Cultural Evolution: Adaptive Diversification in Language and Religion
Michael Doebeli

in Adaptive Diversification (MPB-48)

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Item type: chapter

This chapter examines adaptive diversification in language and religion. The historic record contains many examples of the types of diversification occurring in these models. Diversification in languages has been rampant throughout history, and must have often occurred under substantial contact between hosts of diverging language memes. Similarly, it seems clear that religious diversification has often occurred, and continuous to occur, under conditions of substantial contact. The models illustrate that diversifying processes should be expected to operate whenever the likelihood of secession from a dominant culture increases with increasing dominance of the mainstream culture. Intuitively, it is not hard to imagine that the attractiveness of a culture diminishes as the culture becomes more dominant, dogmatic, and perhaps oppressive, and that the desire to stand out and be different increases in increasingly conformist cultures.

Cultural Subordination Through Cultural Diversity
Roy L. Brooks

in The Racial Glass Ceiling: Subordination in American Law and Culture

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Cultural subordination is defined here as the suppression of important black values or folk ways—questions and concerns of keen importance to blacks—in the American mainstream culture. Like juridical subordination, cultural subordination is animated by post-Jim Crow norms that perform
important rhetorical and regulatory functions in civil rights discourse—racial omission (traditionalism), racial integration (reformism), racial solidarity (limited separation), and social transformation (critical race theory). After defending the belief that blacks do have a distinct set of values that transcend class stratification, and after discussing the legitimacy of cultural diversity in American society, this chapter crafts four models of cultural diversity defined by these post-Jim Crow norms—cultural assimilation (traditionalism), biculturalism (reformism), cultural pluralism (limited separation), and transculturalism (critical race theory). It then proceeds to explain how most of these visions of cultural diversity subordinate legitimate black values. Deploying these models to purposefully enhance our racial democracy, which lies at the root of cultural diversity, can reduce (but not entirely eliminate) racial subordination in the American mainstream culture.

Crosscurrents of Crisis in 1970s America
Thomas Borstelmann

in The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality
Published in print: 2011 Published Online: October 2017
Publisher: Princeton University Press
DOI: 10.23943/princeton/9780691141565.003.0002

This chapter examines American anxieties about the longstanding foundations of American society and thought. By the 1970s, American society would be buffeted by powerful crosscurrents which reshaped both the nation and the world beyond it. Military, political, economic, and environmental crises unfolded rapidly on top of each other, leaving many citizens uncertain of which to address first and how to do so. In the backwash of defeat in Vietnam and humiliation from the Watergate scandal, and in the midst of inflation and an oil crisis, distrust of government pervaded American society, the loss of confidence in public authority laid the foundation for deregulation and a turn toward the free market, a path that led to growing disparities between rich and poor. At the same time, the more tolerant and individualistic mainstream American culture increasingly rejected old forms of group discrimination and inequality.

Discourse as Cultural Struggle
Xu Shi (ed.)

Published in print: 2006 Published Online: September 2011
Publisher: Hong Kong University Press
DOI: 10.5790/hongkong/9789622098114.001.0001
Item type: book
This book challenges the cultural imbalance in current research traditions, and argues for a culturalist perspective in facilitating better intercultural exchange amidst accelerated processes of globalization. It is the first engagement with discourses in non-mainstream cultures. Covering a wide range of issues in public, professional, media, and intercultural communication, the twelve essays tackle culturally pressing issues by aligning viewpoints from various geo-political contexts.

Mainstream Culture Refocused
Xueping Zhong

in Mainstream Culture Refocused: Television Drama, Society, and the Production of Meaning in Reform-Era China

This introductory chapter first highlights the “fate” of Chinese mainstream culture and debates about it in the West, with a brief observation about their own sociocultural particularities. It argues for a need to move beyond the existing mode of state–market dichotomy in order to arrive at a historically informed understanding of the production of contemporary Chinese mainstream culture in general and television drama in particular. The chapter then sets out four seemingly straightforward terms—television set (dianshi ji), television industry (dianshi chanye), television culture (dianshi wenhua), and television drama (dianshiju)—in order to both focus and expand the discussion regarding the relationship between state and market forces and cultural production. These four terms indicate television’s role among “global” and globalizing technology-aided cultural phenomena, but they are also socially and historically particular to modern and contemporary Chinese history, rich with specific implications. They illustrate the complex relationship between the state and the collective imaginary of “modernization” shared by different social groups, and between the state and different players who have participated in the development of television culture as mainstream popular culture in ways specific to the social characteristics in contemporary China.
Re-collecting “History” on Television
Xueping Zhong

in Mainstream Culture Refocused: Television Drama, Society, and the Production of Meaning in Reform-Era China

Published in print: 2010 Published Online: November 2016
Publisher: University of Hawai‘i Press
DOI: 10.21313/hawaii/9780824834173.003.0003
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the rise of Chinese dramas about dynastic emperors. These dramas have become an important subcategory of “history drama” on television. It argues that emperor dramas and critical responses to them reflect the changing and contradictory nature of contemporary Chinese mainstream culture, especially of its uncertainty about how to reaffirm China’s own historical agency, fully acknowledge its own historical choices, and examine their successes and failures without subscribing to either a postmodern nihilistic cynicism or a simple-minded nationalism. At the same time, emperor dramas, their popular reception, the debates about them, and various other related intellectual concerns continue to constitute the complexity of and agency within mainstream culture. In this sense, the emperor dramas, like the other subgenres studied in this book, function as “open-ended” texts that invite both cultural and historical readings not only into the texts themselves, but also into the social, economic, cultural, and political realities of market-reform-era China.

Race and Culture
Roy L. Brooks

in The Racial Glass Ceiling: Subordination in American Law and Culture

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Item type: chapter

The conflicting racial and cultural values that underpin much of the Supreme Court’s decision making in civil rights cases are brought under critical review in this chapter as part of a larger argument regarding cultural diversity made in the next chapter. Thus, this chapter is a bridge between the socio-legal and socio-cultural race problems. In preparation for arguing in the next chapter that cultural diversity rides with a corpse in its cargo—to wit, cultural subordination—this chapter discusses the conflicting racial and cultural crosscurrents of the American middle class and working class. White-middle-class values, more than any other
values, shape the American mainstream culture—“It’s the Middle Class, Stupid!”—wherein the problem of cultural subordination lies.

From Marginal to Emergent
Cyrus R. K. Patell

in Emergent U.S. Literatures: From Multiculturalism to Cosmopolitanism in the Late Twentieth Century

Published in print: 2014 Published Online: March 2016
Item type: chapter

This chapter raises the question of how U.S. late-twentieth-century minority cultures, whether oriented around ethnicity or sexuality, transform themselves from marginal cultures into emergent ones capable of challenging and reforming the mainstream. This transformation depends in large on a shift in perspective. Part of what it means to be emergent is to associate yourself with the idea of the new. Thus, the chapter illustrates the various themes, tropes, and other devices used in ethnic and queer narratives as they attempt to engage with the dominant American mainstream culture and negotiate issues of individuality, assimilation, and identity in order to participate in a collaborative that is, for all its diversity of cultural backgrounds, remains—in a word—American.

Mainstream Culture Refocused
Xueping Zhong

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Item type: book

Serialized television drama dianshiju, perhaps the most popular and influential cultural form in China over the past three decades, offers a wide and penetrating look at the tensions and contradictions of the post-revolutionary and pro-market period. This book draws attention to the multiple cultural and historical legacies that coexist and challenge each other within this dominant form of storytelling. This book argues for recognizing the complexity of dianshiju’s melodramatic mode and its various subgenres, in effect “refocusing” mainstream Chinese culture. The book opens with an examination of television as a narrative motif in three contemporary Chinese art-house films. It then turns attention to dianshiju’s most important subgenres. “Emperor dramas” highlight the link between popular culture’s obsession with emperors
and modern Chinese intellectuals’ preoccupation with issues of history and tradition and how they relate to modernity. In an exploration of the “anti-corruption” subgenre, the book considers three representative dramas, exploring their diverse plots and emphases. “Youth dramas’” rich array of representations reveal the numerous social, economic, cultural, and ideological issues surrounding the notion of youth and its changing meanings. The chapter on “family-marriage” analyzes the ways in which women’s emotions are represented in relation to their desire for “happiness.” Song lyrics from music composed for television dramas are considered as “popular poetics.” The Epilogue returns to the relationship between intellectuals and the production of mainstream cultural meaning in the context of China’s post-revolutionary social, economic, and cultural transformation.

The First Year Out
Tim Clydesdale

Wild parties, late nights, and lots of sex, drugs, and alcohol. Many assume these are the things that define an American teenager's first year after high school. But the reality is really quite different. As this book reports, teenagers generally manage the increased responsibilities of everyday life immediately after graduation effectively. But, like many good things, this comes at a cost. Tracking the daily lives of fifty young people making the transition to life after high school, the book reveals how teens settle into manageable patterns of substance use and sexual activity; how they meet the requirements of postsecondary education; and how they cope with new financial expectations. Most of them, we learn, handle the changes well because they make a priority of everyday life. But the book finds that teens also stow away their identities—religious, racial, political, or otherwise—during this period in exchange for acceptance into mainstream culture. This results in the absence of a long-range purpose for their lives and imposes limits on their desire to understand national politics and global issues, sometimes even affecting the ability to reconstruct their lives when tragedies occur.

New Cosmopolitanisms
Gita Rajan and Shailja Sharma (eds)
This book offers an in-depth look at the ways in which technology, travel, and globalization have altered traditional patterns of immigration for South Asians who live and work in the United States, and explains how their popular cultural practices and aesthetic desires are fulfilled. They are presented as the twenty-first century's “new cosmopolitans”: flexible enough to adjust to globalization's economic, political, and cultural imperatives. They are thus uniquely adaptable to the mainstream cultures of the United States, but also vulnerable in a period when nationalism and security have become tools to maintain traditional power relations in a changing world.

**Supercrip**

Alaniz José

in *Death, Disability, and the Superhero: The Silver Age and Beyond*

This chapter discusses the figure of the “supercrip,” which divides much of the disabled community both within itself and from the wider, “abled” culture. Coming into popular use around the time of the passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the term denotes a type of disabled person more likely to appear in the mainstream mass media. The supercrip represents the antithesis to the other despised image in mainstream culture: the sentimentalized, pathetic poster child wheeled out for telethons and tearjerkers. As the term suggests, through its derivation from Superman and the superhero comics genre, “supercrip” implies an ego-driven overcompensation for lack that is dangerous for its misrepresentation of an entire community.

**Beyond Romance**

Xueping Zhong

in *Mainstream Culture Refocused: Television Drama, Society, and the Production of Meaning in Reform-Era China*

This chapter focuses on Chinese youth drama, a subgenre on television that offers yet another interesting example of mainstream culture's
representations of social contradictions and ideological tensions. It examines three types of well-received Chinese-made youth dramas and their best-known texts. First, it considers the dramas by the so-called master of Chinese youth drama, Hai Yan. It explores the representations shared by the young characters and the social and ideological implications of the commonality in Hai Yan’s dramas. Second, it examines the phenomenon of “post-youth” youth drama, which refer to dramas that focus on the generation of Chinese who grew up during the Mao era but who encountered significant changes in their lives during the post-Mao era. It looks at the ambivalence expressed within those dramas in which their main characters live through two sharply different eras. Third, the chapter examines “counteridol” youth drama, in particular one of its latest representatives, Shibing tuji (Soldiers, be ready, 2007). Focusing on its main character, Xu Sanduo, and the popular following this unlikely hero has generated, it speculates on why an unconventional “youth idol” has successfully captured the public’s imagination.

Drawing France
Joel E. Vessels

In France, Belgium, and other Francophone countries, comic strips—called bande dessinée or “BD” in French—have long been considered a major art form capable of addressing a host of contemporary issues. Among French-speaking intelligentsia, graphic narratives were deemed worthy of canonization and critical study decades before the academy and the press in the United States embraced comics. The place that BD holds today, however, belies the contentious political route the art form has traveled. This book examines the trek of BD from it being considered a fomentor of rebellion, to a medium suitable only for semi-literates, to an impediment to education, and most recently to an art capable of addressing social concerns in mainstream culture. In the mid-1800s, alarmists feared political caricatures might incite the ire of an illiterate working class. To counter this notion, proponents yoked the art to a particular articulation of “Frenchness” based on literacy and reason. With the post-World War II economic upswing, French consumers saw BD as a way to navigate the changes brought by modernization. After bande dessinée came to be understood as a compass for the masses, the government, especially Francois Mitterand’s administration, brought comics increasingly into “official” culture. The author argues that BDs are central to the formation of France’s self-image and a self-awareness of what it means to be French.
Introduction
Marion Goldman

in The American Soul Rush: Esalen and the Rise of Spiritual Privilege
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Item type: chapter

This introductory chapter details the history and philosophy behind the Esalen Institute, its impact on society since its inception in the 1960s, as well as the background of research in exploring Esalen and its enduring influence. The Institute's founding generation had started lasting organizations and social networks that facilitated the development and spread of alternative spirituality and humanistic psychology in the twenty-first century. Esalen encouraged widespread enthusiasm for an enormous range of spiritual paths that offered possibilities for individuals to live joyfully and discover fresh truths about themselves and the cosmos. It democratized spiritual privilege by popularizing options that had once been available to relatively few Americans and made the religious marketplace more diverse and open. Esalen played a critical role in introducing and promoting esoteric spirituality so that it flowed into mainstream culture.

Esalen’s Legacies
Marion Goldman

in The American Soul Rush: Esalen and the Rise of Spiritual Privilege
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This chapter documents some of the ways that the Institute has made a lasting impact on the wider culture through educational institutions, professional organizations, and media, including books, magazines, and websites dedicated to personal and spiritual growth. Esalen had been a magnet for strategic actors from various grass-roots and professional groups that focused on expanding different aspects of human potential. Its doctrines and practices of personal divinity and limitless human potential are now embedded in American society and associated with goods and services that are available to most citizens. Sometimes, the Institute's influence is almost invisible, as in the case of the huge best-seller, Tuesdays with Morrie.
This chapter introduces the variety of drums used in Japan and begins a discussion of the “taiko boom” by demonstrating how it has helped bring taiko drums and taiko drum makers closer to the mainstream of Japanese cultural life. Japanese drums are typically differentiated based on their size, shape, and material composition. They are also sounded in distinct ways (by hands, sticks, or mallets) and are employed differently in the three main genres of Japanese performance: music of the imperial court (gagaku), music accompanying the classical stage performing arts (koten geinō), and music used in religious ritual or the folk performing arts (minzoku geinō). Prior to the emergence of ensemble taiko drumming, taiko drums were used most extensively within the folk performing arts. This historical context contributed significantly to the development of taiko in the postwar period.

The Protocols in Japan

David G. Goodman

This chapter traces the long-standing presence of the Protocols in Japan, its natural alliance with a number of both Christian and Buddhist millenarian traditions, and the political—often imperial—schemes it helped inspire among its “believers.” The text enjoyed its heyday in the 1980s via the writings of a Christian preacher, Uno Masami. By assuring the Japanese that he could help them understand the world and Japan, he wrote huge bestsellers, and the Protocols got a respectful, even enthusiastic look in mainstream and academic circles. And despite the text's popularity, it did not necessarily translate into the atrocities characteristic of the Nazis; in some cases it led to alliances with the Jews and efforts to bring them to Japan so that the nation could benefit from
their intellectual and cultural resources, illustrating that not all believers in the Protocols take it as a “warrant for genocide” against the Jews.