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## Introduction

“We are for a vanishing policy,” declared Merrill E. Gates during his presidential address in 1899 to the influential reform group called the Lake Mohonk Friends of the Indian (1900:12). Gates was echoing the familiar refrain of Major Richard C. Pratt, the superintendent of the U.S. Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, who agreed, in part, with the idea that “the only good Indian was a dead one.” As Pratt saw it, “All the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (1973 [1892]:261). Pratt and Gates were important figures during the so-called assimilation era, when the federal government fused land allotment to industrial education in an explicit effort to quicken the slow processes of Indian evolution from savage pagan to civilized Christian.

In 1928, however, Lewis Meriam explained in his historic report on the failure of Indian policies that “some Indians proud of their race and devoted to their culture . . . have no desire to be as the white man is. They wish to remain Indians.” He explained that many “intelligent, liberal whites who find real merit in . . . things which may be covered by the broad term ‘culture’” advocate a policy that goes so far, “metaphorically speaking, as to enclose these Indians in a glass case to preserve them as museum specimens for future generations to study and enjoy, because of the value of their culture and its picturesqueness in a world rapidly advancing in high organization and mass production.”

“With this view,” Meriam reported, “the survey staff has great sympathy” (1928:86–87). With the help of John Collier, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s politically savvy commissioner of Indian affairs, many of the recommendations Meriam and his staff made found their way into the Wheeler-Howard Act of 1934. Better known as the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), this was sweeping New Deal legislation that was meant to curtail future allotments, empower tribal governments, and put structures in place to

enable improved health, education, land acquisition, and cultural preservation (Medicine 1998:254). Broadly construed, this tumultuous period of explicit vanishing policies began with the passing of the Indian Religious Crimes Code (1883) and ended with the Wheeler-Howard Act (1934).

By employing stark and macabre metaphors, proponents of assimilation barely veiled their desires for the complete destruction of American Indian beliefs and cultural practices, albeit couched in the name of progress and the advance of Christian civilization. A generation later, however, cultural preservation and self-determination became the watchwords of federal policies governing Native Americans. Although the ultimate successes of the IRA varied, one can view this shift in terms of the federal government's promulgating of policies to first destroy and then protect American Indian culture. The dramatic shift in the policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) mirrored shifts in American popular culture, aesthetics, and attitudes toward traditional or authentic Native American cultures. The ascendancy and import of ideas like tradition and culture among American Indian groups, within state and federal governments, in vehicles of popular culture, and among philanthropists were congruent with the development of Americanist anthropology as it moved from embracing ideas of social evolution to articulating ideas of historical particularism and cultural relativism.

The world-renowned potter Maria Martinez (1887–1980), from San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, experienced the change in these ideas regarding culture in a telling way. As a young woman, she was exhibited at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904 as a primitive native on the bottom rungs of the evolutionary ladder, as evidenced by her quaint yet crude pottery. In 1933, however, Martinez received a special invitation to exhibit her highly touted pottery at the A Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago. She fetched a bronze medal. Although her pots remained basically the same, American perceptions had changed; at the turn of the century, Indians were seen as on their way out, but by the 1930s they were seen as very much “in” (Jacobs 1999:3; Spivey 2003:167–68; Mullin 2001:91–172).

In this book, I explore anthropology in the United States and its emerging concept of culture as it played an increasingly important role in this dramatic shift in federal Indian policy and the broader public's understanding of distinctive cultures. At the same time, I investigate anthro-

pology's concept of race, which also emerged as an important idea during this period. The anthropological concept of race, however, was less reliable, slower to stabilize, and often more paradoxical than that of culture (Williams 2006:16–47; Blakey 1999:33). Anthropology also had more competition in the arena of race than it did in the field of culture.

In each chapter, I have identified specific anthropologists who employed particular ideas of culture and race and document how these collide or collude with other ideas outside the academy. The intense public contestation of these collisions often produced unintended consequences that help to identify the motivations, investments, and commitments of the various stakeholders. Throughout the book, I attend to various publics, identifying when anthropology was lionized or reviled, and then try to understand the racial politics of culture animating both the anthropologists who pushed their science into public arenas and the public intellectuals who pushed back. Conversely, I illustrate how anthropology was pulled into the public arena and demonstrate how anthropologists pushed back. I try to focus on how the power of culture and the culture of power often ricochet off one another in unexpected ways and track the perception of anthropology as it made the significant transition from being a reliable narrator in the story of white supremacy to becoming an increasingly less reliable one.

I develop these stories about conflict and collision, collusion and cooperation that turn on ideas of race and culture to demonstrate that anthropology as discourse and discipline has played subtle, complex, and ambivalent roles in shaping the racial politics of culture in the United States. Focusing on the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, I argue that the role anthropology played in shaping popular conceptions of the culture for Native Americans was significantly different from the role it played in shaping popular conceptions of culture for African Americans. And I also argue that the role anthropology played in articulating notions of race had different implications from the role it played articulating notions of culture. Although the roles differed, I suggest the anthropological concept of race that was eventually used to address the Negro problem in the twentieth century emerged from the anthropological concept of culture that was used to understand American Indian languages and customs in the nineteenth century. In other words, to understand the development of African American customs, beliefs, rituals, practices, and art as “culture”

in the United States, one must interrogate the way in which a diverse array of languages and customs were identified and described as cultures among American Indians.

Five fascinating and intertwined questions motivate and frame this research. First, anthropologists resisted studying Negroes and desired studying Indians, so why did many educated, self-proclaimed Negro elites desire the anthropological gaze while many educated, self-proclaimed Indian elites resist it? Second, anthropologists in the United States successfully fashioned a concept of culture by delimiting it from race, while articulating a concept of race by divorcing it from culture. Despite the left-leaning political motivations and even antiracist scholarship produced by Franz Boas and some of his students, how did anthropology in the United States so assiduously avoid or evade deliberate discussions and analysis of racism and structural inequality? Fourth, why did ideas of raceless culture never fully break free from their biological moorings (Harrison 1994; Mullings 2005; Steinberg 2007; Visweswaran 1998a)? Finally, how and why did an obvious division of labor emerge in social sciences in the United States that enabled anthropology to specialize in describing the culture of out-of-the-way indigenous peoples while empowering sociologists to specialize in explaining the culture of the many in-the-way immigrant and black people?

One of the reasons I do not or cannot fully answer these questions is that the problems that have always surrounded linkages and disconnects between concepts of culture and race stem from the fact that both are slippery social constructs, and people too often use one to explain the other or simply collapse the two. My hope is that these stories will help to delimit the limits, understand the contradictions, and offer a better understanding of the terms and conditions of race and culture which are deployed within explicitly political projects that get woven into the fabric of North American culture and become part of American history. My ultimate objective is to illuminate how anthropology helped to shape the racial politics of culture and the cultural politics of race that we are still grappling with today. In the balance of this lengthy introduction, I lay the groundwork for what I mean by the racial politics of culture and how that fits into the history of anthropology, while underscoring some of the differences between race and culture as they were used to describe difference, differently, among African Americans and American Indians.

## The Racial Politics of Culture

As the United States relentlessly blazed a trail through Chinese exclusion, the Wounded Knee massacre, the Spanish-American War, acquisition of island territories, World War I, and the Great Depression, the field of anthropology emerged as a relatively powerful discipline as it explained, described, and preserved “peoples” who were out of bounds, culturally distinct, vanishing, and viewed as the primitive native (Appadurai 1988:36; Briggs 2002:481). This meant, with few exceptions, the description of the customs and behavior of American Indians (Hallowell 1960:15). During the same period, the United States came to terms with waves of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and the Americas, and people were forced to grapple with Jim Crow segregation, disfranchisement, citizenship, ghettos, and violent race and labor riots. Anthropology became popular when it explained and described “races” who were competing, crowding, reproducing, and being viewed as not worthy of the same rights and privileges as those men who were all created equal. And this meant, with some exceptions, the description of the brains and bodies of black people in the United States.

From the late nineteenth century to today, race and culture have routinely served as contentious fulcrums for particular political projects that range from claims of white supremacy to claims for citizenship, sovereignty, and civil rights. And since the late nineteenth century, anthropology has been the social science that has consistently studied race and culture. Anthropology has developed a symbiotic and at times parasitic relationship with popular conceptions of race and culture. The concepts of race and culture within anthropology have influenced popular understandings of these concepts, just as popular understandings of these concepts have influenced anthropology (di Leonardo 1998).

During the late nineteenth century, ideas of blood, civilization, nation, culture, and race were often used interchangeably because “there was not a clear line between cultural and physical elements or between social and biological heredity” (Stocking 2001:8). Culture was synonymous with civilization, and groups like the Kiowa and Navajo were identified as having achieved a stage of culture on the road to civilization that began at savagery, traveled through barbarism, and finally ended at the apex of

culture: civilization. Race, language, and culture tracked together along an evolutionary road.

As recounted with almost catechistic alacrity in nearly every introduction to anthropology course, Franz Boas famously upended this presumption by demonstrating that one cannot rank-order the races because it is impossible to classify them. His most straightforward enunciation of this was his introduction to the *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, in which he demonstrated that “anatomical type, language, and culture have not necessarily the same fates; that a people may remain constant in type, but change in language; or that they remain constant in language and change in type and culture. If this is true, then it is obvious that attempts to classify mankind, based on the present distribution of type, language, and culture, must lead to different results according to the point of view taken . . . in the same way, classifications based on language and culture do not need at all to coincide with a biological classification” (Boas 1911a:11). This view of race, language, and culture gained traction inside and outside the academy. By the 1930s, it became a pillar of anthropological thought in the United States and influenced many Americans’ understanding of “culture” as a plural noun and a modality that was not simply determined by race (Visweswaran 1998a:70). The Kiowa or the Navajo, for example, were viewed as historically distinct cultures that had particular traditions and languages that should be preserved, valued, and otherwise acknowledged in the wake of rapid industrialization.

Predicated on “the rejection of the traditional nineteenth-century linkage of race and culture in a single hierarchical evolutionary sequence,” the anthropological concept of race as anatomical type largely independent of culture was, perhaps, more important than the anthropological concept of culture in the United States because it effectively complemented the powerful and seductive ideas of assimilation and racial uplift (Stocking 2001:46). On the one hand, this idea of race became a compelling argument for desegregation; on the other, it provided theoretical purchase for punitive policies to reform putative bad behavior.

If culture was not constitutive of race, the logic went, what was stopping people from acting white or getting culture, despite their color? Lucy C. Laney, an influential educator in Georgia, was fond of saying that discrimination in the Jim Crow South was bad, but she instructed people to “get culture, character, and cash, and the problem will solve itself” (Southern Workman 1899:364).

Although this concept of race served as a powerful critique of arguments for innate inferiority and superiority, the concept also enabled powerful figures to dismiss distinctive cultures and avoid addressing racism. The anthropological concept of race made it possible to promote the idea that regardless of their race, Indians, Negroes, and Orientals could and should learn to think, behave, and act like good white Protestants—white privilege would follow colored respectability, or so was the expectation.

This was the precise line of argument employed by the well-assimilated Japanese national Takao Ozawa when he filed for naturalization on October 16, 1914 (Ngai 2003:42). “That he was well qualified by character and education was conceded” by the U.S. Supreme Court, but it rejected his bid for citizenship because ethnologically he was not Caucasian and therefore not a “free white person” under immigration law [260 U.S. 189 (1922)]. The following year, Bhagat Singh Thind argued to the Court that he was “a high caste Hindu, of full Indian blood, born at Amrit Sar, Punjab, India.” Anthropologically he was considered Caucasian and therefore eligible for naturalization (Jacobson 1998:234). The Court said, however, what it really meant was that “‘free white persons,’ as used in that section [of the statute], are words of common speech, to be interpreted in accordance with the understanding of the common man, synonymous with the word ‘Caucasian’ only as that word is popularly understood” [261 U.S. 214 (1923)]. Although some privileges were afforded to those responsible individuals who acted white, actual rights afforded white people never followed even the most sincere attempts to perform respectability. In this case, the Court did not heed anthropological findings, but it did have to contend with them and weigh the intellectual merit of anthropology against the broader impact of their decision.

By midcentury, policymakers, legislators, philanthropists, and Supreme Court justices embraced the modern anthropological ideas of race and culture. Most scholars credit this paradigmatic shift in American anthropology and eventually U.S. institutions with the charismatic and indefatigable leadership of Boas and his students, who “insisted on the conceptual distinction of race, language, and culture” (Stocking 2001:23). The way Boas and his students made these distinctions was often by a process of negation or proffering of a definition through delimitation (Stocking 2001:9). “Culture was expressed through the medium of language but was



not reducible to it; more importantly, it was not race. Culture became everything race was not, and race was seen to be what culture was not” (Visweswaran 1998a:70).

Boas and his students eventually wrestled the “modern relativistic, pluralistic anthropological approach to culture” (Stocking 2001:23) from a racialized evolutionary hierarchy, but it took time. “Boas’s success in critiquing racial anthropology was the product of a complex cluster of intellectual dispositions that, taken together, laid the foundation for the Boasian tradition” (Segal and Yanagisako 2005:13). As anthropology developed, its constitutive categories of analysis—race, language, and culture—slowly emerged as distinct objects of inquiry conceptually but, somewhat artificially, sutured together as the prime subject matter of a four-field anthropology.

Thanks to the scholarship of George W. Stocking, Regna Darnell, and others, the basic assumptions of Boasian anthropology are well known (Stocking 2001:24–48; Darnell 2000). Also known is the way Boas and his students simultaneously developed the concept of culture, challenged ideas of racial inferiority, and institutionalized anthropology within institutions of higher education (Darnell 1971, 1982, 1998, 2001; Stocking 1966, 1968, 1974).

Anthropology and anthropologists have been active, not always willing, participants in the messy race and culture wars that raged in the United States throughout the twentieth century and continue today. The modern anthropological concepts of race and culture that are, rightly or wrongly, credited to Boas’s research and writing served as powerful tools to challenge white supremacy, curtail the vanishing policies imposed upon American Indians, legitimate distinctive African American beliefs and practices, and end racial segregation and disfranchisement. Although this is a powerful and important legacy of which anthropologists today might feel proud, the specific histories and the particular way in which anthropologists made these cumulative contributions were often ambivalent, usually contradictory, and never straightforward. More importantly, this legacy of American anthropology is the direct result of scholars, activists, lawyers, and government officials with little or no formal anthropological training having taken anthropology out of the academy to change the terms and conditions under which race and racism were constituted and cultures and languages were protected.

## The School of Americanist Anthropology, Not the American School of Anthropology

During the first part of the twentieth century, anthropology in the United States became a successful and powerful discipline because it explained the culture of out-of-the-way indigenous peoples, influencing law and policy from the Philippines to Puerto Rico. Anthropologists had less success describing the culture of the many in-the-way immigrant and black people. That job went to sociologists committed to the study of assimilation and race relations. One of the foundational claims of sociologists and psychologists who studied race relations was that the races were neither inherently superior nor innately inferior to each other and that any aggregate differences between the races were the result of historical and environmental factors. This was the Boasian concept of race that was formed from the tailings of the crafted concept of culture (Baker 1998; Steinberg 2007:70; Myrdal 1964:146–50).

According to early twentieth-century sociologists, the unique mental and cultural traits of Negroes and Orientals flourished only as a result of racial prejudice, which prohibited integration and assimilation. Discrimination leads to segregation, the argument went, which leads to race consciousness, which leads to the propagation and perpetuation of social practices inimical to the ideals of the nation. According to the sociologist Robert Park, “The chief obstacle to assimilation of the Negro and the Oriental are not mental but physical traits. It is not because the Negro and the Japanese are so differently constituted that they do not assimilate. If they were given an opportunity the Japanese are quite as capable as the Italians, Armenians, or the Slavs of acquiring our culture and sharing our national ideals. The trouble is not with the Japanese mind but with the Japanese skin. The Jap is not the right color” (1914:610–11).

Sociology continued to hold the line regarding the value of assimilation, and this discourse contributed to the theoretical foundation for the movement to desegregate schools, the military, and neighborhoods, while anthropology developed its line regarding the value of particular cultures. That discourse became part of the theoretical basis for the drive to create day schools on reservations, cease land allotments, and incorporate tribal governments. In both cases, it was not easy, and the movements did not

last long. Moreover, each discourse advanced constituent constructs that American Indians and African Americans continue to grapple with and negotiate today—essentialism, pathology, and authenticity.

While anthropology marshaled its nascent authority to describe the difference of exterior others, sociology marshaled its nascent authority to document the sameness of interior others. By the 1920s, both sociology and anthropology rejected notions of biological inferiority, but each embraced different ways of describing customs and behavior.

If we take Kamala Visweswaran's contentious account that "race was seen to be what culture was not" (1998a:70) as a starting point of Boasian articulations of race sundered from culture, then the ways in which late nineteenth-century anthropologists conceptualized ideas of the cultural as opposed to the strictly racial need to be scrutinized. Boas erected his powerhouse of anthropology that shaped the study of American race relations on the foundation of Americanist anthropology, or the ethnology of American Indian culture and language, which can be distinguished from the so-called American School of Anthropology, which propped up pro-slavery arguments (Fredrickson 2002:66–67). Framing twentieth-century formations of race and culture in this way has important implications in terms of identifying the role Native Americans played in the history of ideas and the construction of race. This frame also defines relationships between Native American, African American, and American studies, as well as each discipline's relationship to anthropology.

From Thomas Jefferson's and Peter S. Du Ponceau's efforts to collect American Indian vocabularies in the late eighteenth century to Charles Caldwell's and Samuel Morton's efforts to measure skulls to defend slavery in the mid-nineteenth century, anthropology in its many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century guises consistently examined African American brains and bodies and Native American customs and languages. Although there was considerable slippage and overlap, one can and perhaps should make a distinction between the American School of Anthropology and the School of Americanist Anthropology. The former was pioneered by Josiah Clark Nott, Samuel Morton, and Louis Agassiz and focused on brains and bodies to rank-order races, and the latter was pioneered by Albert Gallatin and Du Ponceau and focused on grammar and philology to categorize languages (Patterson 2001:7–23; Darnell 2008:37; Conn 2004:87). I argue that the Boasian concept of race was a product of the School of Americanist Anthropology, not of the American School of An-

thropology. More specifically, it was a product of the product of Americanist anthropology.

Matti Bunzl demonstrates the influence of German scholars such as Johann Gottfried von Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt on the early work of Boas (Bunzl 1996). Bunzl argues that Boas's critical approach to ethnology should be distinguished from that of Bronislaw Malinowski, who routinized the Self/"Other" dichotomy (Bunzl 1996; 2004). By extension, Bunzl distinguishes Boas from his contemporaries of both American schools who were obsessed with describing the "Other" and in a racialized hierarchy. Bunzl explains that "for Boas, the reason to explore cultural phenomena was not that they were 'Other' but that they were 'there'" (Bunzl 2004: 437). But who were there? For Boas, it was Indians.

The languages, customs, and folklore studied by members of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE), the American Folk-Lore Society, and Section H of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) were overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, American Indian. According to calculations made by Brad Evans, for every ten articles in the anthropological literature addressing American Indians, there was one discussing American Negroes or Africans (2005:75). Boas made choices, and occasionally he wrote about people other than American Indians, but by and large the provenance of the cultural stuff he used to differentiate race from language and culture were his studies among indigenous folks in the Americas.

The anthropological concept of race that social scientists, lawyers, and journalists used to transform American race relations developed in tandem with the anthropological concept of culture used to understand American Indian languages and customs. This claim is based on Darnell's analysis that when Boas came to the United States, he extended the Americanist tradition that was pioneered by Gallatin but institutionalized by John W. Powell at the BAE (Darnell 1998:179). Although one could argue that W. J. McGee, Daniel G. Brinton, and Aleš Hrdlička were heirs to the American School of Anthropology, Darnell suggests that Frank Hamilton Cushing, James Mooney, Francis La Flesche, and the agents of the BAE were the real innovators of Americanist anthropology that developed during the first half of the twentieth century. Darnell is both clear and convincing in stating that "although Boas rejected the bureau's party-line evolutionary interpretation, he built his own historical particularist theory directly on the philological data accumulated under Powell's auspices" (2001:11).

Most scholars would agree with Paul Rabinow's suggestion that "Boas's arguments against racial hierarchies and racial thinking have thoroughly carried the theoretical day" (Rabinow 1992:60). Yet students of the history of anthropology rarely make the necessary connections between Boas's arguments for historical particularism that influenced the Wheeler-Howard Act (1934) and his arguments against racial hierarchies that influenced *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). There is a relationship between Boas's arguments against racial hierarchies and his careful collecting and recording of Indian texts, grammars, and vocabularies. Moreover, there is a contingent relationship between the concept of culture that is pluralistic and distinctive and Americanist anthropology. Boas's critique of racialist science and the concept of culture is tethered to what William Y. Adams calls "indianology," which was the subject of much of early anthropology (1998:93).

Beginning with Lewis Henry Morgan through Powell and Frederic W. Putnam and continuing with Boas and his students, the primary focus of academic anthropological inquiry in the United States was American Indian languages, customs, and material culture (Adams 1998; Bernstein 2002; Bourguignon 1996; Browman 2002; Darnell 2001; Hallowell 1960:15; Patterson 2001; Stocking 1974; Yanagisako 2005). Erika Bourguignon has explained that from the beginnings of anthropology "until World War II and the subsequent great expansion of anthropology, most anthropologists were Americanists," and she emphasized that "the essence and primary task of American anthropology was the study of American Indians" (1996:7).

There is little argument with the fact that academic anthropology did not create this field of significance but instead traded on and legitimated a peculiar idea that describing, analyzing, and recording American Indian languages and customs was necessary and needed for the young nation to forge a distinctive American identity (Adams 1998:193; Conn 2004:91; Deloria 1998:94; Kasson 2000:218; Patterson 2001:32; Trouillot 2003:27; Yanagisako 2005:82). At the same time, the federal government needed to establish sovereignty over its land and was compelled to civilize the Indians. Both processes quickened a wicked and seemingly contradictory cycle of knowledge production and cultural destruction.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot forcefully enunciates, "The 'scientific' study of the Savage *qua* Savage became the privileged field of academic anthropology" (2003:18). As "anthropology came to fill the 'Savage' slot" (2003:19),

it also came to fill the “salvage slot,” and it is important to keep the latter in mind when discussing the former (2003:19). Anthropologists enthusiastically contributed to the knowing of American Indians that led to Janus-faced notions of utopia (Trouillot 2003), processed the raw material that enabled settlers to lay a legitimate claim to the land (Yanagisako 2005), and was party to the denial of American Indian coevalness (Fabian 1983). However, most anthropologists were sincerely motivated by the more mundane and scientific imperative to record and analyze disappearing languages and customs in the wake of the calamitous and destructive Civil and Indian wars.

Before the Great Depression, anthropologists were perhaps overly concerned with American Indian culture, while not being much concerned with African American culture (Bernstein 2002:554). Many African American intellectuals like Carter G. Woodson, Alain Locke, and James Weldon Johnson, however, were nevertheless interested in using anthropology to describe what they understood as a rich, distinctive culture that was historical and particular. At the same time, American Indian intellectuals like Zikala-Ša, Charles Eastman, and Simon Pokagon resisted and distrusted the often well-intentioned anthropologists. There were, of course, prominent American Indian intellectuals who supported anthropology, and several, like Arthur Parker, Ella Deloria, and La Flesche, became influential anthropologists. Likewise, there were many black social scientists who completely rejected anthropological concepts of culture. Nevertheless, an interesting pattern emerged from the late 1890s through the 1920s: African American intellectuals consistently appropriated anthropology to authenticate their culture, while Native American intellectuals consistently rejected anthropology to protect their culture.

## Market Commodities and Museum Pieces

The various and conflicting roles that anthropology and specific ethnologists played as American Indian policies and attitudes changed over time were as varied as they were ambivalent, but what emerged was a unique and informative racial politics of culture that often pitted progressive white anthropologists and conservative Indian traditionalists against progressive Indian activists and conservative Christian reformers. A tug-of-war ensued over the meaning, value, and role indigenous cultures

could and should have in the future of Native North America. Kinship and community, ritual and religion became central foci of contestation within heated debates over education, representation, land, and religious freedom. Well-meaning anthropologists were committed to “salvaging” cultures that were putatively disappearing by curating objects, narrating practices, and recording languages. These anthropologists were often allied with Native Americans committed to conserving and celebrating indigenous practices that resisted the assimilation project of the government and the civilizing mission of the reformers.

The so-called progressive Native North Americans were a diverse group of intellectuals whose work, faith, and zeal mirrored that of their contemporary and peer Booker T. Washington. They shared a belief in mutual progress, civilization, and an unwavering expectation that Indians were capable, even more capable than Negroes and east European immigrants, of assimilating American culture and partaking in all of the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenry. In 1911, six prominent progressives founded the Society of American Indians (SAI), a pan-Indian racial uplift group that resembled in many ways the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), organized two years earlier. Highly critical of the government’s Office of Indian Affairs, the SAI fought for legal and political representation but set a course different from that of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian and the Philadelphia-based Indian Rights Association. Unlike these white Christian reform groups, the SAI used Indian blood to police the boundaries of membership. From the beginning, the organizers were clear that Indians would run this organization (Maddox 2005:11). Drawing on older traditions of pan-Indian and intertribal cooperation, these Indian activists waged an explicit campaign against racism and oppression, often evoking Tecumseh, the early nineteenth-century Shawnee chief who tried to unite northern and southern nations in a military alliance to prevent further Westward expansion (Hertzberg 1971:36–37; Porter 2001:92). While there was consensus that the SAI should promote self-help by cultivating race consciousness, intertribal cooperation, and pride in Indian heritage, there was not a consensus that Indians should take pride in their culture, which was often viewed as “a real hindrance and obstacle in the way of civilization” (Eastman 1896:93).

In the broadest terms, the progressives shared with the supposedly conservative educators and reformers a faith in the benevolent ideals of

progress embedded in social Darwinism and the civilizing mission. These Christian reformers were far from conservative. Committed to assimilation policies, this group of progressive reformers initially crusaded for the abolition of slavery. Following the Civil War, they extended their efforts to promote education for both Indians and Negroes, women's suffrage, settlement houses, and temperance (Hoxie 1984:ix; Utley 1964:154).

It is tempting to delineate the agendas of the SAI and anthropologists by suggesting that the anthropologists were contributing to a progressive yet nostalgic antimodernism by scientifically authenticating Indian behavior in an effort "to restore infinite meaning to an increasingly finite world" (Lears 1981:58), whereas the members of the SAI were simply chasing the allure and spoils of a modernism that too often used a bareback-riding brave as the trope with which to measure the advance of human progress. One can easily understand how members of the SAI combated stereotypes and oppression by employing a kind of strategic assimilation in which individuals sought to gain respect by embracing and performing respectability. However, these adjectives—modern and antimodern, conservative and progressive—simply fail upon stricter scrutiny, and the debates over preservation and assimilation should not be reduced to "the crude calculus of interest and intention" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:7).

The racial politics of culture during the decades leading up to the New Deal were complicated and belie any "crude calculus," but anthropology played an important political role in authenticating the genuine culture many people, white and Indian, desired to perform, protect, and police (Sapir 1924:409; Deloria 1998:94). Anthropologists helped to engineer a timeless aboriginal Indian culture by subjecting Native Americans to what Curtis Hinsley calls "the museum process," which "constructed a meaning of Indian demise within the teleology of manifest destiny; it indirectly addressed the insistent doubts of Gilded Age Americans over the import of industrial capitalism; and it did so by encasing, in time and space, the American Indian" (1989:170). Hinsley argues that dehistoricization was the essence of the process, but entertainment and theater were key elements that cultivated and commodified desire, transforming "autonomous historical agents to market commodities and museum pieces." World's Fairs, Wild West shows, artifact and curio shops, tourist attractions, anthropology museums and publications, Indian folklore, novels, and ritual as well as the many youth camps where boys and girls played



Indian were all “public spaces for safe consumption of a newly dehistoricized Indian” (Hinsley 1989:170). In 1907 Boas suggested even that “the value of the museum as a resort for popular entertainment must not be underrated. . . . If a museum is to serve this end, it must, first of all, be entertaining” (1907:621–22).

The consumption of a pacified and out-of-the-way Indian in Wild West shows, World’s Fairs, and museums needs to be juxtaposed with the consumption of a dangerous and in-the-way Negro in blackface minstrelsy, professionally promoted lynchings, and buffoon-saturated advertising. World’s Fair organizers routinely turned down requests by African Americans to erect Negro exhibits, and philanthropists simply rejected requests to erect a museum to showcase African and African American achievements. While many performers dressed up to offer allegedly authentic renditions of somber Indians, others blackened up to present exaggerated renditions of knee-slapping Negroes. Furthermore, there was simply no African American analog to the Camp Fire Girls and Indian Guides, organizations of young middle-class whites whose activities included dressing up to play Sambo.<sup>1</sup>

Although Mooney, Powell, and even Boas never spoke in terms of authentic and inauthentic, they routinely evaluated practices, languages, and even phenotypes as being more or less conservative, aboriginal, or real. Alexander Chamberlain suggested even that most primitives suffered “insuperable neophobia,” which served as something like a prophylactic to prevent the decay of culture (1903:337). Each man attempted through anthropological science to demarcate and determine what and who was really Indian and what and who was not; whose culture was worthy of study; and whose culture was lost and too far beyond the pale to be worth investigation.

### III Effects of Mind Poison

A turning point in this overall shift from assimilation to conservation was the failure of the Hayden Bill to become law [H.R. 2614 (1918)]. This legislation was tied to the temperance movement, and it would have made the use of peyote a federal offense. The U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs debated this bill in the so-called peyote hearings held in the winter of 1918, at the zenith of

the wider temperance movement (Hertzberg 1971:275). Just as these hearings commenced, individual states began to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited the sale, manufacture, or transportation of alcohol.

The hearings were one of the more dramatic moments when anthropology's authority to authenticate the Indian was seriously challenged by indigenous intellectuals and Christian reformers, but anthropological authority held fast to win the day. By briefly reviewing the debate, I hope to illustrate what I mean by anthropology's role in helping to shape the racial politics of culture, which is a key theme throughout this book and is nicely telescoped by the hearings' format. Although anthropologists helped to constitute a theory of culture that underwrote these dramatic shifts in federal Indian policy and beyond, they often did it by marshaling scientific authority to authenticate particular Indian practices as genuine, while explicitly and implicitly designating those practices they did not certify as fraudulent, broken, or simply not authentic.

American Indian intellectuals, several of whom were anthropologists, both challenged and contributed to this anthropological project that tenaciously debunked ideas of Indian racial and cultural inferiority by stressing how communal Indian cultures were unique and distinctive (cf. Hoxie 1984:142). Moments like the peyote hearings exemplify how anthropologists publicly described what culture is and privately delimited what race was not.

Freedom, justice, liberty, and equality—the so-called virtues of democracy—are among the powerful tools used by scholars, activists, lawyers, and politicians to make the United States a more perfect union. Unlike equality and justice, religious freedom is such an unambiguous and fundamental value held by so many Americans that it has rarely been evoked in struggles for equality. Even though bitter anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic movements have plagued the United States, the federal government never considered abrogating the First Amendment for Catholics and Jews—Indians, however, were different. The First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” but in 1883 Congress passed the Indian Religious Crimes Code, which virtually outlawed all dances, ceremonies, and religious rites. Part of the government's efforts to assimilate the Indian, the code called for the imprisonment of practitioners and instructed bureau agents to focus their efforts on the “medicine men” (Irwin

1997:35). Combined with the fact that the peyote cactus can induce hallucinations or visions, the so-called peyote cult was one religious practice that generated a high level of controversy, persecution, and suspicion.

The peyote hearings of 1918 are a fecund site to analyze the tug-of-war over Indian culture and policy. First, the most important players involved in these issues squared off in one place. Zitkala-Ša, Charles Eastman, Francis La Flesche, James Mooney, and Richard Pratt all testified, and each person articulated his or her views by crafting responses to questions posed by members of the congressional committee while trying to debunk the testimony of the other witnesses.

The hearings were also an important pivotal point in the overall shift from assimilation to conservation, and many of the Indian progressives were split over the issue, revealing important fault lines and competing visions of the future (Swan 1999:6). Finally, the requisite mudslinging and name-calling revealed the role ethnology played in this high-stakes game of ethnographic authentication.

James Mooney (1861–1921), for example, was a white ethnologist from the Smithsonian Institution who was deeply committed to the rights and well-being of the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache groups he studied. He argued at the hearings that “the use of this plant is not an ordinary habit, but . . . is confined almost entirely and strictly to the religious ceremony, excepting that it is frequently employed also for medicinal purposes” (Peyote Hearings 1918:69 [hereafter PH]).<sup>2</sup> In order to make this argument, Mooney decided he must first challenge the authority of Zitkala-Ša (1876–1938), a Yankton Lakota and secretary-treasurer of the SAI who was supported by powerful women in the temperance movement. She provided compelling testimony at the hearings against any use of peyote. Mooney, who supported the ceremonial and medicinal uses of peyote, went on the offensive, attacking her credibility by challenging her authenticity.

Zitkala-Ša launched a media campaign to coincide with the hearings, and it worked. The *Washington Times* ran a story that basically amounted to an interview of Zitkala-Ša (also known as Gertrude Bonnin) detailing the ill “effects of mind poison” (February 7, 1918:1). To accompany the story, the paper published an image of Zitkala-Ša in its front-page coverage of the hearing. Holding up a copy of the paper, Mooney explained to the members of Congress that the woman in the photograph “claims to be a Sioux woman,” but she is wearing “a woman’s dress from a southern

tribe, as shown by the long fringes; the belt is a Navajo man's belt; the fan is a peyote man's fan carried only by men usually in the peyote ceremony" (PH 1918:63). Ostensibly, her gender bending and mixing of specific tribal elements on her body impeached her credibility and thus her claim to speak in the best interest of her people. As Mooney reminded the members of Congress, "An Indian delegate from a sectarian body or alleged uplift organization is not a delegate for his tribe" (PH 1918:149). Mooney implied that only the scientific eye of a seasoned ethnologist could identify these transgressions, which heightened his authority while diminishing hers.

The august General Richard H. Pratt could not let Mooney get away with promoting "these nightly orgies that have been described so graphically by the Bureau of Ethnology itself" (PH 1918:144). He challenged the scientific authority of ethnographic inquiry and implied that it was not the Indians but white anthropologists who were responsible for the growing use of peyote. In a heated exchange between Pratt and Mooney, Pratt addressed Mooney directly: "You ethnologists egg on, frequent, illustrate, and exaggerate at the public expense, and so give the Indian race and their civilization a black eye in the public esteem" (PH 1918:147).

Zitkala-Ša did not address Pratt or Mooney directly but chose to appeal to the conscience of the committee members. Calling peyote the "twin brother of alcohol, and first cousin to habit forming drugs," she pleaded, "Mr. Chairman, were the life of your loved one threatened by a pernicious drug, would you care a straw what the ethnologists had written about the drug; how many years they had studied the drug? No; because the civilized man has studied for centuries other habit-forming drugs; but that study does not warrant anyone giving it to another in the name of religion today" (PH 1918:164,165).

Charles Eastman, the esteemed Indian physician and Dartmouth graduate, took a different approach: He explained that the use of peyote "is not an Indian idea nor is it an Indian practice. It is more like what happened a few years ago during the ghost-dance craze, which, as we all know, was gotten up by irresponsible, reckless, and unprincipled people" (PH 1918:139). Eastman believed the use of peyote should be banned because it was not an Indian practice, but La Flesche reversed this argument to support its use as a sacrament. La Flesche was Omaha and an anthropologist who was elected in 1912 as vice president of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) (Mark 1982; Hoxie 2001:180). At the time of the

peyote hearings, La Flesche was a member of the SAI and disagreed with his SAI colleagues Eastman and Zitkala-Ša on this issue. According to La Flesche, the use of peyote was part of a new, accommodating religion that helped Indians to avoid liquor and uplift the race. La Flesche argued, “The Indians who have taken the new religion strive to live upright, moral lives” (PH 1918:114).

At first blush, the contested but sincere beliefs for and against the use of peyote may seem like a dizzying array of contradictory statements and rhetorical jockeying. Upon closer inspection, one can identify the logic that bolsters each participant’s political position. All the participants in these hearings had their own histories and political commitments forged in response to the assimilation policies promulgated by state and federal governments. The peyote hearings were but one example of many culture wars fought over well-meaning enterprises that too often turned on the lose-lose goal of either preserving or assimilating American Indian cultural practices. Mooney’s hard line regarding who and what was genuine and what was authentic was typical of Americanist anthropology. It was also convincing. The Hayden Bill died in committee, and later that year Mooney helped to charter the Native American Church to strengthen legal protections for those who followed the peyote way (Willard 1991:35).<sup>3</sup>

In the wake of the hearings, some American Indians who were skeptical of assimilation began to see anthropology and anthropologists as allies in their fight to protect religious freedoms and resist the civilizing mission. At the same time, popular magazines and travel publications began in earnest to highlight sensitive yet romantic portrayals of Indian life—not as occupying the bottom rung of a ladder leading to civilization, but on Indians’ own terms (Dilworth 1996; Jacobs 1999).

The spectacle of genuine and authentic culture that had not completely vanished was integral to the professionalization and popularization of the discipline during an era of progressive reform. Anthropology helped to shape an understanding of culture often underpinning rather unstable politics of race and culture that too often masked consistent and persistent racism and genocide (Churchill 1997). Ideas about culture also served as a central concept in attempts to empower Native Americans during the New Deal and African Americans during the New Negro movement; as well, the same concepts reappeared as critical elements of the Red and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Relationships between American Indian communities and anthropologists have often been tinged with ambivalence and derision (Deloria 1969:78–100). Despite, or, I suppose, in spite of, the less-than-amicable relationships, Americanists like Mooney and Boas consistently focused on customs, languages, and religions of American Indians that were very different from their own and explained them as legitimate practices that could be understood in terms of history and culture. They did not explicitly link these differences to ideas of race or to ideas of backwardness, inferiority, and illegitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

### Does the Negro Have Culture?

One could see the appeal of this approach to Negroes, who were constantly barraged by experts like Nathan Southgate Shaler of Harvard University, who explained, in typical fashion, that “the Negro is not as yet intellectually so far up the scale of development as he appears to be; in him the great virtues of the superior race, though implanted, have not yet taken firm root, and are in need of constant tillage, lest the old savage weeds overcome the tender shoots of the new and unnatural culture” (1890:42). And while the inferiority of Negroes’ race and culture was a constant refrain, the superiority of whites served to reinforce that hierarchy. For example, Frederick Hoffman, the esteemed actuary of Prudential Life Insurance, wrote in his influential article “Race, Traits, and Tendencies of the American Negro” that “it is not in the conditions of life, but in race and heredity that we find the explanation of the fact to be observed in all parts of the globe, in all times and among all peoples, namely, the superiority of one race over another, and of the Aryan race over all” (1896:312).

There has been a strong and long intellectual tradition among both American Indian and African American scholars of resisting and challenging racist and derogatory discourse and policies (Warrior 1995:1–44). These intellectual traditions of critique, vindication, and sovereignty were never homogeneous and often conflicted, as evidenced by the peyote hearings. Among African American communities, battle lines were often drawn identical to those within American Indian communities. Anthropologists were also called to assist, but it was difficult to outflank

sociologists, who had long been busy describing African American customs, behaviors, and values in terms of race relations and racial uplift. As a result of occupying the so-called savage slot, anthropologists could exert scientific authority and push back organizations like the SAI and convince Congress, for example, not to prohibit the use of peyote and to pass the Indian Reorganization Act. Anthropologists, however, could not compete on the terrain of culture when it came to black people.

Early in the twentieth century, sociologists used anthropology to assert that Negroes were not biologically inferior, yet many sociologists employed Park's race relations cycle, which was explicitly teleological—moving from conflict to cooperation to accommodation and to its final destination, assimilation. It was the ultimate vanishing policy, under which any distinctive and particular custom or value expressed by an immigrant could and should be forever eclipsed by allegedly conventional habits and values (Baker 1998:168–77; Degler 1991:7; Lyman 1968:17).

Sociologists had the support of organizations like the National Urban League and the Rockefeller Foundation, which blindly promoted assimilation and racial uplift. Nevertheless, any practices or customs Negroes performed that differed from some mainstream norm were all too often explained in terms of deviance or pathology or simply as obstacles in the way of complete assimilation. Sociologists like Park, E. Franklin Frazier, and Guy B. Johnson leveraged the momentum of the progressive era, the mission of black colleges, and the sentiments of much of the Negro elite to convince the nation of the potency of racial uplift and the healing power of assimilation. Racial uplift and assimilation were not much more than euphemisms for evolution and civilization, minus the biological component. More importantly, this was assimilation without integration, racial uplift without equal rights. Although the approach was anti-African and elitist, it was radical, counterhegemonic, and pro-black because it was premised on the fact that racism, slavery, and poverty crippled the lives of black people.<sup>5</sup>

Viewed from the perspective of progressive-era sociology, anthropologists salvaged not only Indian relics, languages, and traditions, but also the very idea of culture from reformers like the founders of the SAI and the Lake Mohonk Friends of the Indian, who would have liked to see it all melt in the pot (Trachtenberg 2004:41). These Indian reformers were cut from the same cloth as the members of the Women's Club movement, Temperance Union, settlement house movement, and the Tuske-

gee machine—all of whom were joined in a global struggle to discipline, clean, educate, and civilize all of the dusky, swarthy people throughout growing empires (Anderson 2006). Each organization was committed to shaping modern reform by embracing the moral values of thrift, individualism, personal hygiene, hard work, and the Christian family. Americanist anthropology gained momentum during the progressive era too, but Americanist anthropology was articulated in a different register and often viewed as going hand in hand with protecting wilderness, creating national parks, preserving archaeological remains, and managing fish and wildlife. For example, the AAA linked the Parks Service with the BIA when it applauded the federal government's advancement of anthropology. The AAA reported in 1906 that:

It is encouraging to note on the part of the National Government a better appreciation than ever before of the needs of anthropology. Among other evidences of this spirit is the recent enactment by Congress of the law . . . for the preservation of antiquities on public domain. . . . A step in a similar direction is the provision made by Congress at its last session for the establishment of the Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, which contains some of the most important cliff-dwellings in the United States. . . .

For many years the Office of Indian Affairs maintained a policy of trying to eliminate everything aboriginal from the American Indian by substituting there for something that originated with the white man, whether or not it was adapted to the Indian's needs. But the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Honorable Francis F. Leupp, who has long been an earnest student of the Indian problem, finds good in the aborigines that his predecessors seem to have overlooked, and is securing the means for encouraging some of the native industries. (*American Anthropologists* 1906:444)

By the early 1920s, anthropologists unequivocally asserted that American Indian groups maintained distinctive and particular cultures that should not be subjected to vanishing policies or federally sponsored assimilation schemes. Anthropologists were equivocal, however, when it came to the culture of American Negroes. For example, Boas asserted in 1911 that “the North American negroes, [were] a people by descent largely African; in culture and language, however, essentially European. While it is true that certain survivals of African culture and language are found among our American negroes, their culture is essentially that of the uneducated classes of people among whom they live, and their language is on the



whole identical with that of their neighbors" (1911a:8). As late as 1925, Melville Herskovits offered his ethnological analysis of Harlem and concluded that it "was a community just like any other American community. The same pattern, only a different shade! . . . May it not then be true that the Negro has become acculturated to the prevailing white culture and has developed the patterns of culture typical of American life?" (1999 [1925]:353–54). In these instances, both Boas and Herskovits were trying to argue that blacks were not unlike whites and therefore should not be subjected to discrimination. Boas supported people like Woodson, who used the science of anthropology to authenticate Negroes' African heritage to empower black people to appreciate their heritage. Boas, however, was "absolutely opposed to all kinds of attempts to foster racial solidarity."<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, he favored cultural assimilation as an effective strategy to ameliorate the Negro problem (1905:87). Boas went beyond supporting a strategy of assimilation to advocate phenotypic miscegenation, explaining that "the negro problem will not disappear in America until the negro blood has been so much diluted that it will no longer be recognized just as anti-Semitism will not disappear until the vestige of the Jew as a Jew has disappeared" (1921:395).

But the question remained: Did the Negro have culture? And if Negroes did, was it worth salvaging, protecting, or cultivating? The answer to the question was not empirical but political. Whether one labels it the Herskovits/Frazier debate or the Boas/Parks division, two different discourses animated competing racial politics of culture, and both are woven into the genealogy and history of race in America. One pivoted on the value of cultural heritage, the other on racial uplift.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Boas and his students developed research that focused on the environment to explain the flexibility and essential equality of racial groups and the relativity of bounded traditional cultures. Although sporadically, they effectively used this understanding of race to help advance the civil and political rights of African Americans and, to a lesser extent, American Indians (Boas 1938 [1911a]; Benedict and Weltfish 1943; Powdermaker 1993 [1939]; Montagu 1952 [1942], 1951; Klineberg 1931; Redfield 1950:192–205). As I have argued previously, what eventually emerged in anthropology was a tightly knit discourse that aligned theories of racial equality with notions of historically specific cultural relativity. By solidifying the academic consensus that racial inequality was not based on biological inferiority, scholars and

activists interested in promoting racial uplift, assimilation, and integration were able to unravel the bundle and use the Boasian concept of race as an unimportant biological type exclusively, discarding the other part about the relativity or value of cultures (Baker 1998:177). For people promoting African American assimilation, this approach proved effective. For people promoting American Indian assimilation, this approach failed, in part because anthropologists were so effective at documenting cultures of American Indians and less effective at documenting cultures of African Americans. Yet for American Indians this effectiveness had a downside too because anthropologists collectively failed to interrogate the tumultuous history of contact. Oftentimes anthropologists perpetuated the idea that American Indians were trapped in time because they were trapped on reservations. The sardonic upside, however, was that Indians transmitted a pure, authentic, and healthy culture to their children; the tragic downside for Negroes was that they inherited a dangerous, counterfeit, and pathological culture from their parents.

Zora Neale Hurston perhaps best exemplified the contrasting ways in which many anthropologists viewed the difference between Indian and Negro culture when she wrote to Boas in 1927 that “the Negro is not living his lore to the extent of the Indian. He is not on a reservation being kept pure. His negroness is being rubbed off by close contact with white culture” (Kaplan 2002:97).

I argue that anthropologists’ failure to view Negro culture as authentic as Indian culture helped to shape the racial politics of two dominant views of culture that emerged in the United States between the two world wars—one outlined by Boas at Columbia University, the other by Park at the University of Chicago. Although scholars articulated elements of these two visions of culture in analyzing immigrants, American Indians, and people in the insular protectorates, the sharpest distinctions between culture and behavior were drawn in analyzing African Americans.

Boas eventually came to view African American culture in terms of that “peculiar amalgamation of African and European tradition which is so important for understanding historically the character of American Negro life, with its strong African background in the West Indies, the importance of which diminishes with increasing distance from the south” (Boas 1978 [1935]:x). Park, on the other hand, maintained that “the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult

to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa" (1919:16). Stated differently, Park believed that those Negroes who could and would assimilate had a legitimate claim to American culture, but those who suffered the full brunt of discrimination and structural inequality were simply mired in bad behavior and shackled by the legacy of slavery.

During the New Negro movement, intellectuals such as Herskovits, Arthur H. Fauset, Hurston, Arthur Schomburg, Woodson, and W. E. B. Du Bois often used Boas's work to authenticate the distinctive culture of the Negro (Gershenhorn 2004). Other scholars, such as Frazier, Charles Johnson, Ralph Bunche, and Guy B. Johnson, accepted the Boasian notion of racial equality but discarded the emphasis on cultural history. These scholars focused on class and extended the sociological view of Negro behavior advanced by Park (J. Holloway 2002).

The Boas-influenced heritage project privileged history, diffusion, and African cultural continuities, which, they argued, helped to shape African American culture. This approach was influential among many intellectuals of the New Negro movement and the Harlem Renaissance who liked to explain difference in terms of culture, not race (Lamothe 2008). Often discounting issues of class, these intellectuals used the idea of an African homeland to craft a complicated cultural identity, as opposed to claiming a simple racial identity. Too often, however, this approach reproduced naive ideas of alterity and simply produced another Other. Folklore, musicology, cultural history, and art history were approaches these scholars deployed in a collective effort to vindicate and validate the past as well as the present. For example, Schomburg argued, "The Negro has been a man without a history because he has been considered a man without a worthy culture. But a new notion of cultural attainment and potentialities of the African stocks has recently come about, partly through the corrective influence of the more scientific study of African institutions and early cultural history" (1968 [1925]:237). Scholars influenced by Park's approach focused on eliminating substandard housing, poverty, and racial segregation. These social scientists maintained that so many individual Negroes have been uplifted so far that they have collectively progressed far enough—especially among the educated elite—to take their rightful place among the higher civilizations of "mankind." Yet members committed to this uplift project were forced to explain why so many blacks could not or would not conform to proper standards of behavior, and they basically

argued that the history of slavery, racism, disfranchisement, and segregation was simply an insurmountable obstacle that other immigrants did not face (Williams 1989:113–48).

One of the most influential proponents of uplift was Frazier. He explained the “simple Negro folk culture” as an “incomplete assimilation of western culture by the Negro masses,” arguing that “generally when two different cultures come into contact each modifies the other. But in the case of the Negro in America it meant the total destruction of the African social heritage. Therefore in the case of the family group the Negro has not introduced new patterns of behavior, but has failed to conform to patterns about him. The degree of conformity is determined by educational and economic factors as well as by social isolation” (1927:166). Frazier also understood that ideas of culture were always already tied to racial difference and was critical of the Boasian approach because “Negro crime, for example, could be explained away as an ‘Africanism’ rather than as due to inadequate police and court protection” (Myrdal 1964 [1944]:1242).

These social scientists usually pointed to statistics that compared Negroes’ deviations to a white standard, which underscored the high number of female-headed households and fictive kin relations, and these so-called deviant practices were conflated with high rates of crime, disease, and poverty. Together, they became indelible signs of deviant behavior or a pathological culture. Too often, the causal arrow pointed to the black mother or the matriarch as the catalyst for the calamitous experiences in black communities (Frazier 1939:89). Even at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, the heritage project was simply dwarfed by the uplift project. Even Du Bois’s—what I would term—ethical humanity project could not compete with the powerful narrative of individual uplift and collective blame. Paralleling the lose-lose outcome of either assimilation or preservation among American Indians, Stephanie Y. Evans explains, the black “middle class was ultimately caught between the rock of primitivism and the hard place of bourgeois aspirations” (2007:65).

Perhaps the high-water mark of the racial uplift project’s narrative was its inclusion in *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action* (1965), an influential report written by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was serving as the assistant secretary of labor under President Lyndon B. Johnson. Moynihan argued that “at the center of the tangle of pathology is the weakness of the family structure . . . it will be found to be the principal source of most of the aberrant, inadequate, or antisocial behavior that did not

establish, but now serves to perpetuate the cycle of poverty and deprivation" (1965). At the heart of the problem, according to Moynihan, was a pattern of kinship that empowered women to head households, a pattern that Moynihan believed was inimical to gender norms and American values and destructive of black manhood. Both sexist and racist, the well-meaning and putatively liberal Moynihan used his report to help wage the war on poverty and shape federal welfare programs. It was a hegemonic paradigm, yet it was consistently challenged, for example, during the New Negro movement of the 1920s and the Black Power movements in the 1960s. It was not seriously challenged, however, in the public's imagination or in federal policies until the women's and multicultural movements of the seventies and eighties.

Versions of these two projects (uplift and heritage) continue today. During 2007, Bill Cosby, for example, was on a media blitz blaming the victim and promoting his book while recycling Frazier's dire mantra that the problems black people face today stem from the fact that many women are forced to head households. The crux of Cosby's latter-day uplift message can be reduced to the fact that "a mother can usually teach a daughter how to be a woman, but as much as mothers love their sons, they have difficulty showing a son how to be a man. A successful man can channel his natural aggression. Without that discipline, these sons often get in trouble at school because many teachers find it difficult to manage their 'acting out behavior'" (Cosby and Poussaint 2007:4).

As for the heritage project, Rick Kittles has almost single-handedly brought to life the Afro-centric idea with his company African Ancestry, which markets itself with a catchy and deceptively simple slogan, "Trace your DNA. Find your Roots." The company really took off after Henry Louis "Skip" Gates Jr. hosted a PBS documentary in which he used Kittles's services to help celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Chris Rock, Whoopi Goldberg, and T. D. Jakes map their DNA to identify the ethnic group in Africa for which they could claim ancestry. In its confidence that with "one simple test" you too can "determine your family's country of origin," Kittles's postmodern and high-tech approach to the heritage project, ironically, takes one back to the nineteenth century, when biology and culture were not yet sundered. For seven hundred dollars you can use your biology to identify your culture.

The tension between uplift and heritage has been a staple within African American and Native American communities for generations, and

it serves as a key theme throughout this book on the racial politics of culture. In recent decades, anthropologists have scrutinized the concept of culture; at the same time, however, other disciplines, institutions, foundations, industries, media conglomerates, and social groups have institutionalized what can rightly be seen as a skewed but nevertheless anthropologically inflected idea of culture (Fabian 1983; Clifford 1988; Abu-Lughod 1991; Trouillot 1991; Visweswaran 1998; Briggs 2002; Evans 2005; Williams 2006). For example, people routinely speak of distinctive corporate or campus cultures, while talk radio pundits speak glibly about the culture inside the Beltway—as if members of Congress are the only people living in Washington, D.C. With the advent of the cochlear implant, some activists in deaf communities have decried the end of deaf culture, prompting the National Association of the Deaf to issue a statement recommending that parents of implanted children “receive education in deaf studies, including deaf heritage, [and] history of deafness and deaf people” (National Association of the Deaf 2000).

For better or worse, the concept of culture as most folks in the United States understand it is tethered to what Charles Briggs described as an epistemological land-grab during a period of history when the discursive terrain of the behavioral sciences was literally up for grabs (2002:481). However, despite the way anthropological analytics have been appropriated within popular parlance, anthropologists are not alone. Social psychologists have grappled with the way people use or misuse the term “identity”; sociologists bemoan the fact that the notion of deviance has been sorely overused; economists no longer hold sway over the compound term “cost-benefit”; and historians have always been leery of the way people throw around the word “history.”

I understand the critique about bounded and essentialist ideas of culture, and I am often persuaded by the analysis. Moreover, I understand all too well the downside of essentialism as well as the danger of viewing culture as stuck and timeless, and I personally understand how a static notion of culture can bleed into ideas of authenticity and give life to a ridiculous line of inquiry that turns on a single question: Is Barack Obama black enough? It is this skewed appropriation of anthropologically inflected ideas of culture that sanctions and authorizes the so-called “Soul Patrol,” the self-proclaimed culture cops who demarcate rather narrow boundaries of blackness. Even though this criticism of the culture concept is seductive, I still have to agree with that oft-cited line James Clifford

penned some twenty years ago: "Culture is a deeply compromised idea I cannot yet do without" (1988:10).

Throughout U.S. history, anthropologically informed concepts of culture have been used to advance civil rights and achieve justice, but they have also been employed to defend segregation and maintain oppression. Many times it is difficult to sort out the intent and intentions from the truth or consequences.

Very little has been written documenting *how* anthropological concepts have been used in the service of political projects (cf. di Leonardo 1998). One reason I have chosen to write about this perspective of the history of anthropology is to address the paucity. I focus specifically on *how* and *why* anthropological concepts, particularly race and culture, have been lovingly adopted by some and disgracefully rejected by others; in each case it is often in the service of a specific political agenda.

### Structure of the Book

The format of this book is influenced by George W. Stocking Jr., who has provided a generation of anthropologists with the big picture by his "ability to create 'vignettes' as opposed to painting the 'big picture'" (Stocking 2001:261). Stocking writes discrete yet thematically consistent and connected essays and weaves them into brilliant books. With regard to the vignette as method, he has been largely responsible for "raising it to the level of historiographic principle" (Stocking 2001:261). I too have found writing discrete vignettes that are connected by an overarching theme a powerful method that allows me to dive deep into a story while covering quite a bit of ground in one book. The structure of this book is pretty simple.

The first two chapters are on anthropology and the racial politics of culture, and the last two are on anthropology and the cultural politics of race. The chapters on culture compare and contrast how anthropology was used to promote racial uplift among African Americans and to contest it among American Indians. Chapter 1 looks at the Hampton Folk-Lore Society and its relationship to early anthropology, and chapter 2 looks at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the way in which American Indian groups resisted the anthropological exhibits. In both cases,

white reformers played a critical role in shaping the terms and conditions of those relationships.

The chapters on race compare and contrast anthropology first as a booster of white supremacy and then as a detractor. Chapter 3 examines D. G. Brinton, who moved from studying the linguistics and philology of American Indians to examining the brains and bodies of American Negroes and as a result became an influential academic, in part because he became a reliable narrator for the story of white supremacy. Finally, I explore Boas's so-called conspiracy to destroy the white race, which was galvanized in the wake of the crisis in Little Rock in the fall of 1957.

I did not necessarily try to identify representative cases, but I hope I identified illustrative cases that highlight not only the limits and contradictions, but also the possibilities and potential that anthropology as a practice, discourse, theory, and discipline can represent in the complex world where culture, race, and justice matter in people's everyday lives.



