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THE WHEREABOUTS OF CULTURE:
An Investigation into the construction of Cultural Realities

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"The distinctiveness of cultural practices of different peoples has been linked to the construction of the other culture as strange and the anthropologist represented as a 'Merchant of Astonishment' who dips into the world showcase of cultures to titillate our sensibilities." Friedman, (1987, p.1).

Having uncovered numerous varied and conflicting definitions of the term "culture", to attempt at all to condense the idea of "a culture" into a clearly definable entity would now seem contradictory to the whole point of investigation. My aim is rather to uncover some of the ideologies, myths and the invisible frameworks that go together to construct a concept of culture.

However, embarking on any investigation without having a fixed point of Reference from which to begin makes any attempt to carry out a critical inquiry quite impossible. Therefore rather than looking for any true definition, I will start instead by choosing a "working model" which incorporates the basic underlying assumptions as to what constitutes a concept of culture.

The cultural studies department of the university of Birmingham have come up with a broad yet accurate account of the notion which we refer to as culture. According to them Culture is:

“The medium through which people transform the mundane phenomena of the material world into a world of significant symbols to which they give meaning and attach value.” (quoted by Peter Jackson, 1989, p. 48).

and they continue to say that it is through the medium of culture that people's raw experience is made sense of socially by being transformed into a world of significant symbols. The strength of this particular definition lies in the fact that it does not presuppose some kind of a living entity which has an existence of its own, independent of those bodies who move about within it, nor does it assume that culture is something “made” by the members of a specific society - a social collage in which those beliefs ideologies, customs, traditions etc. all come together to form the big picture. It does not proclaim the existence of an end product, the sum of the parts or an all engulfing collective identity into which the members of that specific society can place themselves accordingly.

Culture is neither pre-existing nor is it a social construction, since the word construction suggests something which has a form, something that is static. Culture is more along the lines of a grand communication system, a universal language with various regional dialects. It is a language which is being constantly updated and through which all that we experience in the practical world can be meaningfully articulated.

However, it is at this point more appropriate to ask why indeed it is important in the first place to question the notion of Culture. Raymond Williams tells us that culture is “one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language”. (1976, p. 76). It

is "a term that defies easy definition". In the light of such a proclamation the task of venturing towards such a definition appears more than a little challenging. Although as Peter Jackson points out, rather than it being a source of confusion, it is the fact that culture is a contested term that is the vital key to its understanding.

There is, however, more than one door to be opened and the passageway towards that understanding has more than one corridor. There are many parallel avenues of thought and many intersecting theories. I will therefore attempt to unlock as many doors as possible in order to find those points of intersection where the various theories meet, while at the same time continuing to travel in the one direction towards a greater understanding of the notion of culture.

In chapter one I will be addressing the complexity of the term culture by charting some of the important stages in the evolution of the concept from the Greeks back in pre-Christian times to more recent contemporary notions. Chapter 2 is concerned with the way in which culture is "applied" within societies in order to authenticate notions of identity and rootedness. I will be looking at some of the dangers involved in such a process with regard to the practice of place construction and "National Identity". I will be looking at the way in which tourism obscures reality in an effort to preserve cultural ideals. In Chapter 3 I will be considering the importance of the role that history plays in our ability to make sense of culture or what we come to accept as cultural "differences". This chapter will also address notions of "imagined histories" and how they in turn tend to erase dangerous truths and fortify superficial, imagined realities.

The final chapter is attempting to identify the location of culture in what has been termed as a "Postmodern" society. I will be challenging some of the popular myths involved in re-enforcing the idea that we are living in a "post" condition and the belief that "culture" as we once knew it has somehow been "fragmented".

CHAPTER 1

In my introduction I have briefly pointed to the inevitable hurdles that stretch out before anyone who attempts to take a clean run at defining culture. However, it is by no means due to a lack of attention that the term "culture" falls short of a fixed definition. M. Harris reports the first "recognisable" formulation of a concept of culture as being that of Anne Robert Jacques Turgot in 1750 and states

"Possession of a treasure of signs which he has the faculty of multiplying into infinity, he (man) is able to assume the retention of his acquired ideas, to communicate them to other men and to transmit them to his successors as a constantly expanding heritage" (quoted by M. Harris, 1968, p.14).

Today almost two and a half centuries later we are still struggling with the same problematic notion which has the increasing ability to slip through language's attempt to hold it down.

Exactly two hundred years after Anne Robert Jacques Turgot first formulated her theory, two Anthropologists, Kroeber and Kluckhohn collected over 150 various definitions of culture from American and English sources alone. This clearly illustrates what John Tomlinson suggested, that there is either a considerable amount of confusion or that "culture" is so large and "all embracing" a concept that it can accommodate all these definitions. I would suggest that it is a combination of the two. The vastness of

culture's scope cannot be condensed but some attempt can at least be made to clear up the evident confusion.

It is difficult to establish exactly when and how the first "idea" of culture came about. Every text and every theory on the subject appears to give a different account. In a sense it brings to mind a passage in which Peter Jackson described exploration as giving "only the illusion of knowledge under the guise of naming" (1989, p.169). In other words it is not until what we inherently are aware of becomes tangible objectified in the inaugural service of naming that it can constitute knowledge and be worthy of a place in the world of conscious existence. That is to say that the birth of culture should not be confused with its christening.

The first appearance of the verb "to cultivate" within the social discourse, came about around the beginning of the eighteenth century. Up until that point the notion of cultivation was reserved strictly for gardening or agriculture. Chris Jenks suggests, with reference to Coleridge's "Church and State" that the idea emerged as a pursuit of human perfection. This notion of "Human Cultivation" refers to the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterise our humanity. Thus we have the notions of socialisation cultivating the person, education cultivating the mind and colonisation cultivating the natives. (1993, p. 4).

This is but one theory, and there are many. Although it is widely considered that the conscious emergence of the notion of culture occurred circa the late eighteenth century as a result of the disorientation created by the rapidly emerging industrial society, the

new “age of Mechanical Reproduction”, the roots of culture run quite a deal deeper. It could be considered that the emergence of an awareness of culture, although yet unnamed, came about as far back as 570 BC. It was at that time that an earlier philosopher, Xenophanes, began to question the way in which the “idea” of Gods were constructed. On seeing how different races iconised a God whose physical features, language and dress corresponded to exactly with their own, he proclaimed that “Men have created Gods in their own image”. This was a remarkably brave statement and even more remarkable is the fact that such radical notions as he proposed should be taken on board by a great many others. From there, with a current disbelief in the mythological foundations of their civilisation, various philosophers began to look elsewhere for alternative explanations for natural phenomena. It is less relevant that those philosophers became known as Natural philosophers and that it was towards nature that they directed their attention. The relevant fact is that after so many centuries of living unquestionably under a fixed set of beliefs, suddenly, due to the courage of one man the mechanisms and not just the polished exterior of society became visible. Along with this insight the opening was created for new and alternative ways of viewing the world. This first major break away from religion, attempting to uncover explanations without having to turn to myths could be considered the first step in scientific reason.

It was at this time too that the Greeks began building cities both within Greece itself and beyond to colonies in Southern Italy and Asia Minor. It is suggested that since the Greeks had slaves to conduct the manual work, the citizens themselves had time to devote to establishing politics and what we now know today as culture. In Athens,

attention was directed less towards phenomena of the natural world and more towards the Individual and the place of the Individual in society. The society began to form its own working systems and governing structures. It was from this time circa 450 BC in Athens that a democratic system eventually evolved with its own popular assemblies and courts of law. Along with the new focus upon the individual came the belief in the need for the education of the citizens and the potential greatness of Man. One philosopher and teacher at the time proclaimed that “Man is the measure of all things”, Protagoras, in doing so makes Man the central figure, there are no truths but those upon which he himself decides, no right or wrong, good or evil, only considerations of what is relative to Man’s own needs.

There is, I feel, a strange resonance in what Heidegger said earlier this century, regarding truth, that is not about being right or wrong but rather about “accepting the ‘aletheia’, the powerful interplay of revealing and concealing that which shapes humanity’s destiny” (quoted in *Culture on the Brink*, p. 68). Nevertheless, something significant has changed. The rights and wrongs no longer reside purely in the subjective reason of the individual, now it seems that the individual acts out his or her role in relation to a grander scheme of things. The significance of any individual action is given meaning in the external world through an invisible system of codes, signals and signs, in other words the language of that society. Not only is action translated in order for it to be understood but each reading is also subject to the reader’s preconceptions and is relative to time and place. It could indeed be considered that it is precisely those factors which determine our ability to read and make sense of otherwise random actions, that together to form what we now call ‘culture’.

However, it would be unwise to jump the gun at this early stage or come to any premature conclusions . It was a combination of anthropologists and sociologists who together first took on board the idea of investigating the symbolic aspects of human society. In doing so they sought to define the division between the realm of the human and that of the purely natural. They were committed to reaffirming the uniqueness of Humankind. It is through the human intellect, the ability to transform the natural into representation and to articulate experience by way of language and symbols that we exhibit our superiority over the natural world.

This notion of differentiation, of superiority and the unique disposition of Humankind was at times exalted to the extreme of "perfection" and culture thus came to stand for the height of human achievement and excellence in the creative arts, 'high' as opposed to 'low' culture. The European conventional tradition appears to accept two notions of culture, that in relation to civilisation and that connected with a status of superiority. At this level culture appears to have achieved a certain existence in its own right . It is now possible to speak of a concept of culture, to give it a status as being 'high' or 'low' and to seek out the realms of human practice worthy of its name.

It was principally within the German intellectual tradition that the idea of "Kultur" took its roots. The German concept of "Kultur" was not indeed taken in its broader terms, rather "Kultur" became associated with ideals, and perfection in human achievement became its ultimate goal. Even today culture cannot avoid immediate associations with theatre, opera and the visual arts. In doing so it is adhering to that notion of "high

culture” which is often used as a means of preservation of all that is held up as pure and good in society and in turn protects those sectors against contamination from that which is considered common and vulgar i.e. “low culture”. It is this same idea that became a great aid in upholding the class divisions within European society. Notions of value and taste became synonymous with the realms of “high” and “low” culture, hence the idea of “cultured taste” associated with the upper classes. It was Bourdieu in the twentieth century, who commented on the way in which this notion of “cultured taste” (which had previously been preserved exclusively for the upper-classes) was now being imposed upon those considered “culturally deprived”. He states that such a motivation comes from “the need of the upper and middle classes to mark their distinction from the lower classes” (1986, p. 57). This distinction is achieved by making recognisable to the lower classes a firmly established set of elitist values to be upheld and the level to which they may only aspire to rise.

Although this theory has long been preserved, the evolution of cultural theory did not stop here. With the introduction of Giovanni Battista Vico’s “new science” in 1744 came the first step towards a purely social theory. It sought to trace the development of the human history, but in terms of its own symbolic creations.

“The world of civil society has certainly been made by Men and its principals are therefore to be found within the modifications of our own human mind” (quoted by Cris Jenks 1993, p.14).

With this he created a theoretical platform on which many more philosophical thinkers could then build. In an account given by Cris Jenks, he shows how society arrived from this point to the theory of social “en-culturalisation” with the aid of Levi Strauss’ view on the practice and function of primitive cosmologies, Durkheim’s idea of the primitive horde. Rousseau’s “primitive but gentle savage”, and Marx’s “primitive communism”. Their theory states that society passes through three stages; the age of Gods, the age of heroes and the age of Men, and correspondingly through three kinds of customs, belief systems, laws and common-wealths. Thus “the human persona transforms, in parallel, from ferocity, through pride into Reason.” It is also suggested that it is from Vico’s “new science” that some of today’s contemporary forms of structuralism have evolved. (quoted by Cris Jenks 1993, p.14).

The concept of culture continued to develop right throughout the nineteenth century. As society underwent changes, the necessary role of culture adjusted accordingly. Increasingly though this period, culture came to be viewed as the salvation of society from the ravages, the uncertainty and banality of the new industrialism. Culture provided an element of consistency amid the unpredictable change, not altogether unlike the idea of an institution, in fact it could be said that at this time culture had become institutionalized. Culture had become a medium for upholding specific values within society and various theories we can see attempt to integrate the idea of appointing “guardians” of that culture. These guardians came in the form of society’s “elite”. In one sense an elitism existed based on superiority, an example of the ultimate goal to be achieved, as in the case of German “Kultur” and in various theories such as those of Arnold and Coleridge. Carlyle too believed in the necessity of a cultural elite but not

merely to stand as an example to society but the industrialisation of society had made it impossible for culture to integrate into the everyday lives of the people. Thus the job of ensuring the survival culture was allocated to a chosen few.

What I have traced here are but a few examples of some of the earliest developments in cultural theory in order to show how the notion transformed from an initial awareness of its existence, to when it became christened as “culture”, transported into the field of theory, identified, defined and located in the social world. From there it was applied to practice and finally to become the possession of only a privileged elite. Culture has entered the food-chain of the intellectual word. However, at this point it has far from come to the end of the line, this is just the beginning. The account that I have given, rather than being an historical account of the progress of culture, as an effort to do so would constitute a thesis in itself, my aim instead is to create a backdrop for further discussion.

CHAPTER 2

“Continual defence is necessary, for the ever-moving, ever-changing cosmos can reveal to us at any moment, that our precious structures are as fragile as a match stick house, and can be swept away like match sticks in a stream.” (Dorothy Roe 1994, p.12).

I would imagine that there are few situations more “self” challenging than finding oneself a stranger in a strange place. The experience of the exile is a total loss of security, permanence is replaced by change, familiarity with the unknown all that remains is the bare self, “identity” as it protector.

Could this be an analogy for what is happening now on a global scale. Change becomes that strange place and the theories of yesterday its exiles, or geographically speaking the “global village” threatens to engulf us all so that every nation becomes exiled within its own world. So indeed what defence can we mobilise better than a re-inforced sense of “national identity” and better still one which holds a promise of permanence amid the rapid change. In order to construct such a “collective identity” one must identify the essential characteristics of that place and those members within it. “Culture” provides the guise under which entire nations, continents even, can identify collectively. Culture in this sense taken in broad terms of constituting a whole way of life of a people, their beliefs, traditions, religion, language, history etc.

Problem one thus arises. To begin with I have serious difficulty with anything which claims to provide a “collective representation”, since it must inevitably (especially in this

specific case) entail an enormous amount of generalisation. In this instance our notion of culture also incorporates convenient sub-structures in the form of ideologies, myths and popular beliefs to facilitate the task. All of which can be re-inforced and regulated under the watchful eye of the mass media.

Problem two is as equally apparent. How can something such as a whole developing nation and its inhabitants its social patterns and histories, which are constantly in flux, be represented as a "static" entity? As John Tomlinson points out, it is the political discourse of "national culture" and "national identity" itself which requires us to imagine this process as "frozen" and that this is achieved via concepts of "national heritage" or our "cultural traditions". He also suggests that this "freezing" "conceals a complex historical process in which the sorting out of our culture becomes highly problematic". (1991, p. 4).

To once again attempt to view the larger spectrum, one has to wonder what has led to this obsession with constructing notions of identity and place. However, although it may appear more to the fore now than ever, the politics of place, local identities, nations, cities etc.. is by no means a purely contemporary concern. As David Harvey explains, these features have always been of great importance within the "Uneven geographical development of capitalism." (1993, p. 26). Rather, he points towards our current "re-discovery of place" as the key point of concern with its multi layered meaning. He suggests that it is this multi layered meaning within the rhetoric of the cultural mass, and through that, within the rhetoric of politics which is significant as

opposed to an assumption that the world has changed somehow, making the political economy or cultural politics of place more important now than before.

For Benedict Anderson however, as he explains in his book "Imagined Communities", "national imagining" is a phenomena of modernity, an experience made possible only within the context of technological and economic changes that produced modern capital societies. The style essential for the imagining of "nation-ness" he says, is essentially "mass mediated", one developed in literate societies with well developed communication structures. Anderson also addresses the problematic issue of how time and place become envisaged in these "imagined communities". He gives an account of how the ritual of reading daily newspapers encourages people to imagine the simultaneous occurrence of events which are spatially distant. He refers to the way in which newspapers co-ordinate the occurrence of events at the same time across the globe, giving us the modern concept of "meanwhile", one which allows people to think of their relation to others across "the spatial spread of large nation states". Anderson argues that this modern perception implies the notion of "empty homogenous time", a medium which is measurable by clock and calendar, and through which societies move. Newspapers, he believes, are the "prime cultural carriers" of this apprehension, reproducing for us on a daily basis the "meanwhile of our cultural-historical imagination." (Anderson 1993, p. 39).

Anderson also offers an account of what makes the cultural imaging of nationality necessary or why it becomes the dominant form of cultural identification. He suggests that it is due to the way in which social modernity has arisen out of the decay of other

cultural practices which had previously offered their own general orientation to people. (1983, p. 39). This is an opinion shared by Anthony Giddens who also believes that there exists a psychological link between the feeling of belonging to a nation and earlier historical accounts of tribal societies, kinship and regional traditions. This in turn has echoes of Durkheim's theory on totemism, the need for emblems of common identification, the compulsion to construct a coherent belief system through which people can achieve a sense of common recognition and the feeling of belonging to a community.

The fact that we now live in a society, structured around a multiplicity of meanings offering few fixed reference points from which we can determine our orientation there is a tendency to construct alternative means of security. Within the discourse of cultural identification societies have been described as consisting of "value parasites" in other words lacking any real sense of tradition, those members draw their values from association with the dominant interest in that society.

Frederick Jameson tells us that we are now living in a new and original historic situation in which we are condemned to seek history by way of our own popular images and of a history which remains forever out of reach.

"Fabulation or if you prefer, mythomania and outright tall tales is no doubt a symptom of social and historical importance, of the blocking of possibilities that leaves little option but the imaginary." (Quoted by Fintan O'Toole, 1994, p. 41).

Indeed this is only one of the many examples which can be bound referring to the frantic measures societies tend to adopt in order to fill those “cultural voids”. With reference to the contemporary state of Irish society Fintan O’Toole describes the “obsessive search for theories that will fill the black hole of static darkness” as the mark of “a culture that has nowhere to go but around in circles” (1994, p.157). And again it was said in relation to history as balm for wounded egos that

“by 1916 Irish nationalism in America had little to do with Ireland. It was a hodgepodge of fine feeling and bad history, with which the immigrants filled a cultural void” (Sowell, 1994, p. 252).

The necessity to construct identities rooted in our culture, our sense of place or origins is a complex issue. Clearly the debate ranges in emphasis from the personal to the political, geographical to theoretical and all are equally responsible. But what of these images, the representations which are the end product of this complex process. Is this just another product on the conveyor belt of a growing commodity culture - the selling of place. At this point we can also be led into questioning the whole notion of authenticity.

In his book *Black Hole Green Card* (The disappearance of Ireland) Fintan O’Toole refers to a famous story by Gorge Luis Borges. The story is of an Emperor who becomes increasingly obsessed with having a detailed map of his territory. As he becomes more impatient and the pressure mounts upon his cartographers, they finally produce a map whose scale is one to one. So the map when spread out covers the entire

landscape which then disappears under a detailed and precise representation of itself. O'Toole suggests that this story is not an unlikely analogy for Ireland today only we "build a few interpretative centres on it so that visitors can be taught its meaning". He shows that clearly we are not only intent on forming a set of physical (visual) representations of space and place, we must also enforce along side of it a conceptual guide, an instruction book on how to "read" its "meaning". Referring to the recently built interpretative centre at Mullaghmore, O'Toole protests that

"It is the whole function of interpretative centres to intellectualise reality, to turn nature into culture, to make a physical reality into a "meaning" and that meaning into a product." (1994, p. 34).

Tourism is of course unmatched in its ability to sell places. The key factor however is that the product is always designed to match the market and in a commercial world it is the brand name that everyone recognises. In a literal sense, tourism has the ability to shape the land. It provides us with ready-made images with which we can identify. It sells us our own ready-made culture. As Fredric Jameson put it, Postmodernism is what we have when the modernisation process is complete and "nature is gone for good" and he suggests that what has happened to culture may indeed be one of the more important clues for tracking the postmodern:

"An immense dilation of its sphere, an immense and historically original acculturation of the Real, a quantum leap in what Benjamin still called the aestheticization of reality" (quoted by O'Toole, 1994, p. 38).

A worthy example is to take a look at the “marketing” strategies for our own “Irish Culture”. In the Bord Failte document *Heritage Attractions Development: a strategy to interpret Ireland’s history and culture for tourism* (1992) , the goal they set out to achieve is to produce more “repeat business”, better “word of mouth publicity” and the creation of a “strong brand image of Ireland as a quality heritage destination, with unique heritage attractions”. Their greatest obstacle was to attempt to tackle the complexities involved in Irish history and heritage, which had somehow to be condensed into digestible quantities for the visiting tourist, who has but a limited amount of time to acquire the entire historical development of a nation. The solution to the problem lay in the creation of a “narrative storyline”. It proposed that five “key themes” be clustered around the central storyline and everything could be understood in relation to the central narrative. The key themes were: “live landscapes”, “making a living”, “saints and religion”, “building a nation” and “the spirit of Ireland”. It did suggest however that “new storylines are possible under all of the themes.”

Once again we have the same sense of snap shot images of a history, the same freezing of time that John Tomlinson has pointed out. What O’Toole suggests in this case is that all landscape, history and culture eventually will become part of a single timeless and placeless grid of stories into which the tourist can tap in the same way in which a computer user can tap into a databank. What we now have in place here is a quick guide to creating our very own modified reconstruction of reality. Is this the end of history, as the brand name replaces the product or the image replaces the original. Thus

history as we once knew it becomes “suspended in a comodified sense of place” (Fintan O’Toole, 1994, p. 40).

However, product packaging is but a practical necessity. Its purpose is to preserve and present more appealingly the contents within. In order to reveal the contents the packaging must be discarded. The way in which “cultural identities” are constructed could be seen as similar to the process of commercial food processing. Assuming that we are the consumers of the produce, the processed “culture cookies”, we must be careful not to be seduced by the sweetness of their taste. The sugar produces the sweetness but it is only one of its many ingredients. To elaborate on the image of the “culture cookie” if one is to become sceptical of the artificiality of the flavour something important may indeed be revealed. So the package may be retrieved and the ingredients looked for. The ingredients are listed, however for those ingredients one can read, there are an equal number one cannot. There are generalities (“artificial” colourings and “artificial” flavourings) and coded Jargon (E numbers and scientific terms). Overall one could not be blamed for getting the impression of a cover up, a deliberate effort to thwart easy understanding. Yet even if one was familiar with the coded listing, the list remains arbitrary. There are no ratios or quantities specified nor any recipe provided. However, one may indeed ask why be so concerned, after-all if one likes the cookies why not enjoy them and if one doesn’t then don’t eat them. Indeed ignorance is bliss but must we wait for the one who gets the belly ache to reveal what somebody had already decided we would rather not know?

In the course of this chapter I have addressed the idea of identity and place as being but the end products of a complex cultural processing industry. I have shown the way in which identities can be used as a defence mechanism in an unstable environment. Place construction then acts as a visual and conceptual backdrop to authenticate notions of “identity”, “rootedness” and sense of belonging. I have highlighted some of the consequences of attempts to uphold invented truths or impose notions of fixity upon processes which are continually in flux. I have highlighted the way in which notions of “collectivity” demand a great deal of reality manipulation and delusion. To make the most successful “cultural identity” you will need the following ingredients:

Large chunks of frozen time

A vast amount of self delusion

Artificial histories (frozen)

Artificial realities (frozen)

and one strong resistance to change.

The method remains unspecified but the end result should be something along the lines of a superficial sense of reality and should facilitate the erosion of previous histories and addition of new improved versions. As for marketing strategies, package and delivery can be left in the capable hands of the Tourist and National Heritage industry.

In chapter three I will be discussing the role of history in relation to culture, its validity, its importance and its potential danger.

CHAPTER 3

“History is man’s painfully purchased experience now available free or merely for the price of attention and reflection” (Thomas Sowell, *Race and Culture*, 1994, p.42).

Thomas Sowell’s words echo the striking reality of the importance of being aware of history. It costs us nothing but time, time which could otherwise be spent formulating the same mistakes generations have made before us. History shows us patterns. Sowell tells us that although the past can shed a powerful light on the present, what we seek in the past is also influenced by what we confront in the present.

We must be aware however of the pitfalls that can be encountered in historic readings. The value of history depends entirely on the integrity of how it has been represented. If we consider the very nature of representation itself we are made aware of the problem of attempting to communicate facts, if such things exist at all. However, questioning the nature of fact does little to aid the task of historians since at some point decisions have to be made and records have to be written. Should historians all sit around considering the ethics of recording events we would simply have no account of the past. A reality according to somebody is preferable to no reality at all. It thus becomes the reader’s job to sift through the data, eliminate any suspect material and attempt to identify where the essential facts lie. However, this is no simple task as even if we were to accept that a specific text was not a fabrication and free from any prejudicial opinion, that it was written with the utmost integrity to the truth and from the most objective position possible, even then no one reading would reveal the same account to one reader as it would to another.

As Sowell explains, it is possible that a particular historical account can achieve a certain level of independence from its author, just, as he says a child eventually achieves independence from its parents. However a reader can never read from a viewpoint outside of his/her perception. Each reader may find different lessons or see things that may never have occurred to the author. Furthermore the displacement created by a shift in time and place will inevitably influence the implications of a text and its understanding. Sowell cautions us that history cannot solve today's problems but what it can do is expose the fallacies which can potentially worsen matters or make the resolution of things harder or easier to achieve. Above all he tells us that history offers understanding,

“Not in a psychological sense of Maudin patronage but in the sense of a clear-sighted view of reality, its limitations and its possibilities” (Sowell, 1994, p.158).

and he considers one of the most important places for such an understanding is among peoples from different racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds.

To have achieved even a mean subjective understanding of the facts presented by history, a vast amount of assumption has had to be made. When we begin to consider the history of culture and race, we should not make the mistake of seeing only the broader patterns. We must also bear in mind the inadequacies of history itself, its pitfalls and its limitations.

History at its best is a dictionary of humanity, only it provides, not definitions but offers possible explanations. This brings me to recall a quote from Jostien Gaarder's "Sophie's World". "You could say that life is one big lottery in which only the winning numbers are visible" (1995, p.325). Indeed if you see only those numbers that have been chosen you may come to the conclusion that those were the only numbers. like Plato's analogy of the cave men and the shadows. Seeing only the shadows of the world outside they mistook the shadow for reality. And of course if you always accept the numbers presented, how can you ever be sure that the draw is not being fixed?

The notion of the winning numbers is applicable to many areas of discourse, from the process of human evolution to warfare and colonialism, from the capitalist consumer market to theories of culture and that which we accept as reality. However, unlike the lottery drum, the laws of the universe do not rest upon chance. Darwin proved, in his theory of the "survival of the fittest", that it was no result of chance that the species had evolved, it was the outcome of a process of natural selection, in which only those that were best adapted to their surroundings would survive and propagate the race, Adaptability is the key to survival since what is an advantage in one environment will not necessarily be so in another and no environment remains static.

Consequently the same basic theory can be applied to the survival of cultures. Within this discourse the same dynamic process of competition is in play. According to Thomas Sowell wars are the most obvious field of competition, for he says that the outcome of wars of conquest can determine what language the descendants of the combatants will speak for centuries to come, what concepts will organise their thoughts

and what values will shape their moral universe. (Sowell, 1994) Likewise, in relation to the field of cultural theory, cultural thinkers act as mediators in society and the theoretical zone of values, belief, ideology etc.. It is within these debates over the meaning of such terms, and the reasons for their current importance, that gradual shifts occur in “what people take to be thinkable and do-able in relation to particular circumstances.” (Morris 1993, p. 40). It is among these gradual shifts, as with Darwin’s “cell mutations”, that new species of theory evolve, of which the strongest and most adaptable will eventually become a reality and a mark of that culture in which it evolved.

Of course the capitalist world and the field of technological advancement are by no means the least of those affected by the process of superior selection. It is often in reaction to this we witness the lamentation of dying tradition. Referring to that process of obsolescence and change, Sowell warns against the objection to the process of advancement proclaiming that “those who deplore such things are deploring the very process of cultural diffusion by which the human race had advanced for thousands of years”. Of course history itself is in no short supply of examples of societies manifesting harsh resistance to change or exhibiting their fear of its potential implications. Charles Darwin for instance was considered “the most dangerous man in Europe” because of his revolutionary ideas and in 1859 on the publication of “The origins of the species” one upper-class lady is quoted to have said:

“Let us hope it’s not true but if it is let us hope it’s not generally known”
(quoted by Gaarder, 1995, p. 320).

Similarly it has been said of the learned men who refused to look through Gallileo's telescope understood or at least sensed that what they might observe "were not the physical phenomena of astronomical bodies, but the end of the world as we knew it." (Sowell, 1994, p.247) Magellan on returning from his voyage around the world discovered a peculiar discrepancy in his log book. According to the log the day should have been Saturday when in fact it was Sunday. His conclusion was that the logs "discrepancy" proved that the earth spins on its axis, thus the King ordered that the log book be burned.

"He understood that the issue was not just an underlying fact, but was a question of undermining part of the foundation under a whole super-structure of beliefs supporting existing institutions, societies and ways of life." (Sowell, 1994, p. 248).

The fear of the social implications of scientific advancement is not unique to European civilisation. We have examples of how the Chinese dynasties strove to keep astronomy a "State Secret". Such was the case with the Chinese model of a clock more advanced than any found in the Western world, with the invention of gunpowder, porcelain, paper and printing which all became exploited by the western world rather than in China itself, where social or political consequences would prove too costly. To accomplish a shift in peoples attitudes is to change the way we view and understand the world and to discredit the very stability of our knowledge. Since nobody takes kindly to having their "house of cards" shaken, to undertake any such an effort will inevitably be a long and painful process.

The pattern of human understanding could be considered the result of what happens when the “selection” process is applied to memory. The selection of that which is more easily integrated or preferable becomes the recipe for programming the history that has forgone us and the reality or realities in which we now live.

Human nature has a great capacity for self-delusion. The nature of hiding away the things that we do not like, those things we might find embarrassing, unsettling, threatening or painful is an art which humanity has finely mastered.

In psychological terms we can speak of the way in which the mind obliterates and denies painful and disturbing memories and realities. In society we can see how the game of “winners” and “losers” attempts to deny the “losers”: the “mad”, the homeless, the minorities and the poor. Likewise in the intellectual world “reality” often endeavors to deny conceal or obliterate its shameful and embarrassing histories and disturbing and dangerous truths. Truly though there can be no continuity without a preceding past. Therefore, in reality’s “editing” process any frames which are eliminated must be replaced and dubious or potentially incriminating images rendered more readily palatable. This is all made possible by way of the integration of a spot of “virtual reality” and a little image “pixel pushing”. And so the sequence is complete, reality is reproduced at a high resolution “in full technicolour glory”. The similarities between reality “airbrushing” and the new advanced methods of digital film editing are unavoidable where “Great editing with a great performance makes it look so believable”. (Summerfield, 1995, p.51) Indeed the truth becomes even more inaccessible in a

production industry whose “visual effects are performed so seamlessly you won’t realise it has been done.” (Summerfield, 1995, p.52).

The ultimate challenge is therefore to attempt to envisage a future whose foundation is as weightless as its airborne pixels. Of course we have not as yet quite reached such a point of crisis but such a foreboding is difficult to ignore. The only defence we can maintain is an honest commitment to the truth. Undoubtedly though, in a reality which increasingly finds itself displaced, the search for orientation is constant. Naturally it is easier to attempt to align the past with the present, by re-inventing it accordingly, than to discover a hidden and contradictory past and therefore have to re-evaluate and possibly reconstruct the very pillars of the reality we have come to accept. Any attempt to take an easy route out, as in the former case, would merely be “to discard an anchor on reality and to set sail with light ballast and a reckless optimism.”

Thomas Sowell raises the question of how a mythical, “glorious past could produce any more contemporary success than a real one” (Sowell, 1994, p. 227). He suggests that the romantic vision which it aims to produce, acts as an idealistic distraction from the hard unglamorous work on which real achievements are built. Bad history can be built upon where as myths can be lived. It is far simpler to find examples of small nations or minority cultures that have prospered in spite of hardships or obvious geographical disadvantages, (for example Japan and Scotland, or the prosperity of the Jews scattered worldwide) than to identify a people who can survive or prosper on notions of hereditary “greatness” alone.

“Former greatness, even when real, is no magic key to future greatness” (Sowell, 1994, p. 253).

Indeed today for example China can no longer hide behind a thin facade of “honour”, “glory” or a long history of cultural pre-eminence. Now as we witness the deplorable lame efforts to deny a cruel reality in an attempt to “keep face”, China currently faces the second of recent unveilings of the states will guarded secret of its orphanage policy. It is a policy under which neglect, to the death, facilitates the silent annihilation of thousands of unwanted children. Unfortunately this is but one of any number of hidden crimes against humanity currently in practice in contemporary “civilised societies”. The impact of uncovering shocking injustices, such as those in China, lies in the fact that those crimes are not the produce of social breakdown or a warped sense of reality amid the chaos of war (not that violence or imposed suffering is excusable under any circumstances). Rather these circumstances were created within the bounds of a powerful and influential civilisation as part of a state policy implemented to keep the numbers down in a country threatened by overpopulation. Surely this displays an outright shrouding of reality coupled with a blind ignorance to history’s hard learned lessons. Does this not also sound strange echoes of the drastic measures, employed by those whose egos and visions were threatened, to produce Nazi Germany. Churchill witnessed at first hand how a warped sense of reality had created “currents of hatred so intense as to sear the souls of those who swim upon them” (Churchill, 1973, p. 267).

Clearly history is a powerful and indeed a dangerous tool if left uncontested in the hands of the wrong few. In the case of circumstances such as those to which I have referred, that which founds their realities can hardly be considered history. Sowell tells us that

“A search for the past, for group image enhancement cannot be called history and equally so, neither can a record of the past which is purged of whatever may be currently embarrassing or vetoed by contemporary group spokesmen” (Sowell, 1994, p. 253).

More specifically though, if we look beyond laying the full blame upon the shoulders of history or its ill use, the fragility of facts points to more immediate conditions. It is of significant importance as to how the facts of history become “shaped” by the needs of the present, but ultimately, it is this preoccupation and current concern with the accuracy of the facts of history that tells us something about the state of the present. As Fintan O’Toole points out, in a society whose present is relatively stable and uncomplicated, history or the facts about the past are important but not “something to get passionate about” (O’Toole, 1994, p. 90). On the other hand if a society’s present reality is one of instability, division and danger, the facts about the past become critical. As we now appear to be living in a “post” condition, an aftermath of what has gone before, a society which contemporary cultural theorists like to refer to as fragmented, decentered, pluralist, heterotopic, heterogenius and the list goes on. It gives something of an impression of being perched upon a rock amid a buffeting ocean of a post apocalyptic world. An ocean which tosses about within it the broken up remains of a

bygone era from the remnants of which we must now begin to choose patterns and fabrics in order to sew together the patchwork quilt that will constitute our future.

If indeed this were to be the case and the only available material for the future was off-cuts of the past, it would naturally follow that our maximum concern should be as to where those pieces originated and how best we might form the repeat pattern while integration its edges with its corresponding pieces. The goal instead is therefore to attempt to envisage a future which is a continuity rather than an aftermath, and extension as opposed to a truncated limb. The future we envisage must look towards history as a reference. In this way history should function by its truth rather than as a regressive escape route or a conjurers top hat from which solutions can be pulled or justifications and invented authenticity can be magically produced at will.

As I have shown history is a Pandora's Box. Its secrets lie open to those who seek them and their interpretation subject to those who read them. It is as important if not more so to read between the lines, what is not said, as to read what we are given. History is the key to understanding Culture. In this light, Culture would now be understood as the clothing which renders our reality visible and in turn stands to signify the potential of those realities. History charts the evolution of cultures. I have shown how the evolutionary process is applicable to more than the physical but also cultural, social, structural and conceptual development of humankind. Any attempt to explain contemporary culture at a level of pure face value is to impose a selective reality and deny the existence of a past. On the other hand a contemporary preoccupation with history (as blame, balm or explanation) can also hint towards a confused present. An

exaggerated obsession with the past perhaps marks a culture whose fear of creating a future becomes concentrated on recreating the past. In the next chapter I will be looking a little more closely at the "post" phenomenon in relation to contemporary culture.

CHAPTER 4.

“Someone said the world is a stage and each must play a part” (Elvis Presley, 1961).

If we were to attempt to rework this image in relation to contemporary culture it could be said that life is a play and somebody has taken away the script. There is no longer a plot and there are no written lines or at least nobody cares to use them. Instead we all go about inventing our own scenarios and prance about the stage reciting our own lines. Nobody can quite remember when the scene began and nobody can envisage an end. It is simply infinite, spontaneous and continues to invent itself. There is no need for critics since there is no one play to criticise and validity is relative to the individual players. There is no audience, they too have jumped upon the stage and the players overflowed into the auditorium, Nobody need object. Nobody need get bored. The viewpoint is multidimensional so there is always somewhere “else”.

I have previously referred to some of the popular adjectives / terms used in discussions concerning the notion of postmodern culture, i.e. fragmentation, decentralisation, breakdown of boundaries, enlargement of frontiers, limitlessness, multimeaning, pluralistic, multiphrenic and abandonment of the “grand narrative”. Even the name given to this apparent state of chaos, “The Postmodern” by definition supposes that we are living in an aftermath. As Robert Hewison states the “after” is a difficult place to describe “since it is defined by what is not” (1993, p. 249), giving us the impression that we are living in a void. All of this language helps to reinforce feelings of living in a paradox of having limitless potential within the spheres of an uncontrollable chaos.

Bolted down to its essence this implies that we can do exactly as we please but it will have little effect anyway since everybody else is doing just that also.

The overall impression we are given seems a little suspect. After-all the nature of "culture" is ever-changing and constantly seen to be entering "new eras", all of which are "Post" conditions of what has gone before. So what is it about "Postmodern culture" that induces such a sense of crisis? It is almost as if we are witnessing part of a grand conspiracy to create an air of misdirection, confusion and the notion of lost ideals. In doing so the "fragmentation" and vulnerability of individual cultures leaves them open to embrace with welcoming arms, a cultural policy that re-introduces a sense of security, stability and union and points in the direction of a collective goal. What that policy might be no-one yet knows (or perhaps it is the closely guarded secret of an informed few). Whatever its form or convictions, in an atmosphere of such instability its potential influence could be great indeed.

With regard to the development of the concept of "culture" itself, it appears once more to have returned more immediately to my original working definition, as a medium for translating experience into meaning and meaning into representation in the form of sign and symbol. Thus what we experience in the immediate world can be read and made sense of socially. The current confusion experienced in the field of cultural production could in part be due to the fact that the language of culture has become so complex that few are competent enough to speak it let alone understand it. As Peter Jackson states:

“One of the few consensus within the whole Postmodern debate concerns the inadequacy of a unitary concept of culture” (1993, p. 177)

However language itself makes it necessary to imagine “culture” as objectified. Whereas before we had culture ordained with a status (high / low). Presently, culture has been levelled and notions of elitism have lost much of their credibility. Culture has become common place, we live through it and cannot stand outside of it. Yet we still continue to imagine it as a solid form or at least in linguistic terms. Since high and low rankings have been eliminated and the foundations have become planed down, the current belief appears to be that the two-dimensionality of the cultural plane can no longer facilitate the complexities involved in communicating the “Postmodern” experience. Thus we have images of the rupturing or “fragmenting” of the cultural surface in order to accommodate the overload created by the influx of a diversity of “other” cultures. It seems that the old language of culture has become too static for communication to be possible. Therefore its vocabulary must be updated.

Much of the present atmosphere relating to “newness”, change and notions of fragmentation could appear little more than language games. To allocate a name, a term is to attempt to distance oneself from the matter and to attempt to identify it objectively. Robert Hewison makes reference to attempts to apply theory to the experience of actuality, he states that the project of theorising had become one “in which the present situation was simply described in order to be denounced”. (1993, p.249). Perhaps therefore, the biggest linguistic error was the official application of the term “modernity” to refer a period in social and historic development. In doing so “modernism” set itself

up as something of a goal that had finally been achieved. It held itself up to stand for the essence of all things "modern". It sought not only to transcend its past but to do so in a way that arrogantly attempts to collectivise all that had gone before it under the name of "pre"-modern. So where does one go then once "modernity" has been denounced but into an enlargement of the same, or a "post" condition. Consequently since we have already distanced ourselves from "Postmodernity" (denounced in the act of naming) it appears we have already transcended what we are yet to make sense of theoretically. Tobin Siebers' observation that "we want to do what we have to do as fast as we can do it so that we have the pleasure of remembering it" (1995, p.1), seems particularly apt. Furthermore, he also refers to our uneasy relationship with the present.

"There is something about Postmodernism that creates a gap between saying what it is and trying to be it." (1995, p. 2)

Thus he claims Postmodernity is a utopian project based on the desire to be other than who and what we are.

It still appears however that the "crisis" of the "fragmentation of society is largely an illusionary one, linguistically constructed. To begin with, fragmentation would be viewed as more of a modernist preoccupation than that of the present. Postmodernity does appear to have adopted the notion but not perhaps in order to proclaim or celebrate it but rather to investigate the concept as a reference point to guard possible future directions. Meghan Morris states, in her essay "Future Fear", that she considers the view of Postmodernism as the "rhetoric of crisis and fragmentation", as a very

“British” reading. She prefers to apply the term “heterogeneity”, as a more appropriate description of the current cultural “dispersal”. (1993, p. 30)

Indeed it is true to say that much of the language adopted when considering the condition of the Postmodern is overshadowed by a resounding sense of pessimism. I do not wish to labour the point of the role of language in the enforcement of accepted opinion but the weight of its connotations is difficult to avoid. Consider for example the way in which “death” has become a theoretical “buzz-word” in relation to current cultural trends. Dick Hebdige described the “discourse of death”, “the death of the subject”, “death of art”, “death of reason” and the “end of history” (*Hiding the Light*, p. 210). Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the apparent death list is the fact that none of the death forebodings are necessarily qualified by re-births. Another favoured term in circulation is that of being “on the brink”. Although this reference holds slightly less of the “doomsdaying” factor it nevertheless points to the fragility of our current cultural position. As Peter Jackson illustrates he considers it a part of the Postmodern condition

“To find ourselves walking a narrow line between the enlargement of meaning and the peril of it breaking down and evaporating altogether.” (1989, p. 6).

In her essay “Art and Technology Revisited” Renee Green refers to the sense of “urgency” generated by discussions of new technologies. She suggests that the notion of being “on the brink” of some phenomenal change is one which holds much of the impetus for these numerous discussions. However, she maintains an air of scepticism towards how seriously one should consider the apparent “state of emergency”. She

suggests that although we find ourselves steadily approaching the year 2000, what we are experiencing as the current "techno-craze is not historically unique". She also suggests that it may be useful for us to remember the "paradigmatic shift" that scientific thinking underwent at the beginning of the twentieth century.

"...when classical physics was replaced by the atomic theory and subsequent discoveries made it necessary to re-address the concept of the natural world." (p 56)

Indeed it is only natural that any dramatic processes of transformation which societies undergo are accompanied by an atmosphere of insecurity or a degree of anxiety. Perhaps it is the current tendency to anticipate not "a future" but "futures", the fact that our "direction" is multidirectional, that intensifies the sense of insecurity. We are bombarded with motions claiming to reject aspiration to attain "fixed" goals or aims, and the daunting prospect of futures which boast open-ended possibilities tending towards limitlessness, the infinite, flexibility and multidimensionality. It is no small wonder therefore that sociologists have diagnosed society with having a bad case of Arbitrariness. Regardless of how one chooses to accept the notion of "unbounded" futures, there certainly is a reinforced feeling of the co-existence of "other" realities, the plurality of life-styles and the infinity of our options in all areas of life, the awareness that things could be other than they are. The "meanwhile" identified by Benedict Anderson is no longer something which exists on another level of consciousness made visible to us only on odd occasions of momentary awareness. The idea of co-existent realities is one which is celebrated by Postmodern culture and one which is omnipresent in the world of information technology. In relation to the notion of the plurality of the

future, Hebdige says that when you put an “s” on the word future you really have to dispense with “fantastic thinking” about what was “bound to happen”. He identifies the tendency, especially among intellectuals on the left to announce after any historically important event “Oh that was bound to happen”. Meghan Morris likewise criticises ideas applying the term universality to thought or knowledge referring to certain historically “European” discourses deploying as universals “powerstructured” and “generative” opinions such as “Modernity” and “tradition” which she considers to be limited and “place bound”. She further suggests that they may in cases be “parochial” in their descriptive and predictive value and she points out that “they help to produce, from their particular position, the phenomena they claim to describe. In other words the “phenomena” concerned are “bound to happen” by nature of our willing them into being. However Hebdige is consoling in his suggestion, that after having witnessed the impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

“After November the 9th 1989 one thing, if nothing else, is certain: absolutely nothing except from our own eventual departure from the scene, is ever bound to happen.” (1993, p. 270).

Thus the unpredictability upon which our futures will thrive should be seen as its strength rather than its weakness. Inevitability can no longer be used as an excuse when actions demand justification. We are too clearly aware that situations are never without an alternative.

The fact of the plurality Postmodern culture embraces leads to our living in a culture founded upon paradox, not the least of which is accepting the impossibility of the “bound to happen” amid efforts to predict the future. In an interesting article by Watts Wacker he identifies some of the paradoxes within what he terms our “cultural schizophrenia”. He says that we increase our flirtation with danger while demanding greater personal safety, America’s passing of NAFTA and GATT treaties while increasing nationalistic and protectionist tendencies. He says that the reward for dieting is to indulge and predicts that over the next five years we will eat even more “low fat chips that are dipped in high fat cheese”, go about saying that we are concerned for the future while living for today, we have one foot rooted firmly in the past “while the other is planted in the future”. He considers that this tension created by pulling in oppositions as opposed to looking towards a balance or consensus means that the motivation of people in the future will have a lot to do with “being able to incorporate the past and the future at the same time”. (1996,p. 21) As to just where it is we are being directed he says that there is a “pendulum” which is for us whether we move towards consensus or exploration of end points. He suggests however that

“We are moving towards the exploration of end-points in both directions at the same time.” (Watts Wacker, 1995, p. 22)

We appear to be living in a culture of relativity when the decision making process lies ultimately upon the individual subject to personal preference. Mass action and participation in ritual is on the down trend (however this remains debatable). Wacker suggests that we now live on a much more situational basis “we fit it in when we can

manage it, we eat what we feel like, when we feel it - even cereal for evening dinner". (p. 22) He also relates the same self-importance to the "value crisis", he identifies wherein a survey revealed 74% of students interviewed admitted to cheating in exams of which 64% considered cheating "no big deal anyway" (p. 22). He says that in effect we are looking for some guidance but have not allowed a new institutional structure to take place. Perhaps this is due to the fact that society has become much more self-aware. We are no longer satisfied to accept graciously what we are given. Wacker compares this notion to the idea of "intelligent disobedience" - a term used in the training of guide dogs "do what I tell you unless you have a better idea" and he suggests that we all have a better idea!

"A dog for the blind when instructed to cross the road will not do so if it sees a bus coming." (Watts Wacker, 1995, p. 23)

In this chapter I have taken on board the idea of living in a "Postmodern" culture. I have attempted to revise the concept of culture in relation to contemporary theories and to show how the language of theory itself determines how it is we conceptualise culture. I have suggested the way in which notions of being in a fragmented culture is largely a theoretical construct, it is the realisation of the infinity of experience that creates this illusion. Finally I have looked at Watts Wacker's consideration of current cultural attitudes and trends. As to the future Wacker offers some of his own predictions: experience will replace acquisition in the quest for pleasure, there will be a craving for what is scarce, energy is the "currency" of the people, we will see a further use in information technology, reduction in church goers, but rise in need for "alternative"

spirituality, rise in the importance of solitude. In the music world we will see more blues and the hot colour will be purple.

CONCLUSION

Having completed my investigation into the internal workings of cultural production the one thing that stands true is that no investigation into such will ever be complete. However, from what I have charted in the development of my thesis it appears that the concept of culture has undergone quite a significant journey of "self-discovery". From its awakening back in circa 570 BC the present day, it has experienced more than one identity crisis but has managed to remain undefined. In the hands of society "Culture" has been recognised, manipulated, constructed, deconstructed, reconstructed, displaced, replaced and relocated. It is therefore little wonder that "Culture" has spent quite a deal of its life perched upon the leather couch of "cultural analysts" and even less surprising that the final analysis comes under the unimaginative diagnosis of a multiple personality disorder "Cultural Schizophrenia". In reality what we have is ultimately a phenomena whose complexity lies beyond linguistic definition. Perhaps within the minds eye we may grasp some impression of Culture's "aura" through an investigation of its various components. Any effort on the part of the analyst to hint towards a point of conclusion or to attempt to do so hypothetically (in linguistic terms) would be merely to exhibit an inability to comprehend the nature of culture and to articulate the inadequacy of language itself.

So what of imagining the future or futures? Perhaps it is best to embrace the contemporary notion of "Nomadism" (of bodies, knowledge, thought, experience, theory, language etc..) and the inevitability of displacement and uncertainty. Anxieties

must be taken on board, and certainties must be sacrificed to accommodate possibilities, according to Hebdige:

“One of the certainties we must give up is the confidence inspired by the perfection of a certain style of critique which never puts a foot wrong because it never puts a foot forward.” (Hebdige, 1993, p. 177).

There is much ground to be trodden. We need no longer put our foot forward but also from side to side, in fact in any direction and backward if desired, and the space in which we now move is virtual space - “blank, colourless, shapeless, a space to be made over, a space where everything, is still to be won” (Hebdige, 1993, p. 279).

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