgeois values and aesthetics” (Mahmood 2005:9). Mahmood asserts that these alternate forms of resistance are just as socially-encoded as any other form of agency and are not necessarily any more or less intrinsically aspirational than any other form of agency and that these “practices teach us about complex interworkings of historically changing structures of power” (Mahmood 2005:9 quoting Abu-Lughod 1990:53). Of course, what happens when different discursive formations and conceptions of agency collide or intersect remains intriguing as an oppositional theme.

G. David Harvey and “Neoliberalism”

In David Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, we see an emphasis not so much on resistance (although some forms of opposition are discussed near the end of the text), but on the techniques used to construct consent around a “neoliberal” political and economic agenda, which according to Harvey undermines or diffuses potential resistance to this socioeconomic regime. Harvey’s thesis is that “neoliberalism” is not a natural or spontaneous development in recent economic history, but rather it has constituted an intentional project to redistribute wealth back to an economic elite (Harvey 2005). According to Harvey, this project occurred in response to the increased gains by the working or middle classes (as a result of the Fordist capital-labor compromise from earlier in the twentieth century) and the decreased economic returns that began to manifest themselves in earnest in the 1970s (Harvey 2005). The arguments for how this transition was accomplished are not only the subject of Harvey’s text, but other texts such as Naomi Klein’s *The Shock Doctrine* (2007).

According to Harvey, the tropes or narratives commonly associated with or attributed to neoliberalism have been mobilized in its contemporary setting in the United States and elsewhere.

Of particular interest is Harvey's description of Gramsci's characterization of forms of "common sense," which according to Harvey in the case of neoliberalism is deeply rooted in the principles of personal accountability and individual liberty as opposed to forms of collective action (see, e.g., Harvey 2005:23). Harvey describes the role of "common sense" as follows:

For a shift of this magnitude to occur required the prior construction of political consent across a sufficiently large spectrum of the population to win elections. What Gramsci calls 'common sense' (defined as 'the sense held in common') typically grounds consent. Common sense is constructed out of longstanding practices of cultural socialization often rooted deep in regional or national traditions. It is not the same as the 'good sense' that can be constructed out of critical engagement with the issues of the day. [Harvey 2005:39]

The idea that hegemony descends to the level of "common sense" (i.e., as fully internalized and below the level of discursivity) is in many ways consistent with the Althusserian position that an "ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1971:153) and "what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (Althusser 1971:155). Ortner characterizes this view of culture as the "mystification" model where "culture (= 'ideology') tells lies about the realities of people's lives, and the analytic problem is to understand how people come to believe these lies" (Ortner 1984:153.)⁴

Finally, one does find resistance discussed in Harvey at or near the end of his book when he discusses the role of opposition movements to neoliberalism (Harvey 2005:198-201). What is intriguing about Harvey's description of the intentional implementation (i.e., not a spontaneous or natural rise) of the neoliberal agenda, however, is that it itself would then have constituted what amounted to an oppositional movement that sought to deconstruct (according to Harvey) at least a

⁴ Gramsci's concept of "common sense" is further discussed in the third part of this paper.

half century of social democratic (“Fordist”) orthodoxy. This point raises obvious questions about the capacities of one group versus another to bring about social change and the associated types of change. A cynic, even one from the Althusserian tradition, might argue, however, that underlying the so-called labor-capital compromise one can still find a form of a ruling philosophy that normatively favors certain groups over others (with the only “change” being the relative emphasis placed on one group over another).

III. Historical Foundations of Social Cohesion and Change

The issue of the individual and society – that is, whether or which one precedes the other or determines the other – surfaces noticeably in comparisons between Durkheim (society as “social fact”) and Weber (individual agency and “Verstehen”). Modernity yielding to heretofore unexpressed forms of individualization, in which modern subjects have grown accustomed to social differentiation, intentionality, self-expression, and self-interest, suggests changes in the modes of subjectivity and agency. Is “individualization,” however, the same as agency? Also, how have societies bound themselves together traditionally and how has this mechanism changed over time, if at all?

The question of social cohesion is discussed in more historical detail in this section. It includes an examination of Durkheim’s emphasis on interdependence through increasingly complex divisions of labor from a transition from one form of “social solidarity” to another (in conjunction with Durkheim’s reliance on the continued binding value of the “sacred” within a community). This section also examines the role of class conflict and ideology within Marx’s paradigm and the influence of forms of authority and social change within Weber’s system. It concludes with a detailed analysis of themes relating to social cohesion, agency, and “the law” from Malinowski’s *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*.

A. Émile Durkheim's Focus on Society as Social Solidarity

A detailed analysis of Émile Durkheim's view of the transitions involved from the "pre-modern" to the "modern" starts with *The Division of Labor in Society*. This text represented Durkheim's initial foray into explaining social cohesion and the transitions from what he called "mechanical" to "organic" societies. Durkheim would later examine in more depth the origins and development of religion (as a form of social cohesion) at the mechanical level, in what he characterized as its most elemental form, in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

Durkheim regarded "society" as the central defining force in explaining and understanding human behavior (Pals 2006:85). It should, therefore, come as no surprise that in *The Division of Labor* he sought to look at the problem of social cohesion. For Durkheim, the relationship between society and the individual was, in many ways, rather straightforward. In opposition to Rousseau's attempt at explaining society through a "social contract" among already autonomous individuals, Durkheim regarded the individual as always having been "born first into groups – into families, clans, tribes, nations – and raised in that context" (Pals 2006:90). To a large extent, because of this precondition, Durkheim came to view society in itself as having an intrinsic moral component due to these "basic structures of life" and obligations within and to the community (Pals 2006:91). The fact that Durkheim came to view religion as inseparable from society (Pals 2006:91), and even as the community worshipping nothing but itself as presented within *The Elementary Forms*, is consistent with this message of society as a moral entity or source.

Within mechanical societies, Durkheim examined the role of common or shared norms which constitute, depending on the translation, a "collective consciousness" or "conscience collective" (Durkheim 1984). This consciousness is based on a "dense network of shared symbols and rituals" (Turner 1991:49). Durkheim argues that these societies are, notwithstanding certain

divisions of labor across males and females, characterized by “the absence of a complex differentiation of social roles, the absence of individualism and doctrines of individuality and by the absence of cultural variations and divisions” (Turner 1991:49). As described by Durkheim, the universal group norms were enforced through “repressive laws” that served to punish breaches from the collective norms of the group (see discussion at Durkheim 1984:xvii). In these contexts, “there is uniform agreement as to what is right and what is wrong in almost all matters of human conduct” (Pals 2006:91).

From the mechanical, Durkheim transitions to “organic societies.” The causes of the transition from the mechanical to the organic are likely numerous, but Durkheim focuses on the pressures of “moral” or “dynamic” densities, which represent increases in the population (social volume), increases in population densities (physical density), as well as increasing social interaction within these social and physical dimensions, leading to heightened levels of competition (Durkheim 1984:200-225). As greater numbers of people interact and compete within these spaces, specialization and divisions of labor result as a form of or a response to increasing competition (Durkheim 1984:200-225). Within the organic society, the social cohesion – and moral force – of society manifests itself differently. Moral commitment in this context “comes not from the threat of punishment but from the need that each person acquires for the work of others” (Pals 2006:91). This is reflected in society’s reliance on restitutive laws, rather than penal laws. Restitutive laws, which arise in such highly developed areas as domestic law, contract law, commercial law, and administrative law, strive to restore any breaches between or among individuals by making members whole and returning them to the *status quo ante* (Durkheim 1984:68, 149-175).

The irony of the organic society is that, because its members become functionally interdependent on one another as part of the increasingly complex societal organism, these members emerge as individuals (or, at a minimum, as specialized cells within a social body) who are functionally distinct from and yet still functionally interconnected to other individuals within the community. According to Durkheim, individuality and distinct social boundaries therefore emerge within what was previously a relatively homogenous collective, along with more individual diversity and personal freedom (Pals 2006:91). This interdependence in modern societies has been characterized as a form of “moral individualism” because of our reliance on others to do their duty within the organic body and to competently – and ethically – perform their functional roles (Pals 2006:91).

Durkheim also recognized certain “exceptional” and “abnormal” forms or outcomes of the division of labor when the full, harmonious effect of social solidarity is no longer engendered by and distributed across society (Durkheim 1984: 291, 307). These forms include the “anomic division of labor” and the “forced division of labor” (Durkheim 1984:291-322). “Anomie” constitutes a condition in which a worker becomes over-specialized and is reduced to the “role of a machine” and acts out in a repetitive, monotonous “routine” without an understanding of a connection to the greater whole or its purpose (Durkheim 1984:306-307). A “forced division of labor” is meant to include those situations in which the institution of some external or unnatural constraint (such as a caste system) interferes with the natural functioning and internal capabilities of what would otherwise constitute a well-run organism and its parts, which can lead to dissatisfaction and hostility (leading even to civil war) (Durkheim 1984:310-311). These forms or outcomes are pathological or deviant and “unnatural,” but according to Durkheim they are not systemic, as in the case of the forms of alienation described by Marx.

Durkheim later turned his attention to the topic of religion (as, among other things, a form of social cohesion) in *The Elementary Forms*. What is interesting about Durkheim's analysis is that this text constitutes a further elaboration on the norms and customs of his previously-described mechanical societies. Its goal is to examine the development and role of the "collective consciousness," but in the form in which it is typically displayed or manifested within a traditional society. Because of Durkheim's "central focus on religion in its earliest forms," it can be said that Durkheim "was somewhat inclined to think in evolutionary terms" insofar as Durkheim "proceeded to show how all of religion in other places and later times has evolved from those forms in various new and different combinations" (Pals 2006:182). Durkheim's functional approach reflects his metaphor of society as an organism of interdependent parts (Szelényi 2009 and Durkheim 1984:139-141). This stands in contrast to Weber's perhaps more historically-situated approach such that when Weber "sets out to explain ideal-types, he is careful to notice how expressions of those types may appear in one epoch, fade in the next, and return again thereafter, depending on each new cultural or historical circumstance" (Pals 2006:182). This contrast is due in large part to differences in their respective approaches, with Durkheim taking a functional-reductionist approach and Weber avoiding reductionism through an examination of complexity and diversity (Pals 2006:149) that also happens to avoid some of the cultural evolutionary elements of Durkheim's analysis (Pals 2006:182).

Durkheim defines religion as follows: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them" (Durkheim 1995:44). This definition is notable for its three primary elements: the sacred, rituals, and a community. Even by looking at only these elements, one can anticipate what in fact

Durkheim sought to accomplish in his text, which was to claim that the community's (i.e., the clan's) worship of the totem, either in its physical or abstract form, was in fact its worship of itself as a conflation of the sacred with the group and of the moral with the group, often accomplished through ritualistic practices. The totem is "nothing else than collective forces, incarnated, hypostatized under a material form" and "it is society which the faithful worship" with the "superiority of the gods over men" as "that of the group over its members" (O'Toole 1984:14, quoting from Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms*). Thus, for Durkheim, "religion is, in some sense, 'society worshipping itself,' so that 'society' is the symbolic referent of religious ritual." (O'Toole 1984:14). The ritualized practices of the group "create strong emotional states (a collective effervescence, to use Durkheim's terminology), re-establishing and cementing social relationships within the tribe" (Turner 1991:46).

Several of the passages near the end of *The Elementary Forms* are remarkable for how they attempt to link past with present and future by relating how society, in its modern incarnation, can still attain the moral (and social) cohesion of its more elemental forms by directing its attention towards another totemic form, with society (still) worshipping itself in the form of what amounts to a "civil religion." Regarding how modern society can continue to self-cohere, Durkheim states:

There is something eternal in religion that is destined to outlive the succession of particular symbols in which religious thought has clothed itself. There can be no society that does not experience the need at regular intervals to maintain and strengthen the collective feelings and ideas that provide its coherence and its distinct individuality. This moral remaking can be achieved only through meetings, assemblies, and congregations in which the individuals, pressing close to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments. . . . In short, the former gods are growing old or dying, and others have not been born. . . . A day will come when our societies once again will know hours of creative effervescence during which new ideals will again spring forth and new formulas emerge to guide humanity for a time. . . . We have already seen how the [French] Revolution instituted a whole cycle of celebrations in order to keep the principles that inspired it eternally young. . . . There are no immortal gospels, and there is no reason to

believe that humanity is incapable of conceiving new ones in the future. [Durkheim 1995:429-430]

According to Durkheim, the “former gods are growing old or dying,” but what is to come? Durkheim’s quasi-nationalistic message is ironic in light of another revolution, of sorts, that will happen soon in Durkheim’s future, which would tear his family apart by taking his son from him, and ultimately Durkheim’s will to live (see Wikipedia, “Émile Durkheim”). The First World War would come to represent a final shattering of the old order, of Europe as previously constituted, with that first great upheaval leading to the types of nationalism to which Durkheim was referring, though one certainly must question whether that transition constituted “progress.”

B. Karl Marx’s Emphasis on Class Conflict

If Durkheim viewed “society” in its various forms as the pre-eminent source and form of social solidarity (and, ironically, individuality through interdependence), then it is Karl Marx who argues that society is not a harmonious community per se, but rather is the product of class antagonisms and conflict. Like Durkheim, Marx adopts a reductionist approach (Pals 2006:149), because historical materialism is premised on the supposition that the material base or infrastructure determines the superstructure. Within the paradigm of historical materialism, “religious beliefs were representations of the particular economic conditions of specific modes of production” (Turner 2006:285). Marx’s “ideas on religion are part of his general theory of alienation in class-divided societies” (Hamilton 2001:91). As discussed below, Marx also viewed religion as a means by which social cohesion was maintained (though, according to him, disingenuously).

Unlike Durkheim and Weber, Marx apparently did not deal systematically with the subject of religion, but he instead addressed it periodically in some of his writings – though, when he did so, it was in scathing terms (Hamilton 2001:92). His most deliberate and condensed treatment of

religion occurs in the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Hamilton 2001:92). For the purposes of this paper, it would facilitate the discussion of Marx to quote verbatim an extended passage from this text. According to Marx:

The basis of irreligious criticism is this: *man makes religion*; religion does not make man. Religion is indeed man's self-consciousness and self-awareness so long as he has not found himself or has lost himself again. But *man* is not an abstract being, squatting outside the world. Man is *the human world*, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion which is an *inverted world consciousness*, because they are an *inverted world*. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual *point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its general basis of consolation and justification. It is *the fantastic realization* of the human being inasmuch as the *human being* possesses no true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly a struggle against *that world* whose spiritual *aroma* is religion. *Religious* suffering is at the same time an *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people. [Tucker 1978:53-54]

What is noticeable about Marx's approach is that arguably some similarities remain to Durkheim's conception of religion, one of which is that both Marx and Durkheim would agree that religion is a reflection or consequence of something else (Pals 2006:150). For Durkheim, religion is a reflection of society projecting itself and its norms onto or into the form of a totem or totem-like object or principle that it worships, but the worship is nothing but the worship of itself – that is, of the group (or “society”). Marx departs from Durkheim by positing that this projection is not of the collective, for in Marx's mind the “collective” (or the “social”) does not exist as a single harmonic unit or entity, but rather constitutes a forced assemblage of class interests and embedded antagonisms in which the ideological superstructure, including religion, reflects an underlying class power dynamic and is used by a “dominant” class to protect and legitimize its interests (see O'Toole 1984:67).

A major difference between Marx and Durkheim is that, while Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms* continues at the end to proclaim the need for the “sacred,” even if the civil totem replaces the naturalistic totem, Marx offers no such suggestion, for according to Marx the “compensating and comforting illusion” of religion “would eventually be dispensed with as human beings lost their need for illusions” (Hamilton 2001:91). Further, Marx’s critique of Durkheim’s notion of the “sacred” and Durkheim’s call for a civil religion as a source of social cohesion in modern settings would likely be that this form of “governmentality” (to use a Foucauldian term) is nothing more than yet another means by which one class imposes its interests and ideologies on another. Of course, the question (and problem) is the extent to which Marx and Marxism ultimately became to its adherents the sacred totems Marx purportedly sought to demolish. Another criticism of Marx on this point is that he was too focused on the West and, specifically, on Christianity and that his analysis, at least with respect to religion, does not necessarily apply to other areas or to tribal religions (Pals 2006:140).

Since religion for Marx is the outcome or reflection of underlying material forces and class conditions, the solution for Marx is to attack those underlying material conditions. This point ultimately ties back to a discussion of ideology and its role as a force of social cohesion and change. Thus, according to Pals:

As Marx puts their plight in one of his characteristic reversals of phrase, “The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a *call to abandon a condition which requires illusions.*” He is fully confident that, in time, the attack on those conditions will succeed. And when it does, religion, like the state and everything else in the superstructure of oppression, will “wither away” entirely on its own. [Pals 2006:137]

Of course, the issue here is that an “attack” on the conditions of the “sacred,” per Durkheim, would represent an attack on society itself and would constitute nothing more than the “profanization”

of the sacred and the “sacralization” of the profane. The over-arching categories, however, would remain the same (see, e.g., Durkheim 1976:XI).

C. Max Weber and “Rationalization”

Max Weber does not appear to suffer from the reductionistic criticisms leveled against Durkheim and Marx. Weber also stands in marked opposition to Marx’s materialist approach, for in Weber’s system with its emphasis on agency, meaning, and understanding (“Verstehen”), Weber “presumes that we cannot explain the actions of humans as we explain occurrences in nature” (Pals 2006:153). It has been argued that “Verstehen” and the use of the ideal-type do not represent an intuitive, imaginative, or purely interpretative explanatory process, but rather can be seen as “a form of science” involving “a systematic, rational method of explaining human actions by discerning the real motives or meanings” and of describing “a historical circumstance or set of conditions” and by “looking at what actually did happen, we try to isolate what it was that made one sequence occur when the others did not” (Pals 2006:154). Weber’s approach has been called “methodological individualism” (Pals 2006:155).

If Durkheim viewed society itself as the dispositive social force, and Marx emphasized class divisions and conflict, then Weber focuses on the role of authority and social action in illuminating the increasingly pronounced expressions of a certain form of rationality in governing our social interactions and institutions. According to Daniel Pals, “intellectual historians have focused on [Weber’s] discussions of ‘rationalization’ in human societies over the course of history” with some believing that rationalization serves as “the grand interpretative scheme that underlies Weber’s program, linking religion, economics, and society” (Pals 2006:185).

In modernity, there appears to be little doubt that Weber was prescient as one witnesses the processes of instrumental-rationality and bureaucratization envelop, for better or worse, both

Western and non-Western cultures. The theme of rationalization appears to play a more predominant role in Weber's analysis of Western culture and society. According M.M.W. Lemmen, the "various elements of this rationalism were to be encountered elsewhere in the world, certainly, but that in its totality typified Western culture alone" (Lemmen 1990:15). Malcolm Hamilton has also noted:

Rationalism . . . is used by Weber to characterise the particular way in which Western culture and civilisation as opposed to Eastern have developed. The West, Weber believed, was more rational in its approach to all spheres of life and endeavor. Often he seems to be thinking largely of the development of the scientific outlook, the systematic pursuit of scientific knowledge and its application through technology. Along with this goes rational bureaucratic organisation of administration and production. Even in spheres such as music, however, the West developed a more rational approach. [Hamilton 2001:162]

One starting point is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in which Weber makes the case that a particular form of religious creed (i.e., Calvinist Protestantism) served as the catalyst or spark – though not necessarily the only possible cause, and certainly not a sufficient cause – of a new mode of production (i.e., modern, Western capitalism) which "stood Marx on his head" (Pals 2006:165) insofar as it emphasized an idealist – not a materialist – origin of the capitalist mode of production. Even more intriguing than the idealist versus materialist squabble between Weber and Marx is Weber's contention that the new capitalistic ethic becomes sufficiently ingrained and acquires a momentum of its own, without the need for its initial religious impetus (Pals 2006:165). From this perspective, Western modernity constitutes a form of detached rationalization (i.e., detached from its original religious catalyst) (see Lemmen 1990:178).

In *The Protestant Ethic*, the end result of this process of rationalization, which "stripped of its religious and ethical meaning" appears to have the "character of sport," is the "iron cage" (Weber 1987:182). In Weber's words:

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: “Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before reached.” [Weber 1987:182]

This transition into the “iron cage” can be interpreted through the prism of Weber’s forms of social action. These consist of the traditional, affectual, instrumental-rational, and value-rational (Weber 1978:24-26). According to Weber, the process of “rationalization” represents the sacrifice of the value-rational (or “substantive rationality”) in favor of the cold-hearted, cost-benefit-motivated instrumental-rational (or “formal rationality”):

The systemic pursuit of profit in capitalism by careful calculation of costs in relation to return, optimal use of resources, elimination of waste, and so on, may be highly rational in the formal sense but it does not necessarily produce a substantive rationality in the sense of meeting human goals and needs or the needs of a society as a whole. Formal rationality has nothing to do with values; substantive rationality involves value positions. Whether something is rational in the substantive sense depends upon the values one holds and what is rational in this sense from one point of view may not be so from another. Much of Weber’s work is oriented to the understanding of why the West has placed so much emphasis, in his view, upon formal rationality. [Hamilton 2001:162]

It is this progression from value-rationality towards the highly impersonal and technical and bureaucratized instrumental-rationality that can be characterized as “the irrationality of rationality” (Seminar Discussion, Anthropology 203A, Fall 2012, likely in reference to George Ritzer’s formulation of this concept in a contemporary setting). Since “no necessary value judgment is intended by Weber in his use of the term rational” and “Weber was not necessarily implying that the West is thereby superior” (Hamilton 2001:162), it can be said that our escape from the “iron cage” hinges in part on our realization that the value-rational is still rational and should play a role in our modern lives.

Where is the sacred shimmer of Durkheim's civil religion or some equivalent cohesive social force within Weber's writings? That is, how does Weber account for the evolution of values within his paradigm of rationality? The ideal-typical process of rationalization reflects or constitutes the "disenchantment" of society: "One of Weber's widely cited types defines the process of cultural 'disenchantment,' by which faith in the supernatural realm of magic and gods, long anchored in traditional society, gradually dissolves under the pressure of systematic and rationalized patterns of thought" (Pals 2006:157). The result, according to this line of thought, appears to be a steady process of "ethical rationalization" in which our values and mores eventually begin to stand on their own rather than relying on tradition, a charismatic prophet, or a bureaucratized priesthood (see, e.g., Hamilton 2001:157-162). According to this perspective, "once 'disenchanted,' the world has no need of religion" (Lemmen 1990:172).

As a result of this process, it is argued that society also now moves towards an era of the autonomous individual, who must accept the burdens of the transition away from traditional forms of authority: "In modern times, man with his yearning for meaning has been cast more than ever upon his own individuality. . . . Man is compelled more than ever before to free himself of the received social orders and to make a choice" (Lemmen 1990:182-183). The consequence is "a switch from communal relations, involving substantive values and habitual reciprocity, to a society characterized by value pluralism, the indifference of market relationships, the individuation of the autonomous personality, and the evolution of a secular environment, relatively free from the constraining impact of traditional norms" (Holton & Turner 1989:75-76). In one sense, individualization can be seen as the development of the autonomous person who is able to resist "all authoritarian arbitrariness" (Lemmen 1990:174-175). It is entirely possible, however, that this new form of instrumental individuality is ultimately "'cold' and empty," for through

bureaucratization and the iron cage, we risk becoming impersonal persons who ultimately lack “creativity and individuality” (Appelrouth & Edles 2008:149). Is it then possible that the human reaction to the iron cage is a greater, not lesser, emphasis on traditional forms of authority and the stability (and “social salvation”) it might come to represent?

D. Bronislaw Malinowski on Social Cohesion, Agency, and the Law

A principal theme addressed by Bronislaw Malinowski in *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* consists of, at one level, how (Trobriand) society binds itself together, while at another level, it addresses the role of agency within the group. Malinowski’s reliance on the reciprocal obligations (and individual calculations) embedded within the daily interactions of the tribe is an apparent reaction to earlier theories of social cohesion insofar as Malinowski is reacting to what he perceives to be the failure of prior social theorists to only regard the “primitive” as essentially devoid of reason and as a slavish and blind servant of the group and group sentiment. It is this idea of mechanized group custom that Malinowski apparently most stridently rejects. He states, for example, that “underlying all these ideas was the assumption that in primitive societies the individual is completely dominated by the group—the horde, the clan or the tribe—that he obeys the commands of his community, its traditions, its public opinion, its decrees, with a slavish, fascinated, passive obedience” (Malinowski 1926:3-4). In many ways, Malinowski appears to launch his stiffest attack against Durkheim’s formulation of the “mechanical society,” where a “collective conscience” permeates the social fabric and is used by Durkheim as the basis for social solidarity within pre-modern societies (Durkheim 1984:31-67). This contrast between Malinowski and Durkheim has been articulated as follows:

This is most fully elaborated in his *Crime and Custom*, which opens with the following question: Why is it that rules of conduct in a primitive society are obeyed, even though they are hard and irksome? Even under normal conditions, the savage’s compliance with his moral code is at best partial, conditional, and evasive. . . .

Above all, Malinowski rejects the assumption that it is the sacred authority of the moral code, or the “collective conscience,” which accounts for the conformity given it. It is to this anti-Durkheimian point that he directs the brunt of his polemic. Conformity, says Malinowski, is not sanctioned “by a mere psychological force, but by a definite social machinery.” [Gouldner 1960:169]

Malinowski examines reciprocity as the foundation of this “social machinery” in his text as he considers several social practices (e.g., social functions and relations within the Trobriand canoe system, exchanges of fish and vegetables between villages, widows weeping for their deceased husbands to satisfy the deceased man’s brothers and maternal relatives, the continuing obligations between a woman and her children and her brother, etc.), but Malinowski also builds his case for a more individualized account of social functioning by referencing numerous aberrations and violations of group custom. For example, Malinowski notes:

Whenever the native can evade his obligations without the loss of prestige, or without the prospective loss of gain, he does so, exactly as a civilized business man would do. When the ‘automatic smoothness’ in the run of obligations so often attributed to the Melanesian is studied more closely, it becomes clear that there are constant hitches in the transactions, that there is much grumbling and recrimination and seldom is a man completely satisfied with his partner. [Malinowski 1926:30]⁵

Malinowski’s emphasis on individual non-conformity (as a form of agency) and his attack on Durkheimian notions of a slavish psychological adherence to the “collective conscience” is, if it is accurate, one of the most interesting aspects of Malinowski’s project in *Crime and Custom*. Just as Levi-Strauss demonstrated in *The Savage Mind* that the “primitive” was capable of ratiocination on par with the “modern” (Levi-Strauss 1966:1-33), Malinowski undermined the assumption that social actors within traditional societies mindlessly conform to group customs without individual incentives, ratiocination, pride, or egotism. He notes, for example, that “the free and easy way in which all transactions are done, the good manners which pervade all and cover

⁵ One question is whether Malinowski overstated the number or frequency of the instances in which these violations occur.

any hitches or maladjustments, make it difficult for the superficial observer to see the keen self-interest and watchful reckoning which runs right through” (Malinowski 1926:26-27). Likewise, even when it comes to relations within a kinship group, “rivalries, dissensions, the keenest egotism flourish and dominate indeed the whole trend of kinship relations” (Malinowski 1926:48).

Malinowski underscores these points by observing:

Far also from being exclusively a group affair, his rights and his duties are in the main the concern of the individual, who knows perfectly well how to look after his interests and realizes that he has to redeem his obligations. We found indeed that the native’s attitude towards duty and privilege is very much the same as in a civilized community—to the extent in fact that he not only stretches but also at times breaks the law. [Malinowski 1926:74]

One also perceives from these portrayals that this creature of reason described by Malinowski is also a creature of emotion, which is consistent with a more fully articulated and rounded portrayal of human individuality (as opposed to a mere caricature of one aspect of human nature or the other): “‘It is characteristic of Malinowski’s method,’ wrote Sir James Frazer, ‘that he takes full account of the complexity of human nature. . . . He remembers that man is a creature of emotion at least as much as of reason, and he is constantly at pains to discuss the emotional as well as the rational basis of human action’” (Hoebel 1946:851).

Malinowski also apparently disputes the Durkheimian notion that social cohesion within “primitive” societies is reliant on religious customs, norms, and taboos. For Malinowski, the “secular and religious are not in a hopeless jumble in the primitive mind” (Seagle 1937:281). Malinowski describes a broad range of civil or secular practices (which he separately argues constitute “legal” functions) that stand part from the sacred. Malinowski observes:

It is also obvious that the type of rules which we have been discussing, although they are unquestionably rules of binding law, have in no way the character of religious commandments, laid down absolutely, obeyed rigidly and integrally. The rules here described are essentially elastic and adjustable, leaving a considerable

latitude within which their fulfilment is regarded as satisfactory. [Malinowski 1926:31]

It has, therefore, been stated that Malinowski rejects “the myth of the primitive mind” and “above all he has the merit of rejecting the idea that the whole of primitive life is dominated by religious and magical conceptions and influences so that the savage is unable to distinguish religious from other rules of conduct” (Seagle 1937:275).

Malinowski also presents in *Crime and Custom* a theory of the precursors (or functional equivalents) of civil law within a tribal society. The basic idea that our daily interactions are bound up in systems of reciprocity that begin to look like contract or other “civil” relations is certainly apposite. Malinowski reinforces the analogy to modern civil law when he states: “‘Civil law,’ the positive law governing all the phases of tribal life, consists then of a body of binding obligations, regarded as a right by one party and acknowledged as a duty by the other, kept in force by a specific mechanism of reciprocity and publicity inherent in the structure of their society” (Malinowski 1926:58). On this point, Malinowski’s functionalist approach plays a crucial role, with Malinowski himself describing it as encompassing “the study by direct observation of the rules of custom as they function in actual life” and that such a study “reveals that the commandments of law and custom are always organically connected and not isolated” and “that their very nature consists in the many tentacles which they throw out into the context of social life” (Malinowski 1926:125).

The functionalist approach certainly has its advantages, as for example in its expansion of the practices an anthropologist might consider legal or proto-legal. Malinowski contested “the belief that law consists of ‘central authority, codes, courts, and constables’, and insisted that law does ‘not consist in any independent institutions’; rather law represents ‘an aspect of their tribal life’” (Tamanaha 1995:504). This definition of the “law,” however, has also been criticized. Malinowski is sometimes reproached as being too much the functionalist, with its immersion in

the individual, and not enough the structural-functionalist, with its greater emphasis on the “construction of the social order itself” and, especially, with its more intense focus on the role of social structures or institutions within that order (see, e.g., Barnard 2000:61). An institutional (“Western”) approach might tend, on the other hand, to put too much weight on the importance of legal structures and forms (while the kinship group might in fact be the quintessential “law-giver” and form, so “institutions” are not necessarily ignored in “non-Western” approaches). On these points, Michael Sims argues:

A definition of law as exemplified in Western society. . . was a “blind alley” because it excluded preliterate societies and amounted to saying that all “primitive” societies had no law and left *too little* to talk about. Another approach . . . was that of Bronislaw Malinowski. Malinowski’s definition of law did not require courts and codes but included any norm of conduct which was “baited with inducements.” However, [it has been] argued that Malinowski’s approach caused almost every form of social control to be a legal one and left *too much* to talk about.” [Sims 1995:345]

Sally Falk Moore, a noted legal anthropologist, concludes:

Within anthropology, the conception of law that Malinowski propounded was so broad that it was virtually indistinguishable from a study of the obligatory aspect of all social relationships. It could almost be said that by its very breadth and blurriness of conception Malinowski’s view made it difficult to separate out or define as law any special province of study. Law was not distinguished from social control in general. [Moore 1969:258]

At the end of his life Malinowski apparently recognized some of the limitations of his approach. According to Hoebel, Malinowski eventually “gave authority and coercive sanctions a preeminent role in social control”:

At the very end of his life, however, when confronted by problems of freedom and law in modern civilization in the face of the totalitarian threats of Fascism and Communism, Malinowski realized how deficient his “anthropological approach to law” really was. In *Freedom and Civilization* (published posthumously in 1944) we find him saying, “By law in the sense of a socially established rule we mean a command or rule of conduct sanctioned by organized constraints.” [Hoebel 1954:209]

Hoebel expands on this statement:

The concept of reciprocity, important though it is for the understanding of social relations (for no social relations are unilateral), was at long last recognized by Malinowski to be wholly inadequate when taken by itself in the attempt to understand the nature and function of power in social organization. When he addressed himself to the pressing matter of freedom in civilization the necessary allocation and delegation of power, as against the tendencies to usurp and corrupt power by self-centered interests, could not help but be the chief concern of his thoughts. Then, and only then, did he realize that this is the concern of law in all societies. [Hoebel 1954:210]

If Hoebel is correct, it took totalitarianism and a more profound sense of the role of conflict and power within society for Malinowski to finally adopt a role for the law that comes closer to how we might regard it today. This means, among other things, that the law must also act to restrict the power of the group or society itself and those who wish to overtake or overpower it.

IV. Language and Discourse as a Source of Social Cohesion and Control

The last part of this paper elaborates on scholarship and social theory that examines the interdependent relationship between language and social structure and social relations at multiple scales. As discussed below, this field of scholarship ranges from the macro level (e.g., Foucault's discursive formations and Gramsci's notions of "common sense"), to the intermediate (e.g., Bourdieu's practice-theory dialectic between structure and agency), to the micro (e.g., Goffman's interactional and dramaturgical approach at the individual or role-playing level). Other formulations are equally important, including the potential role of language in structuring thought and, in turn, behavior (Whorf), the role of tropes or narratives (Friedrich), the role of verbal performativity (Bauman), and how language itself can be viewed as reflecting certain sociopolitical, ideological, and class influences or orientations (Volosinov). This area of research is ultimately relevant to any project that examines how the social is constructed and reproduced

(by ratifying, for example, certain modes of thinking or worldviews), as well as how subjects or agents are able to resist or transform the circumstances of their everyday lives.

A. Ferdinand de Saussure and Structuralism

As a foundational matter, Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between *langue* (language as abstract, intrinsic, bounded, ordered, and unified) and *parole* (speech as a token or epiphenomenal manifestation) deserves some treatment (Saussure 1959; see also Hanks 1996 for an attempted synthesis of Saussure and Peirce). Many of the ideas that follow are in opposition to Saussure's rigid structuralism, which gives preference to the abstract linguistic ideal-type over the token and, in Saussure's formulation, marginalized, de-emphasized, and quotidian speech acts or performances.

In opposition to structuralism, an anthropological approach regards *langue* as necessary, though not sufficient. That is, while *langue* is a useful analytic concept, language as actually constructed, materialized, and negotiated as discourse within human social relations is, according to this view, ultimately the more meaningful and relevant domain of analysis (that is, language as an integral aspect or medium of human sociality) (for a discussion of the role and scope of linguistic anthropology see Duranti 1997). It is also the element of historicity (or diachronicity) and a non-static negotiation and construction of language through its use within human social interaction or as part of a community as discussed in Duranti (1997), as opposed to structuralism's emphasis on synchronicity and linguistic isolation, that gives *parole* its influence within a non-structuralist paradigm and that gives meaning (by way of a contrast to structuralism) to the social theories utilized within the proposed project. Moreover, in addition to the structuralist notion that signifiers are arbitrarily applied or related to the signified (Saussure 1959; see also Hanks 1996), a structuralist emphasis often disregards, rather than appreciates, discursive anomalies, which is

consistent with a traditional objectivist desire to disregard conflict more generally (whereas a focus on *parole* and diachronicity acknowledges the dialectical relationship between practice and ideal type).

B. Peircean Pragmatics and the Importance of the Interpretant

As another foundational matter, in opposition to a Saussurian self-contained dyadicity between signifier and signified, the early scholarship of Charles Peirce constructed a semiotic system involving a triadic relationship between and among sign, object, and interpretant (Peirce 1955). In the context of how language operates within the realm of human social relations, the Peircean approach is not only transitional, but essential. Theories that examine the role of language and discourse as ideology, for example, build on scholarship that relies to no small extent on the “semiotic models of communication based on the theories of C. S. Peirce (1931-58)” (Kroskrity 2004:500). Peirce’s research “recognized a broad variety of sign-focused ‘pragmatic’ relations between language users, the signs themselves, and the connections between these signs and the world” (Kroskrity 2004:500). Paul Kroskrity, a leading scholar in the field of language ideology, has observed that “one of the key theoretical advantages, for researchers, of these semiotic-functional models is their recognition that many ‘meanings’ that linguistic forms have for their speakers emerge from the ‘indexical’ connections between the linguistic signs and the contextual factors of their use,” which became the foundation for an ethnographic approach to communication that takes into account social relations (Kroskrity 2004:500), including presumably relations of power and class.

In the Peircean system of “pragmatics,” the addition of an interpretant acknowledges the importance of relating Saussurian signs to an exterior, mediated, or constantly remediated world, rather than simply viewing language (*langue*) as isolated or esoteric and speech (*parole*) as

unimportant. Useful terms or concepts include the Peircean idea of an interpretant, which constitutes a mental image, mediating representation, understanding of an object, or more simply, is itself a sign (an “equivalent” or “more developed” sign) often created in the mind of a person reacting to another sign, which is called a *representamen*, which itself stands for or represents an object (Peirce 1955:99; see also Hanks 1996). A sign stands for the object in some essentialized, distilled, or prototypical way, which in its Platonic sense is called the “ground” (Peirce 1955:99). In this useful framework, the interpretant itself as a sign can be interpreted and acted upon, and so on in a constant loop or series of interpretations (see Hanks 1996). The idea of constantly constructing and producing meaning in a hermeneutic process of interpretation and reinterpretation allows for social change because of the capacity (or tendency towards) divergent interpretations in this semiotic process (Seminar Discussion, Anthropology 204, Fall 2013).

C. Benjamin Whorf and Linguistic Relativity

Other scholarship has also examined the relationship between language and thought, including its effect on behavior and culture. These topics were examined by Benjamin Whorf in collaboration with Edward Sapir to form what is known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (in either its strong or weak versions) or, more generally, as the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis (see, e.g., Whorf 1956; Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992). This hypothesis postulates that the operations of language, through the influence of language classifications, language categories, and more specifically, linguistic analogies, often result in certain confluences or organizations of meaning that affect how we filter and, therefore, perceive and translate our experiences (Whorf 1956; Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992). This process is affected by and reflected in a language’s “fashion of speaking” (in its everyday and ordinary sense), which represents the cumulative effect of these types and forms of linguistic classifications within a particular language system (Whorf 1956; Lucy 1985; Lucy

1992). These “fashions of speaking” constitute a linguistic representation of reality in its various lexical, morphological, syntactic, and grammatical forms (Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992). This linguistic representation of reality in turn affects and conditions what are called our “microcosms of thought,” “systems of thought,” or “habitual thought worlds” (Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992). According to this theory, these linguistically-conditioned “habitual thought worlds” fundamentally affect our conceptions of such basic phenomena as time and matter (Whorf 1956; Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992).

An understanding of the effects of discursivity on thought and behavior, including at its everyday or micro scale on how we perceive and are affected by our social relations, thus builds on the Whorfian theory that it is through the indirect and long-standing effects of language on these linguistically-conditioned “habitual thought worlds” that produces the cultural and behavioral norms that might be said to constitute or condition a particular cultural expression (Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992). These “habitual thought worlds” are also reflected in and construct, according to Whorf, the “Weltanschauung” or “worldview” of a group of people (Lucy 1985; Lucy 1992).

What is particularly interesting here, at least according to the Whorfian paradigm, is how everyday language or a “fashion of speaking” arguably conditions or shapes thought, which in turn through a “long historical association” affects behavior and culture (Lucy 1992:65-66; see also Lucy 1985). While the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis has met with staunch opposition (see Lucy 1985 for a summary of critiques and contributions), particularly in its strong form, the notion that language can condition or shape thought and, in turn, behavioral and cultural norms provides potentially helpful material for any analysis of how certain discursive practices can potentially construct and ratify certain modes of thinking, which is particularly applicable to the effects of a particular world view and its related discursive practices on relations of power and the ability of

agents or subjects to resist or transform their circumstances in their everyday lives. According to Alessandro Duranti, “linguistic relativity becomes a way of exploring the power that words have over individuals and groups” and “is thus a precursor to more recent topics in linguistic anthropology, such as language ideologies” (Duranti 2001:8901).

D. Valentin Volosinov and Language as Ideology

Valentin Volosinov examined what he described as the inseparability of language and ideology – that is, language is permeated by the social, which itself is permeated by the ideological (Volosinov 1973). This view stands in opposition to the Saussurean “abstract objectivist” view of language as a detached, self-contained system which is “interested only in the inner logic of the system of signs itself, taken . . . independently of the meaning that gives signs their content” (Kroskrity 2004:499). According to the view propounded by Volosinov, abstract objectivism “ignores the position that meaningful signs are inherently ideological” (Kroskrity 2004:499).

To the extent that Volosinov’s text (*Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*) “is chiefly concerned with the sign and with the laws governing the systems of signs in their deployment within human society” (Volosinov 1973:3), Volosinov’s theories are applicable to any research that seeks answers as to how language is potentially embedded with ideological content that serves particular class or socioeconomic interests (which, by extension, ratifies particular forms of social reproduction or transformation as allowably emergent from particular social structures). These signs emerge from our social interactions or relations, which is to say that they “arise only on *interindividual territory*” (Volosinov 1973:12). These “social situations” and the “broader social milieu” are manifested dialogically within the utterance (Volosinov 1986:viii; Volosinov 1973:3-4).

According to Volosinov, the “ruling class strives to impart a supraclass, eternal character to the ideological sign, to extinguish or drive inward the struggle between social value judgments which occurs in it, to make the sign uniaxential” (Volosinov 1973:23). The implication is that one class seeks to negate the appearance of conflict or multiaccentuality (that is, the inner dialectical quality of any ideological sign), thereby creating the illusion of a transcendent, ahistorical, and universal semiotic truth or theme that serves all class interests over time (see Volosinov 1973:23-24; see also Parrington 1997). To the extent these contradictions are concealed and the embedded dialectical binaries are never made explicit, the result is arguably consistent with Gramsci’s concept of “common sense” and thereby produces the outcome of an unconscious and uncritical acceptance of a particular ideology as indexical or representative of all interests.

E. Paul Friedrich and Tropes, Metaphors, and Narratives

Post-modern and post-structural themes involving the discursive functions of tropes, metaphors, and narratives are similarly useful. Like Volosinov, Friedrich Nietzsche described (and, in his case, disparaged) the dominance of uniaxential accounts that over time disregarded or effaced competing accounts or perspectives when he asked, “What, therefore, is truth?” and answered that truth is a “mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms; truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions . . . coins which have their obverse effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal” (Sarup 1993:46). Paul Friedrich catalogs and discusses the various types of subtropes, tropes, and macro tropes, but more importantly, he notes that all language is tropological (Friedrich 1991:24). Volosinov claims that language is ideological (Volosinov 1973). The confluence of these two positions is that most, if not all, tropes are ideological.

Most of the time “tropes are the great and little prepatterns that variously channel, influence, and determine how the speaker interrelates elements of language to each other and interrelates language itself and the rest of the world” (Friedrich 1991:54-55). A metaphor is just one type of trope (Friedrich 1991:43). This definition of trope is useful because the unconscious and unquestioned manners of understanding labeled by Gramsci as “common sense” – which are mobilized, without thought, to unaccentualize, homogenize, and filter our perceptions (Gramsci 1971), similar in some ways to a Whorfian “habitual thought world” or worldview – can in many ways be regarded as tropes or metaphors. Friedrich also relates his discussion of the trope to Volosinov’s recognition of the dialogic and dialectical nature of language, for according to Friedrich, “As Voloshinov put it, ‘Between psyche and ideology there exists a continuous dialectical interplay’ . . . which we can paraphrase, ‘Between the psyche of the unique individual, whether Poet or Everyman, and a society’s ideologies and myths there exists a continuous, dialectical interplay via the mediation, among other things, of figures such as irony, metaphor, and synecdoche’” (Friedrich 1991:54).

Two additional authors (among many) add insights to this topic of the narrative. From a post-structuralist perspective, Jean-François Lyotard’s discussions of the metanarrative “implying a philosophy of history . . . used to legitimate knowledge” (Lyotard 1984:xxiv) and forms of legitimation (and delegitimation) (Lyotard 1984) are useful. Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept of “language games” and how discourse (or, more specifically, an utterance) is implemented and considered ratified or legitimated (or not) within or across particular domains is also germane (see Lyotard 1984).

F. Michele Foucault and the “Discursive Formation”

The social theory and scholarship of Michel Foucault articulates several useful concepts relating to the relationship between language and social cohesion, reproduction, and change, including the discursive formation, the archive, governmentality, and the metaphor of the panopticon (see, e.g., Foucault 1978; Foucault 1979; Foucault 1980; Foucault 1984; Foucault 1988a; Sawyer 2002). These concepts are potentially interrelated within Foucault’s system insofar as Foucault emphasizes, as discussed, how forms of power and control, which one typically attributes to the state or sovereign as such, are increasingly distributed throughout the social matrix into the various institutions and networks in which subjects operate and in and through which social subjects come to self-regulate and self-discipline through a process within modernity called “governmentality” (Foucault 1978; see also Ahearn 2012). It is through the all-seeing and ever-present gaze of the social matrix that certain power relations (and forms or styles of knowledge and discursivity) are constructed and implemented and actors come to be self-regulated (or self-subjugated) in a manner similar to Bentham’s panopticon (see, e.g., Sarup 1993:73-76; see also Foucault 1984:3-29, Editor’s Introduction).

As discussed, a “discursive formation” has been described as “a field of statements and practices whose structure of possibility is neither the individual, nor a collective body of overseers, but a form of relation between the past and present predicated upon a system of rules that demarcate both the limits and the possibility of what is sayable, doable, and recognizable as a comprehensible event in all its manifest forms” (Mahmood 2005:114-115). More generally, Foucault focuses on “discourses,” which owing to the sometimes ambiguous manner in which Foucault uses the term, are described by various authors as either “the sets of rules and practices that allow people to produce meaningful statements in given societies at particular historical

moments” (Ahearn 2012:265) or as “a specific instance of language use: a letter, a speech, a book, an argument, a conversation” where “each discourse is generated – by analogy to generative grammar – according to the rules of the discursive formation and the archive” (Sawyer 2002:440). The “archive” is “the general system of the formation and transformation of statements” (Sawyer 2002:437 citing Foucault 1969/1972:130). The claim is that we are not able to describe this archive, which “constrains our thought,” since “it is from within these rules that we speak” (Sawyer 2002:437). Foucault apparently later avoided using terms such as “discourse,” “archive,” and “discursive formation” as his focus shifted towards non-discursive practices (Sawyer 2002:441).

Foucault later further elaborated on the “different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology” (Foucault 1988c:17-18). According to Foucault, the “main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific ‘truth games’ related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves” (Foucault 1988c:18). One of these “technologies” consists of “technologies of sign systems” that relates to the use and meanings of “signs, meanings, symbols, or signification” (Foucault 1988c:18). In this same elaboration, Foucault’s concept of “technologies of the self” as a form of top-down self-regulation was also potentially modified by Foucault, according to some scholars, to distinguish between “technologies of power” and “domination” and those practices of self-care and personal development that “permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom,

perfection, or immortality” (Foucault 1988c:18 and, for a commentary and interview⁶ with Foucault, Foucault 1988b:3-15). The question, of course, is how much this self-acting (either “by their own means” or “with the help of others”) reflects an authentic state of agency in light of other themes contained in this paper.

G. Pierre Bourdieu’s *Doxa* and Symbolic Power

Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *doxa* represents another useful analytical device with which to analyze the methods and effects of certain forms of political and economic discourse on how we perceive the social. Bourdieu elaborated upon these concepts within the framework of practice theory, which attempts to address the dialectical (not oppositional) relationship between structure and agency (Ortner 2006:2). Bourdieu examines, among other concepts, the roles of habitus, dispositions, *doxa*, bodily hexis, and capital (including social, cultural, and economic) (for a useful overview of practice theory, see Ahearn 2012:265-277).

It is productive to consider the forms of socialization or inculcation that occur within particular social fields (including, in particular, within class settings and relations) and whether – and, if so, how – we are thereby predisposed to act, think, and speak according to a certain set of dispositions or habits (Ahearn 2012:266). It is also useful to think in terms of how certain ideologies (as narratives or tropes) are constructed and implemented to produce forms of socialization and unqualified or unconscious acceptance. Specifically, the concept of *doxa* encompasses “that which is taken for granted, that which is ‘commonsense,’ that which literally goes without saying” (Ahearn 2012:268 citing Bourdieu 1977:166-167). It “includes every social norm or cultural value that lies outside of the ‘universe of discourse or argument’; people do not

⁶ In this interview, Foucault acknowledged his intellectual debt to Heidegger and early, formative readings as a student in the 1950s of Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Foucault 1988b:12-13), which arguably helped facilitate a later repositioning of Foucault within anthropology’s “ethical turn.”

debate *doxa* because it does not occur to them that there could be other ways of thinking or acting” (Ahearn 2012:268). The implication is that different classes will often possess competing interests as to whether to support or undermine these social norms or values. The view is that while “the dominated classes have a vested interest in ‘pushing back the limits of *doxa* and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted,’” the “dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of *doxa*” (Throop and Murphy 2002:189 quoting Bourdieu 1977:169).

Doxa is, therefore, potentially aligned with Gramsci’s articulation of “common sense” beliefs that are taken for granted, unspoken, and unquestioned (see Gramsci 1971). Both concepts – *doxa* and common sense – are useful to explore how certain narratives, themes, or tropes are constructed and manipulated to build consent within governed populations. How particular day-to-day discursive practices index certain perceived power disparities in their speakers also invokes a Bourdieuan theme of symbolic power and violence; that is, to the extent that certain political narratives or tropes gain a foothold in everyday political or mainstream discourse, then their differential use by speakers also indexes a speaker’s perceived economic, symbolic, or cultural capital (and, by implication, the speaker’s competence and credibility) (see Hanks 2005 for an invaluable discussion of Bourdieu’s practice theory, including the concept of symbolic power).

Bourdieu’s emphasis on how certain cultural values, which to varying degrees are communicated through language, have come to be inculcated in and later taken for granted within particular agents or classes of agents (or subjects), stands in opposition (as are the theories of many other relevant social theorists who examine the relationship between communication and forms of power) to Saussure’s abstract structuralism, which is to say that “Bourdieu is adamantly opposed to all those forms of ‘semiotic’ or ‘semiological’ analysis which owe their inspiration to Saussure: these forms of analysis are purely ‘internal’, in the sense that they focus exclusively on the internal

constitution of a text or corpus of texts, and hence ignore the social-historical conditions of the production and reception of texts” (Bourdieu 1991:4). In other words, what really matters is how communication emerges and is negotiated in practice, at least where the domain of human social relations is concerned.

H. Antonio Gramsci and “Common Sense”

Antonio Gramsci was responsible for addressing and expanding on such concepts as common sense, hegemony, and more broadly, the role of ideology (see, e.g., Gramsci 1971; Gramsci 2000; Ives 2004). The most important of these terms, at least for these purposes, is “common sense,” which is used by Gramsci “to mean the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become ‘common’ in any given epoch” (Gramsci 1971:322).

As discussed, David Harvey’s analysis of the discursive dimensions of the “neoliberal revolution” focused on this concept of “common sense” (Harvey 2005:39). It is “common sense” that “grounds consent” because it “is constructed out of long-standing practices of cultural socialization often rooted deep in regional or national traditions” (Harvey 2005:39). From this perspective, common sense “can, therefore, be profoundly misleading, obfuscating or disguising real problems under cultural prejudices” (Harvey 2005:39). “Political slogans can be invoked that mask specific strategies beneath vague rhetorical devices” (Harvey 2005:39). According to Harvey, Gramsci “concluded that political questions become ‘insoluble’ when ‘disguised as cultural ones’” (Harvey 2005:39).⁷

⁷ Sherry Ortner, for example, has written about “the hidden life of class” and has argued that explicit discussions of class in the U.S. are often hidden from day-to-day discourse because class is typically conflated or fused with race and ethnicity (Ortner 1998 and Ortner 2006).

I. Richard Bauman and Discursivity as Performance

How then are discursive themes or tropes enacted on a day-to-day basis? Richard Bauman has examined the idea of “verbal art as performance” (Bauman 1975). This understanding of language “refers to a domain of human action where special attention is given to the ways in which communicative acts are executed” and is often associated with what Roman Jakobson called the “‘poetic function’ of speech” (Duranti 1997:15 quoting Jakobson (1960)). The important point here is the emphasis on “performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication” that “consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence” (Bauman 1975:293). This competence in turn “rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways” where what is appropriate or competent depends on a particular interpretative or social frame (Bauman 1975:292-293). Performance is keyed (see Goffman 1974) to a particular frame even as the frames themselves are “invoked and shifted” (Bauman 1975:295). The ways in which performance is keyed in turn “vary from one community to another” (Bauman 1975:296). Performance can be viewed as a “situated behavior, situated within and rendered meaningful with reference to relevant contexts” (Bauman 1975:298). These contexts can include “culturally-defined places” as well as institutions of a religious, educational, and political nature (Bauman 1975:298).

Bauman, invoking Raymond Firth, recognizes the role of an abstract or ideal-typical social structure (with its overarching and presumably enduring social expectations) as providing “‘a limitation to the range of alternatives possible’” for emergent forms of social organization, with the latter constituting “‘the systematic ordering of social relations by acts of choice and decision’ in concrete activity” (Bauman 1975:304 quoting Firth 1961:40). This abstract-actual dichotomy within the realm of social relations appears analogous to the Saussurean *langue-parole* binary

within the realm of language (Saussure 1959). It is within these forms of actual social organization with their pre-structured, constrained, and limited range of possible social behaviors that a “person chooses, consciously or unconsciously, which course he will follow” (Bauman 1975:304 quoting Firth 1961:40). According to this perspective, the appearance of some variability, even within this constrained epiphenomenal assemblage of possibilities, presumably gives social actors the feeling of choice and free will, which comes full circle in how performance is (or is not) able to be keyed within particular contexts and social milieus and what constitutes (or does not constitute) communicative competence.

J. Erving Goffman and “Impression Management”

Performance on a micro or interactional scale within social spaces or fields is a theme addressed by Erving Goffman. For an analysis of how ideological forms of discourse are implemented on a day-to-day basis (though the line between “ideological” and “non-ideological” forms of discourse has certainly been blurred), Goffman’s scholarship is apt and relevant.

Goffman has explored the presentation of the self as a dramaturgical expression or as act of role and impression management (Goffman 1973). The metaphors applied by Goffman to human social interactions include “drama,” “ritual,” and “game” (Branaman 1997:lxiii). Goffman also described how social actors organize social experiences according to what are called “frames,” which are defined as “principles of organization which govern the subjective meaning we assign to social events” (Branaman 1997:lxxiv). How a particular activity or event or episode is “framed,” which is the filter by which we interpret it, influences how we relate to the activity, what is acceptable, what is not acceptable, and the appropriate roles one needs to adopt (Branaman 1997:lxxiv). Framing can also be used aggressively as a form of social power insofar as some social actors are subject to misframing by others; that is, “people with little social power have little

power to frame events or to combat interpretative frameworks applied to them” and a “person judged to be incompetent, for example, carries no weight in combating the judgment” so that “protests can be discounted, taken as evidence of incompetence” (Branaman 1997:lxvii). This predicament is labeled by Goffman as a “frame trap” (Branaman 1997:lxvii; Goffman 1974:480). The concept of a “frame trap,” especially at the discursive level, is particularly relevant to an examination of forms of social power constructed by particular ideological or economic tropes or narratives.

The narratives or tropes that are constructed and expressed as ideologies can be related to the frames that affect how social actors filter human subjective experience. Goffman’s explanations of how human social interactions are managed (on an interactional or micro-scale) through impression management and face-work (Goffman 1955) combined with Foucault’s notions of “governmentality” and acceptable or ratified discourse in the form of discursive formations and archives (on a macro-scale) and Bourdieu’s notions of habitus and *doxa* (on an intermediate scale) all potentially complement one another (see, e.g., Clarke 2008 and Hacking 2004) to explain how forms of discourse are constructed at the structural level, inculcated or negotiated at the dialectical plane, and then accessed and implemented on a day-to-day basis within the interactional domain in which social actors respond to events by adopting certain roles and postures consistent with certain ideological tropes or narratives specific to a particular social field. A related question is the extent to which these interactional choices reflect forms of agency (i.e., actively managing impressions through a liberal range of choices) or, instead, reflect forms of subjectivation (i.e., “being managed” by structure within a highly constrained field of potentialities). In addition, to the extent one can view society itself as a “total institution” (see Goffman 1961 for a description of the “total institution” and its characteristics and effects), then

within any social body are persons effectively assimilated, absorbed, and homogenized, particularly through discourse, or can they remain modestly agentic and individualized?

In response to these questions, a connection between Bourdieu and Goffman is possible, particularly given Bourdieu's explicit references in his scholarship to Goffman. According to Bourdieu, the dispositions we acquire within particular fields or positions "imply an adjustment to this position, what Goffman calls the 'sense of one's place'" so that "it is this sense of one's place which, in interactions, leads people . . . to keep their common place, and the others to 'keep their distance,' to 'maintain their rank,' and to 'not get familiar'" (Bourdieu 1989:17). Bourdieu adds: "Habitus thus implies a 'sense of one's place' but also a 'sense of the place of others'" (Bourdieu 1989:19). Even in the struggle to define and label what is regarded as "common sense" or "for the monopoly over legitimate naming" (Bourdieu 1989:21), the symbolic capital and authority of the social actor govern.

A connection between Goffman and Foucault is similarly helpful insofar as Goffman's discussions of role or impression management imply a threat of rejection or stigmatization (see, e.g., Goffman 1963) if the proper role is not implemented or executed, so that the resultant forms of interactional "normalization" serve as intellectual precursors to Foucault's ideas of how individuals are "normalized" by virtue of the techniques of modern society (Clarke 2008:510), which are turned into the "technologies of the self" (this argument likely relies on the early formulation of this concept). The attempted reconciliation of Foucault and Goffman has been discussed elsewhere, with Foucault's "top-down" emphasis on forms of discourse and their relations to power complemented (and supplemented) by Goffman's "bottom-up" interactionist approach (see Hacking 2004).

V. Conclusion

The range and scale of social theories applicable to the topics of social cohesion, reproduction, and change is broad indeed. The material in the first section regarding the role of resistance and social change addressed concepts related to how resistance can be practiced within a distributed social network, techniques of “self-regulation,” the role of the “intellectual,” the role of the “hero” or even the “bad subject,” how the inculcation of habitus is not necessarily complete and perfect and can result in stochastic outcomes, and the role of cultural critique, among other topics. The second part of the paper included a discussion of the views of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber as they relate to some historical foundations of social cohesion and change, including transitions between forms of social solidarity, the role of religion and the “sacred,” however defined, along with an examination of the effects of the so-called transitions into modernity, individualization, and “rationalization.” This section also examined in some detail the role of social cohesion, agency, and “the law” within Trobriand society, which served as a potential critique of several themes raised by Durkheim, using a classic ethnographic text by Malinowski. Finally, the last part of the paper commenced with foundational matters pertaining to language as constituting an integral aspect of the human social condition in which its looped and continuing effects on interpretants matter (as opposed to language in its abstract, dyadic form). It then moved through to how language itself potentially conditions human thought, how language is permeated by the social which is permeated by the ideological, the role of tropes and metaphors and narratives, our predispositions to think or act or speak in certain ways, the role of discursive forms that structure what is sayable or doable within any particular social or historical environment, how “common sense” forms of ideology can remain unquestioned, and discursivity at the performative and interactional level. Through these concepts and others, one can start to understand how social and

anthropological theory address the topics of social cohesion, reproduction, and change, even as part of a much larger project of what it means to be a “subject” or “agent.”

VI. Bibliography

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