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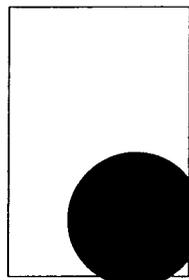
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The Imaginary

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Abstract

It is common in anthropology now to speak of *imaginaries* instead of *cultural beliefs*. This article examines the way Cornelius Castoriadis, Jacques Lacan, Benedict Anderson, and Charles Taylor analyzed this concept. For Castoriadis, the imaginary is a culture's ethos, for Lacan, it is a fantasy, for Anderson and Taylor, it is a shared cognitive schema. Then Marilyn Ivy's application of these theories to Japanese 'national-cultural imaginaries' is examined. Finally, a more person-centered analysis is sketched, focusing on US Americans' explanations of the Columbine school shootings. Current anthropological uses of *the imaginary* inherit from Castoriadis a tendency toward cultural abstraction, reification, and homogenization. Lacan's, Anderson's, and Taylor's applications of *the imaginary* are potentially valuable if we use person-centered methods to study real rather than abstract cultural subjects, if we insist on a deeper understanding of the psychological processes involved, and if we respect complexity at both the psychological and social levels.

Key Words

Anderson • Castoriadis • cognitive psychology • imaginary • Ivy • Japan • Lacan • schema theory • Taylor • US

'National-cultural imaginaries' (Ivy, 1995). 'Spatial imaginary' (Handler, 2004). 'Technoscientific imaginaries' (Marcus, 1995). 'Modern social imaginary' (Gaonkar, 2002; Taylor, 2002). *Imaginary* is becoming common in the place of *culture* and *cultural beliefs*, *meanings*, and *models* in anthropology and cultural studies. I believe it is not a coincidence that talk of *imaginaries* became common just as *culture* was falling out of favor: to a certain extent *the imaginary* is just *culture* or *cultural knowledge* in new clothes. We need a way to talk about shared mental life: if *culture* is too redolent of Otherness, fixity, and homogeneity, then another term will have to be found. Ironically, however, *the imaginary*, in the hands of some authors, has taken on many of the same connotations of homogeneity as *culture* did.

In the following article I will trace some of the intellectual history and contemporary uses of *the imaginary*, focusing especially on the key contributions of Cornelius Castoriadis, Jacques Lacan, and Benedict Anderson, as well as Charles Taylor's application of Anderson's ideas. Although *the imaginary* has become so common that most

authors do not even cite a source for the term any more, those who do usually cite one of the first three authors; Taylor's more recent extension of Anderson is likely to become equally influential. A fuller account would start with Karl Marx's work on ideology and the fetishism of commodities, which greatly influenced these later commentators, and would include Louis Althusser ('Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence', 1971: 162), but it will be sufficient to focus on Lacan, Castoriadis and Anderson plus Taylor to provide an understanding of current examples of this concept in anthropology and cultural studies. Interestingly, each uses *imaginary* in a different way, which could be glossed as follows: for Castoriadis, the imaginary is a culture's ethos; for Lacan, it is a fantasy; for Anderson and Taylor, it is a cultural model (i.e. a learned, widely shared implicit cognitive schema, Holland and Quinn, 1987). Due to readers' likely unfamiliarity with these theories and obscurities in some of them, this exegetical section of the article is lengthy. However, it is not purely exegetical; it also includes criticisms or expansions of the theories from a psychosocial perspective.

Next I analyze Marilyn Ivy's application of all three of these versions of *the imaginary* in *Discourses of the Vanishing* (1995). Her unusually thoughtful attempt to apply this combination of theories highlights the strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches. Finally I offer a concrete US example to illustrate how psychological anthropologists could contribute to an improved concept.

To summarize what is to follow, *the imaginary* inherits from Castoriadis a tendency toward cultural abstraction, reification, and homogenization. Lacan's, Anderson's and Taylor's applications of *the imaginary* to describe fantasies and cultural models are potentially valuable if we use person-centered ethnographic methods to study real rather than abstract cultural subjects, if we do not reduce psychological processes to social ones or the reverse, and if we insist on a deeper understanding of the psychological processes involved. This article, in addition to analyzing the key word *the imaginary* and its uses, argues against attempts to turn culture into an abstraction and advocates instead that anthropologists study concrete material and symbolic conditions, on the one hand, and the understandings, emotions, and desires that individuals develop as they experience these conditions, on the other. The latter is an approach that psychological anthropologists have taken for some time, despite other differences in theories and methods (e.g. Wallace, 1970; Whiting and Whiting, 1975; Sperber, 1996; Strauss and Quinn, 1997, for a few examples among many). This means talking, not about 'the imaginary of a society', but of people's imaginaries. This person-centered approach recognizes the importance of learned cultural understandings but does not take 'culture' to be a fixed entity assumed to be held in common by a geographically bounded or self-identified group. Bounded or self-identified groups may share some cultural understandings, or imaginaries, with each other, but be fractured with respect to other understandings, which could be shared among people who have had the same formative experiences despite living in different parts of the world and not having a common identity.

CASTORIADIS: THE SOCIAL IMAGINARY AS CULTURAL ETHOS

Oddly, Cornelius Castoriadis seems to be the most frequently cited of these theorists of imaginaries, even though his conception of the imaginary has the least to contribute to anthropological analysis. Possibly this is because 'the social imaginary' was central to his

project, in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (1987 [1975]), of rethinking Marx's theories of society to give a greater role to the power of creative ideas. My exegesis is based primarily on the Preface and Chapters 2 and 3 of this book (see also Castoriadis, 1997).

For Castoriadis, the imaginary is fundamentally 'the capacity to see in a thing what it is not, to see it other than it is' (1987: 127), in other words, the imaginative capacity. More specifically, the 'radical imaginary' is this capacity and the 'actual imaginary' is its result in what has been imagined (1987: 388 n. 25). The 'social imaginary' is the actual imaginary of a society (e.g. 1987: 143). In other words, it is a society's imaginings, rather than ideas about society (although it might include that). Castoriadis's key examples of social imaginaries are the Old Testament God of the ancient Jews and the philosophical and democratic conceptions of the ancient Greeks (1987: 128–9). Imaginaries give meaning to symbols, goods, institutions, and are 'not so far removed from what Hegel called "the spirit of a people"' (1987: 128). Critiquing economic determinism, Castoriadis writes:

No technical fact has an assignable meaning if it is isolated from the society in which it is produced and none imposes a univocal and ineluctable sense to the human activities that it underlies . . . At a distance of only a few kilometers, in the same jungle, with the same weapons and instruments, two primitive tribes develop social structures and cultures as dissimilar as possible. (1987: 23)

Castoriadis greatly appreciated *the imaginary* as a potential source of creativity and freedom, for both individuals and societies. For a society, imaginaries are alienating when they take on a life of their own in institutions (1987: 109, 132), but at the same time they are creative, 'an original investment by society of the world and itself with meaning – meanings which are not "dictated" by real factors since it is instead this meaning that attributes to these real factors a particular importance and a particular place in the universe constituted by a given society' (1987: 128).

Thus, the social imaginary for Castoriadis is the ethos of a group (Ivy, 1995: 4) in the sense of a society's shared, unifying core conceptions. His focus is on unity, rather than multiplicity:

what is it that, amidst the infinity of possible symbolic structures, specifies *one* symbolic system, established the prevalent canonical relations, orients in *one* of the innumerable possible directions all the metaphors and metonymies that are abstractly conceivable? We cannot understand a society outside of a unifying factor that provides a signified content and weaves it with the symbolic structures. (Castoriadis, 1987: 160)

In a subtle but important difference from the cultural models sense of imaginaries, societies have their imaginaries; there is a one-to-one correspondence between groups and their unifying ideas. Notice Castoriadis's formulation, '*the* social imaginary', repeated by anthropologists who use *imaginary* in his sense (e.g. Durham, 2004: 590; see also Ivy, 1995, discussed later). The definite article, 'the', implies just one, and indeed Castoriadis stressed the way each (bounded) society has its fundamental idea: 'that these

real problems can be problems . . . presenting themselves to a particular epoch or a particular society as a task to be completed, only in relation to an imaginary central to the given epoch or society' (Castoriadis, 1987: 133).

For anthropologists, this is old news; old because it is a mixture of both our disciplinary common sense and problematic earlier conceptions of bounded societies, each with its own distinctive 'spirit', ignoring possible disunity as well as contact and cultural exchange throughout history. Furthermore, it is annoying that while Castoriadis talks about the Bororo (1987: 163) and the Kwakiutl (1987: 26), his only references to anthropologists in the passages I read were critical (e.g. 1987: 130 and 385 n. 45). We can acknowledge Castoriadis's important role in Marxist theorizing in the 1970s (see Sahlins, 1976 for a similar point), but question what he has to contribute to cultural anthropology now.

Both psychological and nonpsychological anthropologists are likely to agree with this critique of Castoriadis's concept of culture as bounded and unified. My next point, however, is one that comes specifically from the person-centered perspective of psychological anthropology. I see Castoriadis's embrace of this culture concept as due in part to his treating culture as an abstraction, instead of as the outlooks and feelings concretely embodied in people's psyches and behaviors and in the public culture and social institutions that are both the source and product of people's ideas and behaviors. His misconstrual of culture is due to an inadequate theory of the relation between individuals and society.

As an economist, social theorist, and practicing psychoanalyst, Castoriadis was well positioned to have thought about the relation between individual and social imaginaries, and he did so more than anyone else reviewed here. Thus, he considers both individual and social levels of the imaginary, noting that a key difference between the imaginary on the two levels is that in the latter case, imaginaries are institutionalized: 'it is a machine gun, a call to arms, a pay check and high-priced essential goods, a court decision and a prison. The "other" is now "embodied" elsewhere than in the individual unconscious' (1987: 109). This implies that social imaginaries have a concrete location in material objects, institutions, and practices. However, this sensible statement is later followed by an all-too-common mystification of social imaginaries as a kind of abstraction:

Compared to individual imaginary significations, they [social imaginaries] . . . have no precise place of existence (if indeed the individual unconscious can be called a precise place of existence). They can be grasped only indirectly and obliquely . . . as the curvature specific to every social space; as the invisible cement holding together this endless collection of real, rational and symbolic odds and ends that constitute every society, and as the principle that selects and shapes the bits and pieces that will be accepted there. Imaginary social significations – at any rate, those that are truly primary – *denote* nothing at all, and they *connote* just about everything. (1987: 143, emphasis in the original)

If the social imaginary ultimately 'denote[s] nothing at all', is it simply the analyst's name for a pattern s/he sees? But clearly Castoriadis feels social imaginaries have real effects; they are not his fiction but those of a society. I would say that if imaginaries are real in

their effects, they must be somewhere (even if their locations are multiple) and denote something (cf. Strauss and Quinn, 1997: 19; see also Sperber, 1996).

What is the best way to understand compelling, widely shared, historically durable meanings without turning them into a ghostly abstraction ('a cloud hovering over Cincinnati', in the apt caricature of a colleague)¹ and without reifying societies as entities that can imagine?

Castoriadis himself takes an important step toward a better conception. Doubtless influenced by Lacan (see later), he distinguishes between the symbolic and the imaginary. However, unlike Lacan, Castoriadis equated the symbolic with signifiers and the imaginary with the ideas that are their significations: while 'significations appear only as they are carried by signifying structures . . . this does not mean that they [*significations*] can be reduced to these [*signifying structures*], that they result from them in a univocal manner, or, finally that they are determined by them' (1987: 136, bracketed insertions mine).

In *A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning* (Strauss and Quinn, 1997) we take this further. We agree that meanings cannot be reduced to signifying structures. For example, a word (like 'freedom') is just a collection of sounds or marks on paper that evokes meanings; it does not somehow carry meanings within it. If the meanings are not in it, or in even a large collection of such signifiers, where are they? They can only, in the end, be mental entities, the significances imparted by people (Strauss and Quinn, 1997: 19–20; see also D'Andrade, 1995: 180 and Reddy, 1979, discussed by Linger, 1994). Societies are not creatures who imagine, but people do. What Castoriadis called 'social imaginaries', then, may be the conceptions of many members of a social group – or, sometimes, dominant members of a social group, or ideologists of a social group – repeated in multiple or influential social contexts, learned from participation in shared social practices and exposure to shared discourses and symbols. While some discourses, symbols, and social practices are shared within self-identified groups of various kinds, others may be shared by people in far-flung locations, with no common identity, but who are exposed to the same global media, economic institutions, or social practices, such as Castoriadis's 'machine gun . . . call to arms . . . pay check and high-priced essential goods' (see also Strauss and Quinn, 1997: 7–8). By the same token, a given group of people can participate in practices, and be exposed to discourses and symbols, that evoke conflicting meanings. Hence, the key is not to mystify ideas as 'the curvature' of 'social space' or the 'invisible cement' of a society, and not to think of societies as imagining anything,² but to theorize how people in societies imagine. This I will do in greater detail in the next two sections.

LACAN: THE IMAGINARY AS FANTASY

Unlike Castoriadis, Anderson, and Taylor, who all focus on *the imaginary* as something positive, an imaginative creation, Lacan comes from a Marxian³ tradition that emphasizes *the imaginary* as illusion and a Freudian one that treats this illusion as a fantasy, an illusion created in response to a psychological need. The primary sources for this discussion are Lacan's essay 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' (his 1953 Rome report, hereafter FFSL – 1977b) and his earlier essay 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I' (1977a, first published in 1949, hereafter MS).⁴

To understand Lacan it is important to start with his rejection of the idea of the unconscious as the seat of instinctive sex and death drives (FFSL: 53). Instead he saw personalities as constructed in social and cultural relations, as fundamentally *inter-subjective*: ‘The first object of desire is to be recognized by the other’ (FFSL: 58). In lines that remind me of his contemporary, Mikhail Bakhtin, he states, ‘the unconscious of the subject is the discourse of the other’ (FFSL: 55). Language and other symbolic systems structure desires, not the other way around, and thus he approvingly repeats a French maxim translated as, ‘There are people who would never have been in love, if they had never heard talk of love’ (FFSL: 54 and 108 n. 25). He interprets this maxim not as the criticism it was doubtless intended to be but ‘as an authentic recognition of what love owes to the symbol and of what speech entails of love’ (FFSL: 54). Unconscious, repressed memories are a text: ‘that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter’ (FFSL: 50).

Lacan’s understanding of symbols was heavily influenced by Saussure, Jakobson, and Lévi-Strauss. Given these structuralist influences, along with his Freudianism, it makes sense that the paradigm of symbolization for Lacan comes from a case described by Freud in which he observed his nephew, about 18 months old, throwing away a reel tied to a string and saying something that sounded like ‘Fort’ (*gone* in German), then retrieving it and saying ‘Da’ (*there/here* in German – Freud, 1957[1920]). For Lacan this simple opposition between *Fort* and *Da*, absent and present, exemplifies symbolic opposition and the psychic function of symbols that take the place of and distort reality, in this case, the reality of mother’s absence (FFSL: 103–4; Freud, 1957[1920]: 145–7).

Yet, while Lacan is well known for his emphasis on the symbolic constitution of the unconscious, he did not believe psychic life to be entirely determined by symbols. He distinguished the *symbolic* from the *imaginary* and both from the *real* (FFSL: 95),⁵ and he believed a full understanding of a personality required consideration of all three. Lacan’s translator defines ‘the imaginary relation’ as ‘that between the ego and its images’ (Sheridan, 1977: ix). Lacan’s own simple definition is that the imaginary is a fantasy – paradigmatically, one formed by the preverbal child (FFSL: 35) – and he referred to ‘the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image’ or ‘*imago*’ (MS: 2) as an infant. Lacan’s best known example of the way the self identifies with, and is alienated in, images of its own creation, is the way babies identify with their image in a mirror (MS). In the later Rome report (FFSL), that alienating role is largely taken over by language, law, and other structured sets of symbols, but the fundamental problem of a false self remains:

Does the subject not become engaged in an ever-growing dispossession of that being of his, concerning which . . . he ends up by recognizing that this being has never been anything more than his construct in the imaginary and that this construct disappoints all his certainties? For in this labour which he undertakes to reconstruct *for another*, he rediscovers the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and which has always destined it to be taken from him *by another*. (FFSL: 42, emphasis in original)

Thus both symbols and imaginaries are a source of *méconnaissance* (‘failure to recognize’ or ‘misconstruction’, Sheridan, 1977: xi), a central construct for Lacan. Rather than depicting the ego as ‘organized by the “reality principle”’, he states, ‘Our experience

shows that we should start instead from the *function of méconnaissance* that characterizes the ego in all its structures' (MS: 6, emphasis in original), and 'The art of the analyst must be to suspend the subject's certainties until their last mirages have been consumed' (FFSL: 43). Lacan believed there to be a fundamental gap between one's own experience and others' discourses, which he sometimes framed as a particular issue of his time (FFSL: 70–1) and sometimes as a necessary human condition.⁶

In other words, both symbols and imaginaries obscure *the real*, a term for which I have seen commentators give widely divergent explications.⁷ The following is consistent with the glossary provided by Lacan's translator (Sheridan, 1977: x):

It [*the Real*] is a difficult concept to grasp and even Lacan is not always clear. Generally it is unknowable as it transcends language (i.e. the Symbolic). Following the Saussurian idea that there is a fixed, 'objective' reality underlying the layers of the Symbolic register, the Real is Lacan's view of this. Clinically, it might be experienced as a felt presence, shared by therapist and patient, that there is some unspoken, shared sense of reality, which lies just beyond verbalization. Beyond a simple 'consensual reality', the Real is the actual thing which underlies our many layers of symbolization [n]ot unlike the floor beneath the carpet: we believe standing on the carpet is standing on the floor, whereas the carpet (the Symbolic) actually overlays the floor (Real). (Jerry, 1998)

This interpretation of *the real* as what is really real (not what we think is reality) fits my reading of Lacan. For example, he states, 'the analyst's abstention, his refusal to reply, is an element of reality in analysis . . . the junction between the symbolic and the real' (FFSL: 95). Given the liberatory goals of psychoanalysis it makes sense that Lacan would distinguish reality from what is fantasized, repressed, distorted, and partial, and give the analyst a special role in bringing the patient closer to it. However, since for Lacan all discourses fail to grasp reality completely, the real may be a Kantian thing-in-itself for him, which exists but cannot be known (except perhaps mystically, as he hints in a few places, e.g. MS: 7; FFSL: 100–1).

From a psychological perspective, Lacan's theory of the imaginary is a great improvement on Castoriadis's. First, Lacan explicitly theorizes the relation between psyche and society: individuals take their self image from social symbols and images, and the inadequacy of an identity constructed in this way, its failure to recognize real lacks, is a source of anxiety.⁸ Second, for Lacan, the imaginary is the fantasy of a specific person. Unsurprisingly given that he was a practicing psychoanalyst, Lacan based his theories on careful study of individual personalities. While he stressed the cultural construction of the unconscious, he also noted that individuals' subjectivities were not completely expressed by shared discourses and have to be understood in their particularity (e.g. FFSL: 81). Illusions are those of specific persons, not of an abstract cultural subject.

There are potential problems in anthropological applications of Lacan. While I am glad that Lacan explicitly credits the contributions of the structuralist anthropology and linguistics of his day (FFSL: 32, 72–3), structuralism is a problematic theory of symbols, given its assumptions of neat binary oppositions arranged in larger sets of logical systems, instead of seeing symbols as historically contingent, and perhaps only partially coherent. (Whether Lacan was himself prey to that structuralist tendency, I cannot say, except to

note his fascination with the binary opposition of *Fort* and *Da*, which he saw as the prototype of all symbolization, FFSL: 103–4.) The greater danger comes if anthropologists ignore the careful distinction Lacan drew among socially shared symbols, individuals' specific imaginaries, and realities beyond the symbol. As I will show later, it is this confusion of individual and social that is the most troubling aspect of Ivy's application of Lacan to an abstract Japanese subject.

ANDERSON AND TAYLOR: THE IMAGINED AS CULTURAL MODELS

The political scientist Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983) shares with Cornelius Castoriadis an emphasis on the creative, constructive aspects of imaginative creations, but they differ in a crucial respect. For Castoriadis, the social imaginary is the central world view associated with a particular group, setting off one group from another. Anderson's focus, instead, is a concept that has spread well beyond the borders of any one group, specifically the concept of the nation, which developed in many societies from the late 18th century on, due to people's participation in similar kinds of practices. He particularly emphasizes the role of vernacular print languages and print media (newspapers and books) in creating a reader's sense of being part of a larger community of other assumed readers who share one's language and one's concerns, contrasted with parallel imagined communities of readers elsewhere, reading in different languages or of different concerns.⁹ These imagined communities, in turn, helped to fix new identities and political groups. In his now well-known formulation, a nation 'is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson, 1983: 15).¹⁰

Anderson specifically distinguishes this vague new consciousness of limited groups of similar people from the explicit ideologies of liberalism and the Enlightenment:

What I am proposing is that neither economic interest, Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could, or did, create *in themselves* the *kind*, or shape, of imagined community to be defended from these regimes' depredations; to put it another way, none provided the framework of a new consciousness – the scarcely seen periphery of its vision – as opposed to centre-field objects of its admiration or disgust. (Anderson, 1983: 65)

The 'framework of a new consciousness' described by Anderson fits cognitive anthropologists' conception of cultural models, which are similarly shared, implicit schemas of interpretation, rather than explicit ideologies, although cultural models can derive from or be the source of explicit ideologies (see Linde, 1993).

This cultural models meaning of *imaginaries* is even more clearly conveyed in the philosopher Charles Taylor's essay, 'Modern Social Imaginaries' (2002; see also Taylor, 2004). For Taylor, a modern social imaginary is 'the way we imagine our society' (2002: 92; not what societies imagine). This has obvious parallels to Anderson's conception of an imagined community, and Taylor cites Anderson as a major inspiration (2002: 92). Taylor's thesis is that the rise of individualism in modern societies has not meant diminution of the idea of society, but a change in its conception from premodern understandings of societies as given by sacred hierarchies or timeless laws (Taylor, 2002: 94). In the

‘modern social imaginary’, by contrast, the underlying moral order of society is one of ‘mutual benefit, whose functional differentiations are ultimately contingent and whose members are fundamentally equal’ (2002: 99).

In the third section of his essay, ‘Modern Social Imaginaries’, Taylor explains what he means by *social imaginary*:

I want to speak of social imaginary here, rather than social theory, because there are important – and multiple – differences between the two. I speak of *imaginary* because I’m talking about the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, and legends. But it is also the case that theory is usually the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. Which leads to a third difference: the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy . . .

Our social imaginary at any given time is complex. It incorporates a sense of the normal expectations that we have of one another, the kind of common understanding which enables us to carry out the collective practices that make up our social life. This incorporates some sense of how we all fit together in carrying out the common practice. This understanding is both factual and ‘normative’; that is, we have a sense of how things usually go, but this is interwoven with an idea of how they ought to go, of what missteps would invalidate the practice. Take our practice of choosing governments through general elections. Part of the implicit knowledge that makes sense of each act of voting is our awareness of the whole action, involving all citizens, each choosing individually, but from among the same alternatives, and the compounding of these microchoices into one binding, collective decision . . .

The relation between practices and the background understanding behind them is therefore not one-sided. If the understanding makes the practice possible, it is also true that the practice largely carries the understanding. At any given time, we can speak of the ‘repertory’ of collective actions at the disposal of a given sector of society. These are the common actions that they know how to undertake, all the way from the general election, involving the whole society, to knowing how to strike up a polite but uninvolved conversation with a casual group in the reception hall. The discriminations we have to make to carry these off, knowing whom to speak to and when and how, carry an implicit map of social space, of what kinds of people we can associate with, in what ways, and under what circumstances. (Taylor, 2002: 106–7)

Taylor sketches how imaginaries develop, departing from Anderson in giving greater stress to the role of theories in first shaping practices, then imaginaries: ‘what is originally just an idealization grows into a complex imaginary through being taken up and associated with social practices, in part traditional ones, which are often transformed by the contact’ (2002: 110).

This description of *social imaginaries* (conceptions of average people, widely shared, enabling and legitimating practices because they carry a sense of both ‘how things usually go . . . and how they ought to go’, largely implicitly learned and expressed through

practices, images, stories, and so on) is nearly identical to what cognitive anthropologists have described as shared cognitive schemas or cultural models:

Cultural models are presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behavior in it. (Quinn and Holland, 1987: 4)

While cognitive anthropologists typically infer cultural models from what people say, they focus on what is presupposed rather than what is stated. Finally, cultural models are intimately related to practice. As Quinn and Holland explain clearly, we cannot make hard-and-fast distinctions between models for representing and models for acting (Geertz's 'models of' and 'models for' reality) because any given model is likely to mix these functions (and the process of publicly representing is itself a kind of acting, Quinn and Holland, 1987: 6–8); cultural models often carry 'directive force' (D'Andrade, 1984, 1992), and they are learned from participation in practices (Strauss and Quinn, 1997).

So what? The point is not that some of us got there first. Cultural analysis isn't a race, and there is no harm if good ideas flourish under a variety of names. Nor is it likely that Taylor stole this idea from cultural models theorists without attribution; he is a philosopher, not an anthropologist, and his immediate influence seems to have been discussions of what Heidegger and his interpreters call the 'background' (Dreyfus, 1991, cited in Taylor, 2002: 107). The similarity between Taylor's *social imaginaries* and cognitive anthropologists' *cultural models* is worth pointing out, however, for two reasons. First, cultural anthropologists who find Taylor's 'social imaginary' a useful concept should be aware of the large body of cultural models research in which this concept is developed theoretically and applied ethnographically (see especially Holland and Quinn, 1987, D'Andrade and Strauss, 1992, and Strauss and Quinn, 1997). Second, cultural models theory draws on work in cognitive psychology and paradigms in cognitive science that would be helpful for cultural theorists. This research sets forth different elements of a cultural model, distinguishes between explicit and implicit knowledge, explores more flexible connectionist models of knowledge and information processing, and explains the conditions under which such models are motivating.

Cultural models are cognitive schemas or combinations of schemas and include three types of knowledge distinguished by cognitive psychologists: a prototype, exemplars, and other background understandings or an implicit theory (see Lin and Murphy, 1997 and Markman and Gentner, 2001 for overviews of psychological research on categorization and thinking, respectively). The prototype is a real or constructed typical member or good example of the category (Rosch, 1978). 'Stereotype' is a close synonym, if its prejudicial connotations are removed and the term is broadened so it does not apply only to groups of people. (For example, one can have a prototype of an object like a car or an event like a birthday party.) Exemplars are specific examples, and background understandings or implicit theories include other information that is part of the concept, such as how and why features of the prototype are present, how they are related, and when variations on the prototype would be expected. Take a widely shared US cultural model for the family. The prototype would be what many US Americans assume to be

a typical family, consisting of a man and woman married to each other who are the biological parents of two or three children, living in a single family home. Their exemplars would be various real and fictional families they know. While the prototype is widely shared, each person would know different exemplars, although exemplars provided by popular culture would be widely shared. Exemplars, for each person, are likely to include many cases that do not conform to the prototype. People's schemas would include as well implicit expectations and more explicit theories about what a family is, how families should function in different contexts (family vacations, holidays, mealtimes, roles and authority of different members), their ideal affective tone, and so on. Psychologists tend to agree nowadays that categorization does not proceed by following a rigid set of necessary and sufficient conditions (x is a family if and only if . . .) but there is debate about whether people categorize from prototypes or exemplars (Lin and Murphy, 1997; Markman and Gentner, 2001: 235). That is an interesting question when the prototypes and exemplars conflict, which is the case in this example of families if one's prototype is that of a married couple and their biological children but one's exemplars are mostly of families that do not fit the prototype. (See Strauss and Quinn, 1992 for an example of a seven-year-old who thought his family with parents in their second marriage was deviant because they diverged from the prototype even though such divergence was the statistical norm among the families he knew.) Despite their possibly fictional, constructed nature, prototypes can have a normative pull: That is what families are *supposed* to be and we know that activating part of the prototype will lead us to expect it all to be present and lead us to fill in missing features of the prototype even if they were not present. For example, ambiguous sensory input may be first perceived as if it conformed to a prototype and recall of past events may be distorted to fit the prototype (see research summarized in D'Andrade, 1995: 84, 190–3) although events that are emotionally salient (perhaps because they deviate from the prototype) can be memorable, and some psychologists argue that more information is stored than is typically recollected (Alba and Hasher, 1983; see review in Garro, 2001: 117–19 and Schacter, 1996: 76–80). Prototypes are shaped by experience, but paradigmatic examples repeated in popular culture may carry more weight than ones a person has experienced in their own life. Prototypes, exemplars, and background understandings concretize the somewhat abstract features Taylor attributes to imaginaries, and lead us to ask questions such as: What are the prototypes and exemplars associated with specific imaginaries (e.g. of a 'society' or 'nation')? How do the stereotypical expectations embedded in a given prototype fit with the fuller knowledge available in the exemplars and cultural models? Is the prototype for a concept seen as an ideal?

The difference between implicit and explicit understandings is also important. Westen (2001) summarizes research on the way, for example, 'people's implicit and explicit attitudes toward various minority groups (as well as toward the sexes) can be quite discrepant . . . in fact, people with positive conscious attitudes toward minority groups are no less likely than those with negative conscious attitudes to harbor negative unconscious associations' (e.g. Devine, 1989, cited in Westen, 2001: 38). Explicit and implicit knowledge are mediated by different brain structures; for example, 'Amnesic subjects with Korsakoff's disorder, who cannot remember any of the information taught them about two fictional characters, nevertheless subsequently prefer the character who had been described more positively' (Johnson et al., 1985, cited in Westen, 2001: 34). Taylor,

too, stresses the importance of implicit understandings, in opposition to explicit theories, but he seems to assume a correspondence between elites, theories, and explicitness on the one hand, and the masses, imaginaries, and implicitness, on the other. However, both elites and masses have implicit schemas and explicit ideas, and it is important for cultural analysis to look at the relationship between them. Are they consistent or inconsistent? Do implicit schemas mediate behavior of a different sort than explicit theories (cf. Strauss, 1992)?

Connectionist models (neural network models, parallel distributed processing models, McClelland et al., 1986; Rumelhart et al., 1986) of schemas draw their inspiration from brain functioning rather than, as in earlier work in cognitive science, computers programmed with explicit rules. In connectionist models schemas are not fixed structures, but the learned tendency of groups of neuron-like units, each responding to a specific feature of experience, to activate each other if any one is activated. These tendencies can change in response to new combinations of experiences, giving us a model of the way people's understandings change with their experience and how they improvise new responses to new circumstances. (See Strauss and Quinn, 1997, especially Chapter 3.) While Taylor has no problem accepting that imaginaries can both be internalized and open to change, some culture theorists seem to treat internalization as implying fixity (see e.g. Butler, 1990: 134). Connectionist models present a way of understanding why that is a false equation.

Connectionist models can also be extended to include motivation. Westen (2001) gives a plausible account of how this process might work:

Thus, when the mind settles on the 'best fit' to the data, this judgment of goodness-of-fit not only reflects processes of *cognitive* constraint satisfaction but also of *affective* constraint satisfaction. Unpleasant feelings, for example, can inhibit conscious activation of part of a neural network to which they are associatively linked, leading to conscious judgments that are biased in a way that diminishes distress. (Westen, 2001: 36)

More generally, even cultural models that are learned are not necessarily motivating. Whether they are in a given context depends on a variety of factors, including associated emotions and self understandings (see Quinn's article, this issue, on these different aspects of self), knowledge of how upper-level goals relate to specific actions one could take to implement them, social constraints and so on (D'Andrade, 1992; Strauss and Quinn, 1997: 101–10, 231–45).

Finally, to repeat a point from the discussion of Castoriadis, cultural models researchers insist that any analysis of people's imaginaries should pay close attention to what people actually imagine, which is not a topic that a philosopher is prepared to address. For example, Taylor describes social imaginaries as large-scale, coherent structures:

What I'm calling the social imaginary extends beyond the immediate background understanding that makes sense of our particular practices . . . this understanding necessarily supposes a wider grasp of our whole predicament, how we stand in relationship to one another, how we got where we are, how we relate to other groups

. . . It is in fact that largely unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation, within which particular features of our world become evident. (Taylor, 2002: 107)

These broader understandings are indeed very important, but they may not be singular, coherent, or shared by different members of a given society. The close person-centered research that defines psychological anthropology can demonstrate either coherence and sharing or conflict and diversity in cultural understandings of who we are, how we relate to others, our origins and fate. Next I will consider Ivy's non-person-centered anthropological application of Castoriadis, Lacan, and Anderson.

IVY'S APPLICATION OF CASTORIADIS, LACAN, AND ANDERSON

I have described the way some prominent theorists have defined and explained *the imaginary*. How is it applied in anthropological analysis? Often, it has to be said, the application is shallow, with 'imaginary' or 'the imagined' used (and maybe Castoriadis or Anderson cited) in a context where, 20 or more years ago, 'culture' or 'cultural beliefs' would have been used instead, simply for the cultural capital of displaying facility with the jargon *du jour*. When this occurs it seems to be a sad case of disciplinary alienation: anthropologists' labor of working through the culture concept goes unrecognized when *the imaginary* is used and Castoriadis is cited instead.

A less cynical explanation for the prevalence of *the imaginary* is that for some anthropologists it has different connotations than *culture* or *cultural beliefs*. I focus here on Marilyn Ivy's *Discourses of the Vanishing* (1995), a study, in her words, of 'national-cultural imaginaries' of Japan, because it is a very serious attempt to not merely substitute new jargon for old, but to make use of the insights of the theorists discussed earlier.

Ivy carefully traces her use of *imaginary* to Castoriadis, Lacan, Anderson, and a fourth theorist, Claude Lefort:¹¹

There are at least four configurations of the imaginary that resonate, in different ways, with my use: Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' as the basis for the modern nation-state; Cornelius Castoriadis's 'social imaginary', which operates almost as an analogue to culture as theorized by structural anthropologists, as the codified ground for the social production of meaning; Claude Lefort's 'imaginary community', which he links with modern ideologies and the rise of mass media; and Lacan's 'imaginary' as the phantasmatic basis for the human subject's early, presymbolic identification with the image. (Ivy, 1995: 4)

Thus, like Castoriadis, Ivy is interested in local meaning systems, and like Anderson and Taylor, she is concerned with the way the nation is imagined in particular. Lacan's language and insights are especially influential in Ivy's account. Thus, just as Lacan defined the imaginary as fantasy, so Ivy uses 'national-cultural fantasy' interchangeably with 'national-cultural imaginary' (e.g. 1995: 24). Just as Lacan was concerned with self representations, so is Ivy concerned with Japanese representations of their culture. Just as Lacan stated, 'The art of the analyst must be to suspend the subject's certainties until their last mirages have been consumed' (FFSL: 43), so Ivy sees her goal as 'contest[ing]

the interior certainties of Japanese culture' (1995: 23). And just as Lacan focuses on the way the imaginary and the symbolic each deal with the subject's anxiety, so Ivy sets out

to examine how Japan's national successes have produced – along with Corollas and Walkmans – a certain crucial nexus of unease about culture itself and its transmission and stability. This anxiety indicates . . . a troubling lack of success at the very interior of national self-fashioning . . . That is, there is widespread recognition in Japan today that the destabilizations of capitalist modernity have decreed the loss of much of the past. (Ivy, 1995: 9–10)

The rest of the book analyzes tourism campaigns, folklore studies, folk revivals and the like as examples of nostalgia for lost cultural stability and homogeneity. Ivy adds an interesting, psychodynamic explanation of what motivates such nostalgia, in which there is pleasure in the ambivalent longing for what was lost (ambivalent because really returning to the past is not what is desired, 1995: 10):

The linkage of recognition and disavowal describes what in psychoanalytic criticism is known as the logic of the fetish, the denial of a feared absence through its replacement with a substitute presence. But this very replacement inevitably announces the absence it means to cover up, thus provoking anxiety. This concurrent recognition and disavowal can only be sustained by a certain splitting of the subject, a topological segregation of the subject who knows (something is missing) and the subject who (fixed on the replacement of absence) doesn't. (Ivy, 1995: 10–11)

Ivy's discussion of nostalgia is quite suggestive, and what could be more psychological than this psychoanalytic discussion of anxiety, splitting, and so on? The difficulty comes in applying this analysis to the specific cases Ivy considers, for as I read them, I did not see, for any particular persons she described, anything Lacan might have recognized as symptoms of anxiety about lost culture. The question this account raised for me is, 'Whose imaginaries are these?' Too much like Castoriadis, and quite unlike Lacan, for Ivy the answer to that question is an abstract rather than real subject.

Consider the first case Ivy examines: the national railroad's *Discover Japan* advertising campaign in the 1970s. This initial campaign ran for eight years, and spawned successors that continued into the 1980s. Ivy focuses on the campaign's posters, featuring beautiful scenes of urbanized young women in the countryside, raking leaves, or encountering 'an old monk at a mountain temple, the slow approach of a farmer on a country road, the massive wooden doors of an eighteenth century gatehouse' (Ivy, 1995: 44), 'which evoked the possibility of a return to native origins and ethnically true selves' (1995: 41). Perhaps they did. However, Ivy presents no information on how any particular Japanese interpreted these posters, what meanings (emotional and cognitive) they evoked. Did they appeal to concerns about lost traditions? Or – just as plausibly – were they appealing as a depiction of places that were not stressful and polluted, unlike the big cities of the 1970s? A mix of these? Something else altogether? The same meanings for men and women?¹²

In fact, one central meaning of the *Discover Japan* campaign may have been something else altogether. Ivy presents a detailed discussion of the campaign's formation, taken from the words of Fujioka Wakao, the lead creator of the advertisement campaign.

His advertising team decided that only young women had the leisure to travel, and through in-depth interviews with young Japanese women they learned that ‘In the women’s descriptions of their trips, they appeared “just like movie heroines”, actresses on a stage, and what they revealed in their stories was the self (*jibun*), a self that nobody knew, completely different from the everyday self’ (1995: 39). Hence, “Discover myself” . . . had become our campaign concept’ (1995: 40). In an ethnographically honest footnote, Ivy comments:

The extent to which Fujioka insisted on the centrality and originality of touristic self-discovery is striking. In my interview with him in July 1985, he repeatedly insisted that Discover Japan really had little to do with the nostalgic search for national-cultural origins; instead, it had everything to do with ‘discovering myself’, he claimed. (1995: 40 n. 26)

This information does not deter Ivy from the interpretation that in the end the campaign was about ‘a Japanese self (re)discovering its authenticity by moving through originary landscapes’ (1995: 41). Ivy’s attribution of a singular nationalist interpretation of the *Discover Japan* tourism campaign, like her reference later in the book to ‘the national-cultural imaginary of Japan itself’ (1995: 126), is very Castoriadis-like (note even her use of the definite article in speaking of ‘the national-cultural imaginary’) in its emphasis on a central, unifying meaning, rather than what would doubtless prove to be a variety of meanings, some shared, some varying, if she had consulted particular Japanese for their interpretations. (And if she had not dismissed those of the one person, Fujioka, whom she did consult.)¹³

Fujioka’s explanation does not have to prevail over Ivy’s; the campaign may have been appealing to the public for reasons that Fujioka did not foresee. Perhaps it even created new fantasies to return to an authentic, earlier Japan. However, recognizing the possible disjunction between the intentions of the advertisement’s creators and the meanings of the public raises a second concern. (The first is Ivy’s positing of an abstract cultural subject.) My second concern is that Ivy does not pay sufficient attention to the differing dynamics involved in individual fantasies and the collective representations of public culture. Public culture does not simply reflect mass consciousness. Again, Ivy’s discussion of the *Discover Japan* campaign shows why this is. She points out that Fujioka’s account of the advertising campaign omits a central fact about it: the whole theme and even the logo of the *Discover Japan* campaign was borrowed from a US domestic tourism campaign three years earlier, called *Discover America*, which Fujioka was certainly aware of because he had written about it (Ivy, 1995: 42). Indeed, ‘*Discover Japan*’ ‘was usually written in unadorned English’ (1995: 43).¹⁴ So what we have is a cultural production, the central concept for which is borrowed from another society, modified in relation to the producers’ understandings of the desires of one segment of the local market, which may have been appealing for still another reason, or helped create new desires. The *Discover Japan* advertising campaign is not a straightforward reflection of Japanese national anxieties.

Elsewhere in *Discourses of the Vanishing*, Ivy demonstrates awareness of the difficulties of assuming that the same dynamics are reflected in both individual fantasies and public cultural productions. Thus, in a footnote about museum collections, she notes:

Some of the most provocative work in anthropology and cultural studies in recent years has focused on the museum as a site productive of social fantasies. The imperatives of collection displayed in museums repeat many of the dynamics of fetishism; the difference lies in the rule-bound, socially invested nature of public collection as opposed to the erotic, obsessive, and often socially transgressive nature of private fetishism. (Ivy, 1995: 119, n. 36)

This kind of observation could be the starting point for a much more sophisticated understanding of the relation between people's fantasies and public culture.

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGIST'S ANALYSIS OF 'CULTURAL IMAGINARIES'

I do not have the space or areal expertise to give a psychological anthropologist's alternative to Ivy's analysis of Japanese imaginaries. However, I can quickly summarize the results of some of my recent research on cultural models of personhood, agency, and moral responsibility in the contemporary United States. This research exemplifies, I hope, the ways in which psychological anthropologists can give a more accurate and insightful account of social imaginaries by using person-centered ethnographic methods to study real rather than abstract cultural subjects, respecting the difference between psychological processes and social ones, and drawing on psychological theories regarding the processes by which cultural models are learned, mentally represented, and used.

Suppose we were to attempt to describe some of the central imaginaries of contemporary US society, using an approach like Castoriadis's or Ivy's. Like many prior commentators (e.g. Bellah et al., 1985), we would no doubt focus on the central idea of the unfettered individual who is master of his (since the prototype of this individual is male) destiny and morally responsible for his own action. This imaginary could be deduced from popular movies, biographies of entrepreneurs and political leaders, and public policy debates.

A more person-centered approach would certainly find some support for this cultural understanding of the person. Indeed, I have found that a great many Americans do hold this cultural model and employ discourses that stress individual agency and personal responsibility in many contexts. However, in other contexts, they stress instead situational constraints and causes outside of the individual's control. Attending to real people's cultural models, rather than the imaginaries of abstract subjects, reveals that Americans hold a great variety of cultural models for explaining people's behavior, some of which are individualistic and others not. Which ones are highlighted in a given situation depends on people's rhetorical and personal goals. I will give two examples of this.

I am currently examining public discourse about the 1999 mass shootings by two students at Columbine High School, drawing on large samples of postings on internet message boards, newspaper editorials, and in-depth interviews with 24 North Carolinians, with whom I discussed many other topics as well. I found that there were certain circumstances in these discussions about Columbine when individualistic discourses were prominent. These discourses were especially invoked in the unusual case of internet discussion threads begun by someone praising the shooters. (The anonymity of the internet made it the only context in which this taboo sentiment could be voiced.) One

such message evoked the response, '[the Columbine shooters were] psychos who were too cowardly to face some hardship and overcome' and some other comments like it. A teenager who said she, too, felt pushed around and wanted to respond violently was told by some to 'get over it', and 'you only get out of school and life what you put in'. Similarly, threads calling for gun control might be met by the response, 'Guns don't kill, people do'. These are classic individualistic discourses, used to counter arguments that would place blame on the social environment rather than individual character. Notice that they were invoked in particular kinds of circumstances: ones in which individualistic discourses were used to instill a stronger sense of personal responsibility in someone complaining about their circumstances, or to forestall public policies to which the speaker is opposed, like gun control. Furthermore, they were invoked defensively, because the majority of the responses were ones that focused on familial, social, and cultural causes of the school violence. Typically, political progressives argued that the Columbine shootings showed the need for gun control, while social conservatives instead blamed violence in video games and other aspects of popular culture, and, occasionally, a culture of permissiveness and immorality that could be traced back to the Supreme Court decision outlawing prayer in public schools. Adults frequently blamed inadequate discipline or insufficient nurturing by the shooters' parents, while young people were more likely to blame the bullying and teasing the shooters suffered in schools. Such explanations reflect underlying cultural models of human behavior as heavily influenced by the social environment. It may be, as well, that the anxiety created by this unexpected violence led people to suggest causes that were more susceptible to social control than a person's free choices, fitting Westen's (2001) discussion (see earlier) of 'affective constraint satisfaction' (see Strauss, n.d. for a fuller analysis).

Now the objection could be offered that discourse about the Columbine shootings is not a good test case because the shooters were young or because they were seen as so deeply abnormal that they were not felt to be capable of taking personal responsibility for their actions.¹⁵ I found, however, the same mix of individualistic and social attributions in my North Carolina interviewees' talk about other issues and about their own lives. For example, Catlyn Dwyer, a middle-aged, white, former office manager who was a victim of sexual harassment at her last job, had a strongly feminist analysis of women's opportunities, whether speaking of women in general or her own life in particular. She had been offered a college scholarship but never went to college, and got married instead. When I asked her why, she said, 'I wanted to be a doctor, an archaeologist, an astronomer, I mean those were the things I was interested in but back then you were just kind of . . . *dissuaded* from doing anything like that' (emphasis in the original). And when I asked later whether everyone in this society has an equal chance to get ahead, she replied, 'No. [laughter] What is it in careers? That glass ceiling, clunk clunk, for women.' But when I talked to her about welfare programs, she criticized one welfare mother she knew and proudly reported on the way she had managed without assistance from the government or her parents as a single mother after she had divorced her husband. Clearly, different prototypes come to mind when she thinks about 'women' than when she thinks about 'welfare mother' and she has not integrated feminist models of women's opportunities with her views on poor single mothers. Furthermore, while she recognizes the existence of the glass ceiling for women, that's not the discourse she uses to talk to her granddaughters, telling them instead, 'You can do *anything*. Anything

you want.' I found the same pattern with all my interviewees: a mix of individualistic and social-contextual cultural models, learned from different sources, each with its own prototypes and exemplars. Which one was applied depended on personal and rhetorical goals of the speaker such as highlighting their responsibility for their praiseworthy actions (staying off welfare), deflecting blame for behaviors of which they are not proud (not going to college), or inspiring others ('You can do *anything*').

This example shows the way the methods and theories of psychology and psychological anthropology can contribute a more penetrating analysis of the individual meanings and uses of shared discourses of personhood in the contemporary United States.

CONCLUSION

There are some central themes that connect my review of current discussions of *the imaginary*. First, we need to be able to answer the question, 'Whose imaginaries are these?' This is missing in Castoriadis, for whom imaginaries are 'the curvature specific to every social space' when ultimately they can only be *people's* imaginaries, and in Ivy's discussion of the imaginaries of a fictional Japanese subject. Answering this question requires a person-centered approach, central to psychological anthropology, so that we are talking about the imaginaries of real people, not the imaginaries of imagined people. Studying real people will help counter the tendency to see imaginaries as more homogeneous or fixed than they are.

My second major point is that in the course of supplying a missing psychology we have to be careful about the relationship between individuals' psychology and public culture. Adding a missing psychology to cultural analysis does not mean *reducing* public symbols and institutions to a reflection of psyches any more than it means reducing psyches to a simple reflection of social discourses. Instead, it means recognizing that there is complexity at both the social and psychological levels, and in the interaction between them.

My third major point is the need to provide some of the psychological theory missing in terms, such as *the imaginary*, that are implicitly psychological. 'Imaginary' suggests a more interesting form of cognition than knowledge of perceptible facts. Psychologists, psychoanalysts, and psychological anthropologists have delineated a variety of forms of cognition and awareness between knowledge of indisputable facts and complete lack of knowledge. These include explicit knowledge of imagined facts, implicit cultural beliefs, and dissociated, repressed, and fantasized knowledge, as well as experiences that are not internalized because they cannot be assimilated to any previous schema (Hollan, 2000; Fenichel, 2001–3).¹⁶

The interaction between the social and psychological levels is also complex. And there are not just two levels here (social and psychological) but at least three: inner life of individuals; manifestations of people's inner life and social constraints in their publicly observable behaviors; and widely available public culture productions (of ideologies, mass media, rituals, laws and the like). Widely available public culture productions, in turn, build on previous cultural productions, modifications of which depend on pragmatic production constraints, the producers' implicit understandings and explicit guesses about the implicit understandings and anxieties of audiences, whose actual reception will depend on the complex psychology described earlier and may not fit the

producers' expectations, leading to further modification of the public collective representations. (See Weber's [1958] discussion of the development of the Protestant Ethic for recognition of this sort of complexity.) Furthermore, public culture can travel, and provide new understandings to individuals distant from its source. Our goal as anthropologists should be to elucidate that process.

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Notes

- 1 Julie Tetel, personal communication.
- 2 To be fair to Castoriadis, he realizes the danger of personifying societies, although his discussion of 'the social imaginary' is susceptible to that interpretation. Thus, he states, 'society – which, obviously, is not to be transformed into a "subject" in either the literal or metaphorical sense' (1987: 142).
- 3 Marx's influence on Lacan can be seen in Lacan's repeated use of 'alienation' (e.g. MS: 2 and FFSL: 42; see also his reference to dialectical materialism, FFSL: 52).
- 4 The ideas were first presented in 1936, so the 'Mirror Stage' essay represents an earlier phase in his thinking, according to the translator.
- 5 Some commentators capitalize Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. While this makes it clear that these are technical terms, not necessarily meant in their ordinary sense, it also gives them a greater aura of mystery than is necessary. I have chosen not to capitalize them, following the orthography in my Lacan translation.
- 6 In fact, Lacan seems to have a Zen-like view of the insufficiency of language to comprehend experience (FFSL: 94).
- 7 For example, according to Klages, the real is 'original unity [*with the mother*]. Because of that, there is no absence or loss or lack; the Real is all fullness and completeness, where there's no need that can't be satisfied' (Klages, 2001), while for Lacan's translator, the real is 'What is prior to the assumption of the symbolic, the real in its "raw" state (in the case of the subject, for instance, the organism and its biological needs), may only be supposed, it is an algebraic x' ' (Sheridan, 1977: x).
- 8 It appears that for Lacan symbols and imaginaries are used to deal with anxiety but their illusoriness creates new anxiety.
- 9 Thus, referring to early newspapers in the Americas, Anderson says, 'In other words, what brought together, on the same page, *this* marriage with *that* ship, *this* price with *that* bishop, was the very structure of the colonial administration and market-system itself. In this way, the newspaper of Caracas quite naturally, and even apolitically, created an imagined community among a specific assemblage of fellow-readers, to whom *these* ships, brides, bishops, and prices belonged. In time, of course, it was only to be expected that political elements would enter in' (Anderson, 1983: 62). I have questions about whether vernacular languages and print media should be given such causal primacy, but I won't go into them here.
- 10 Anderson acknowledges Ernest Gellner's similar point ('Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist'), but states 'the drawback to this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so anxious

- to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates “invention” to “fabrication” and “falsity”, rather than to “imagining” and “creation” (Gellner, 1964, cited in Anderson, 1983: 15). Thus, it is important not to confuse work on ‘imaginaries’ with work on ‘invention of tradition’, which seems superficially similar. Interestingly, even though Ivy stresses the illusory side of imaginaries, she, too, distinguishes her emphasis on national-cultural imaginaries from the idea of ‘invention of tradition’, which she critiques (Ivy, 1995: 21).
- 11 For Lefort, imaginaries are modern ideologies and their earlier analogues in other discourses that hide realities (Lefort, 1986); Lefort’s discussion was not covered in my literature review because I have not found other anthropologists who apply his ideas, nor do I think they contribute very much beyond other theories of ideology.
 - 12 In research I conducted in North Carolina, my male interviewees were much more invested in defending the traditional South than were my female interviewees, on the whole.
 - 13 When Ivy goes to the town of Tono, celebrated as the site of a well-known collection of folklore, she does interview some individual Japanese, but the excerpts from the interviews she prints reveal a fairly pragmatic attitude toward earlier traditions and modern re-enactments, rather than the anxiety-saturated significance Ivy’s analysis had led me to expect.
 - 14 This use of English does not make sense given Ivy’s understanding of the advertising campaign as appealing to nostalgia for lost Japanese traditions but is quite consistent with Fujioka’s individualistic ‘discover myself’ theme.
 - 15 The first objection was voiced to me by Dan Segal (personal communication, September, 2004), the second by Joel Robbins (personal communication, April, 2006).
 - 16 See Fenichel (2001–3) on distinguishing between repressed veridical memories (e.g. of sexual abuse) and their representation as fantasies. Hollan (2000) discusses several of these forms of ‘not knowing’.

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