

CONCEPTS IN THE STUDY OF MATERIAL ASPECTS  
OF AMERICAN FOLK CULTURE

Simon J. Bronner

In recent years a frequent complaint voiced about studies of material aspects of American folk culture concerned an alleged lack of a theoretical basis.<sup>1</sup> This notion, however, has been often perpetuated by folklorists whose principal domain is oral tradition, for they still grossly underestimate the value of artifactual research to folk studies. This essay offers an overview of the field of material research in order to reveal a significant body of theories, methods, and concepts. An understanding of concepts--those fundamental ideas that represent the purposes and methods of study--particular to material research is essential to further existing scholarship in the object-oriented study of folklife, and to place that study in the perspective of folkloristics.

The terms used in my title are selected deliberately because they represent the major themes in the conceptualization of artifactual research. "Material" describes objects or groups of objects, whether natural or created, as the result of humans' manipulation of their environment. Researchers' isolation of such objects reveals knowledge about their makers, and their historical, social, geographical, and behavioral contexts. Indeed, analysts first recognized objects as a supplement to traditional historic written and oral data. The umbrella term, "material," has been usually defined by the genres that compose it, such as architecture, art, crafts, cookery, clothing, and furniture. In my view, the generic

approach is insufficient for a definition because it obscures the primary reason for study, namely the articulation of processes that generate the categories used by researchers, which often include verbal, social, and contextual elements. Therefore, "material" properly refers to individuals' manipulation of their physical surroundings, from specific objects to broad landscapes, in order to meaningfully incorporate them into their psychological and social worlds.

"Folk" as used by western European specialists is often equated with peasants or preindustrial, agricultural, preliterate, homogeneous groups.<sup>2</sup> American folklorists have argued that folk is not restricted to a particular stratum of society, but rather represents traditional processes--transmission of knowledge by oral or mimetic means through time and space.<sup>3</sup> A few American studies of traditional artifacts, for example, have focused on cities and factories.<sup>4</sup> Despite this expanded conception of folk, the majority of studies by American material researchers continue to center on preindustrial remains of rural, agricultural areas.<sup>5</sup>

Frequent use of the industrial revolution as a watershed mark in material research is problematic because industrialization occurred at different times in different areas with different impacts. Application of alternative notions of preelectrification and preurbanization are even more ambiguous. The prevalent emphasis on antiquated material traditions often stems from a romantic vision of a "golden age" in which life was much more "traditional." What these differing conceptions of "folk" share is a concern with traditional, typical objects used in everyday life.

A continued controversy surrounds the scope of the term "American." Researchers use the concept to include phenomena unique to the continental United States, or instead derivative of foreign influences.<sup>6</sup> The most forceful case for studying folklore that deals with traditions particular to American history is made by Richard M. Dorson who included the importance of material research as a means for understanding the American historical experience.<sup>7</sup> The majority of artifactual researchers, however, have looked at America as a depository of European, African, and other ethnic cultures.<sup>8</sup> To test their assumptions, such researchers undertook studies of diffusion and distribution of Old World forms in the New World.<sup>9</sup> Objects, however, are rarely purely foreign or purely American, but are a complex of mutually influencing factors. I use the criterion of the continental United States for "American" as the central unifying guide in my discussion of American material research while at the same time cognizant of the influence of alien traditions.

"Culture" is a crucial theme in the formation of concepts to be reviewed in this essay. The variety of its interpretations has affected the diverse nature of material study. Underlying some conceptualizations is the belief that possession of culture is superorganic in character; that is, culture has an independent existence which may be possessed by groups and societies, and which has the power to determine their behavior.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, culture is often viewed as simply a vague analytical abstraction with no determinative force.<sup>11</sup> In the latter view, culture arises from the interaction of people, manifested only in individual "minds."<sup>12</sup> Most analysts agree, however, that culture is a shared and learned body of knowledge gained by an individual from exposure to

various groups and experiences. The common use of the term "material culture" should not refer to a type of culture since culture as mental knowledge is intangible. Rather, the term "material culture" properly connotes manifestations of culture, or products of an acquired knowledge. Therefore, "material culture" constitutes an abbreviation for artifacts in a cultural concept.

In summary, uses of terms such as material, folk, American, and culture are tied to theoretical assumptions made by different researchers. My placement of these terms in a unified framework is drawn from the "folklife" movement, which attempts to represent all aspects of tradition, with particular emphasis on objects.<sup>13</sup> A confusion may arise from this last statement because of the misleading distinction often made between the study of folklore and its verbal orientation, and folklife research and its object orientation.<sup>14</sup> The folklife perspective, however, should be designed to eliminate the artificial boundaries between a physical entity and its manifestation in individual expression--verbal and nonverbal. Toward this end, I will identify six categories that represent recent methods, purposes, and theories of material study: historical reconstruction, cultural geography, functionalism, structuralism, symbolism, and behavioralism.

### Historical Reconstruction

Folklife studies has had as its rigorous task the description of the totality of a historic society by utilizing techniques borrowed from archaeology, anthropology, geography, and especially history. Early European folklife researchers including Sigurd Erixon, Iorwerth C. Peate, J. Geraint Jenkins, and Alexander Fenton countered the prevalent view of a history that stressed great events and famous men with one that emphasized the everyday

activities of common individuals.<sup>15</sup> This group of scholars shared a romantic view of history which viewed the past as a harmonious, agrarian existence that was destroyed by technology and urbanization.<sup>16</sup> They hoped to accurately reconstruct past ways of life, especially among peasant groups within a regional framework.

Many American folklorists became attracted to historical reconstruction because of its emphasis on persistence of tradition, description of everyday life, and orientation toward the past. American folklorists called for systematic collection of material aspects of culture that included an expansion of historical reconstruction concerns to questions of origin and development of artifacts, their functional relationships, and methods of transmitting knowledge.<sup>17</sup> A substantial amount of research was associated with recreations of traditional life in museums to establish the historicity of rural life in a certain area during a precise period.<sup>18</sup>

An example of a historical reconstruction study is John T. Schlebecker's "Stockmen and Drivers During the Revolution."<sup>19</sup> Schlebecker, the Curator of Agriculture and Mining at the Smithsonian Institution, and a trained agricultural historian, reconstructed American animal husbandry practices during the late eighteenth century. References to agricultural practices in scattered newspaper accounts, diaries, and journals led him to formulate a consensus of data. He concluded that "after 1779, farmers and planters of the South made the adjustments in animal husbandry which war has already forced on the northerners."<sup>20</sup>

Schlebecker's study indicates typical historical reconstruction methods which reveal several assumptions that affect the final

reconstruction. In a consensus model of culture used by historical reconstructers uniformity and homogeneity are stressed, thus overlooking the minority and diversified viewpoint. What, one might ask, were the reactions of blacks and immigrants to the war, and how was that reaction manifested in agricultural practice? In general, historical reconstructers have tended to project a continuous white, Anglo heritage despite modern awareness of America's wealth of ethnic influences.

A second assumption underlies Schlebecker's arbitrary determination of a geographic region and historic time period. Proponents of the historical reconstruction method select an object or practice, and assume it reflects a preconceived region or time period. Schlebecker's definition of South and North is based on his subjective perception rather than on the basis of the data. Recent articles by Wilhelm Nicolaisen and Henry Glassie, however, suggest methods of determining whether an object is indeed representative of a locale or era.<sup>21</sup> Only when a reasonable amount of comparable data is offered can specific proof be valid for the regionality or periodicity of any particular item or practice.

Historical reconstructers also assume that rural, preindustrial life requires immediate attention because of its inevitable disappearance. The presumption is that urbanism and technology naturally destroy rurally based artifacts. As a result of this perception, rural areas, especially in the older eastern United States, are scoured for material remains. Even those who recognize the existence of material culture in cities fall into the romantic trap of defining folk artifacts as survivals of rural or Old World objects in the modern or urban setting.<sup>22</sup>

Growing awareness of a unique verbal folklore should also suggest the existence of modern material culture in American cities. Further, analysis of a rural-urban continuum, rather than a dichotomy, provides a more complete picture of America's material heritage.

In order to reconstruct the past rural way of life, field research, in addition to historical records study, is undertaken by historical reconstructers. Field researchers typically uncover craftsmen or structures considered remnants of a past age in order to observe living demonstrations of vanishing practices. Fred Kniffen, for example, suggested studying the Pennsylvania Amish to reconstruct American pioneer agriculture.<sup>23</sup> But crosstime comparisons assume that modern survivals are truly representative of the past. Without understanding differing community settings, economic systems, and personal motivations that affected the original creation of objects, reconstruction based on anachronisms may be misleading or even inaccurate. Comparative studies of artifacts and practices separated by time and space suffer because parallels are drawn without documentation of connections between them, or without knowledge of their practitioners.

In order to be valid, historical reconstructers must combine methodologies that bring the past and present into a comprehensive framework. Thus, isolating an item in space and time should be replaced with historical studies that contain a dynamic model for everyday life. Historical reconstruction can provide valuable information on the past life of individual communities, but the method's tendency to generalize and simplify mars its contribution to material study. That contribution, the expansion of the field's historical data base, is essential to modern ethnographic studies.

### Cultural Geography

The perceived interplay between environment and its inhabitants has raised a number of crucial questions: (1) What is the relationship between culture and landscape? (2) What is the origin of humanity's material products? (3) By what means are the ideas that generate objects disseminated? (4) How are distinct culture areas distributed? The geographer's methodological toolkit for attempting to answer such questions has had particular influence on studies by folklife researchers. Like historical reconstruction, geographical approaches for investigating these concerns reflect certain theoretical assumptions.

The cultural geographer presupposes that culture diffuses across space, and acquires and loses elements through effects of the environment. Folk objects supposedly provide a good index to diffusion because they tend to remain stable over time, but variable over space.<sup>24</sup> Stability implies both a superorganic existence, minimizing the individual's role in the creation of objects, and an "innate cultural conservatism" on the part of groups that produce objects.<sup>25</sup> Thus, a culture's participants are seen as groups or communities composed of conforming individuals who behave according to the dictates of cultural forces. Culture, then, becomes an entity that assumes a regional character.

The rural, preindustrial landscape presumably best preserves survivals of culture. Thus, that landscape offers to the cultural geographer clues for ascertaining the succession of regional cultures through time. Because cultural geographers focus on rural groups, "folk" often becomes equated with homogeneous, preindustrial, agrarian groups. The identification of a group's occupance in an area provides the geographer his "region" of study.



In order to reconstruct paths of diffusion for groups based on a sampling of objects plotted over space and time, another assumption emerges: culture is integrative. All elements of the group are considered to be so integrated that they will diffuse together as one consistent entity. That is, if culture is made up of related ideas that objects project, then establishing movements of certain cultural traits will indicate other traits.<sup>26</sup> In material research, this assumption is found in identifications of a group's cultural baggage. If one element moves, it assumedly follows that other elements of the same culture also move, even though accurate identification of historic objects constitutes a problem of inferring more cultural information than might actually appear. Howard Wight Marshall and John Michael Vlach's attempt to test the integrative concept by studying locations of material culture and dialect in southern Indiana showed the need to qualify many presuppositions because information from the two cultural traits indicated different regional demarcations.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, researchers need to study traits independently, and to posit relationships only when a clear correlation exists.

The ideas of cultural geographer Fred Kniffen deserve special attention because of his influence on folklorists. Kniffen outlined five necessary methodological steps for studying culture: identification, classification, arrangement, interpretation, and presentation.<sup>28</sup> Identification of cultural forms, usually material, on a specific landscape and possibly limited to a certain time period, serves as a first step toward deriving what he called a "cultural taxonomy."<sup>29</sup> Structures such as houses are most often included because they are highly visible to the researcher, but fences, farm foundations, and tools can also be counted. In addition to counting objects, Kniffen also

suggested documenting processes, especially agricultural, for evidence of cultural patterns. Expressing a modern disciplinary concern, folklorists have particularly emphasized processes, such as variations in techniques of building a house, rather than distributions of house types. Folklorists have further qualified the identification step by insisting on oral interviews with participants in a culture, rather than taking a pure census approach.<sup>30</sup> Their purpose is to provide an index of objects' meaning to individuals--a more humanistic venture than the scientific one proposed by Kniffen.

A comprehensive survey of every material object in an area idealistically suggested by Kniffen rarely appears, because access to every object is difficult to obtain. Rather, researchers usually choose one form, such as smokehouses or barracks, to infer patterns about other cultural forms.<sup>31</sup> Identification of vanished cultural forms from archaeological finds, written or pictorial records, and informants' memories often supplements visual counting where full description is not possible. Such reconstruction may present problems similar to historical reconstructors' pitfalls such as perceiving similarities over differences, accepting incomplete or incomparable evidence, and portraying objects as existing in static form.

The next step in the cultural geography method, classifying counted objects into types, is based on the analyst's recognition of similar forms. Material researchers have assumed that archaeologists exerted a strong influence on cultural geographers' perceptions of basic forms because of the stress on a horizontal view of structure; so that floor plans, for example, compose common bases of

of classification. Terms such as single pen, double pen, and two room deep reflect that morphological orientation. Kniffen's addition of a vertical dimension partly stemmed from his reliance on visual counting rather than archaeological digging. Another factor influencing American researchers' vertical orientation is the United States' relatively brief history which meant that many structures continued to stand into the present; so that a researcher does not have to rely on archaeological reconstruction as much as the European folklife scholars do. Kniffen's designation of the "I" house shows the combination of horizontal and vertical criteria. He defined it as two stories high, one room deep, and two or more rooms long.<sup>32</sup>

Additional problems arise regarding the classification labels used among researchers. E. Estyn Evans, a British folklife specialist, complained that Kniffen, and American material scholars in general, classified houses based on external appearance alone, which "is the natural product of rapid field work on the scale of half a continent."<sup>33</sup> Evans also claimed that the I house is not a distinct folk type at all, but the culmination of several house types.<sup>34</sup> Kniffen countered by criticizing Evans' over-emphasis of the use of floor plans as a classificatory means.<sup>35</sup> This dialogue points out contradictions in analysts' subjective classifications and their penchant for simplifying complex processes. To solve this problem several folklorists suggested developing native categories based on interviews with users of objects, an approach similar to that of cognitive anthropologists.<sup>36</sup> John Moe, for example, found it significant that informants could distinguish Kniffen's "I" house from other types, but they often used an alternative term--"two over two."<sup>37</sup> Kniffen, however, insisted that the time-consuming task of asking

informants to identify types rarely proves fruitful and their reasoning for classification may even offer invalid rationalizations.<sup>38</sup>

Arrangement of types into cultural complexes is the third step of the cultural geography method. A cultural region is established by outlining combinations of cultural features that interact together. Kniffen explicitly based this formation of culture on a fundamental assumption: culture is a "functioning whole consisting of integral, mutually dependent parts and occupying a given segment of the earth."<sup>39</sup> Henry Glassie's "patterns" for the material folk culture of the eastern United States parallel Kniffen's complexes in that he aims to delineate distinctive cultural relationships that indicate cultural regions and movements.<sup>40</sup>

Arrangement of the types into complexes enables the analyst to plot the diffusion of a culture through time and space. The interpretation step involves the examination of diffusion to determine origin, dissemination route, and distribution pattern of culture. Additional data from similar studies may be added in the interpretation step to reinforce the argument, or new hypotheses may be generated for further testing. Cultural geographers attempt to substantiate their interpretation through the quantification of their data. Quantification contains advantages of allowing a systematic coverage of a subject, establishing probability, allowing for cross-cultural analysis, and enabling tests for accuracy. Folklorists who apply the cultural geography method nonetheless retain their humanistic bent and often emphasize individual life histories and aesthetics.<sup>41</sup> The cultural geography method is thus based on theoretical concepts that are qualified

by individual researchers' goals and their disciplinary concerns.

### Functionalism

Partially influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown's functionalist approaches to anthropological research, a respected group of American folklife scholars have used functional explanation<sup>s</sup> in material research. Like cultural geographers, material functionalists assumed that culture is integrative, but rather than accept diffusion processes as a sufficient explanation for transmission of tradition, they sought to find the reason in the "usefulness" of the object to its natural environment. Utility of artifacts within the context of a technological system, whether it be the farm, house, or landscape, provides keys to understanding transmission and adaptation, they argued. Utility alone did not indicate function; the relationship of an object or process in an integrated system of interrelated structures, such as the chimney's role in the operation of a house, did. Function, then, parallels biological function by contributing to the working of a system, and corresponds to mathematical function because a direct relationship exists between parts of the cultural system. Material functionalists moved toward a more dynamic approach to folklife by examining process, change, adaptation, and context within a singular cultural milieu. Indeed, origin often became a secondary concern.

Functional study retained the folklife researcher's division between historical studies of specific material phenomena over space, and ethnographic studies of particular communities. Thus, functionalists retained the scope of cultural geography and historical reconstruction, but strove to supplement or qualify their theoretical assumptions. Warren Roberts, a leader of this movement, presented the material

functionalist case in several publications which appeared in the early seventies. His argument sprang from a dissatisfaction with sweeping historical and geographical explanations for origin and cause of folk objects' manufacture. Diffusion, he argues, was not sufficient reason alone for the shaping of technology. Instead, criteria of "practicality" in "local context" were more important determinations.<sup>42</sup>

Context as used by functionalists refers to environmental and social setting. Considerations such as available materials, weather conditions, technical competencies, support services, family structures, and economic systems affect the selection, use, and transmission of material traditions. Elements of context act as a system of interdependent factors with potentials for affecting material phenomena. Although this concept appears in materialist approaches to anthropology, material functionalists have not acknowledged possible materialist contributions to their own study including the relationship between oral and material traditions, and the description of functional systems in the environment.<sup>43</sup> The lack of communication may stem from the fact that materialist approaches<sup>5</sup> in anthropology have thus far not been concerned with the case of the United States, and instead have concentrated on foreign peasant societies.

Just as geographers considered folk objects good indices of diffusion because folk "things" remain stable over time and variant over space, functionalists thought of folk artifacts as good reflections of principles used by rational and practical natives to a culture. In contrast, elite objects allegedly reflected the portrayal of fashion and aesthetic over practicality.<sup>44</sup> Roberts asked,

for example, why traditional log houses in the southeastern United States had chimneys on the outside gable end walls. His answers minimize the effect of diffusion and emphasize practical considerations: (1) because of the risk of having the heavy weight of the chimney settle into the ground, the chimney is placed outside the house, (2) risk of fire is lessened by placing the chimney outside the walls, (3) available technology for creating a watertight seal around the chimney as it passed through the roof was not yet adequate; outside construction simplified roof construction, and (4) placing the fireplace outside the house provided more heat escape in the hot climate in contrast to the predominant central chimney location of the colder North which necessitated heat conservation.<sup>45</sup> Continuance of tradition, then, does not act in a haphazard manner based on a superorganic effect of culture, but rather on practical considerations of participants in a culture.<sup>46</sup> A participant's own description of functional motives best supports analysts' functional explanation, but often that information is not available, and then the analyst surmises a logical functional sequence.

In addition to transmission and adaptation, functionalists also attempted to explain culture change. Realizing that historical reconstructers and cultural geographers depicted static views of culture, functionalists projected an image of individual societies in states of transition held together by closed cultural systems composed of interdependent elements.<sup>47</sup> Change comes about as a result of shifting participants' needs, and events that affect the system. Wilhelm Nicolaisen spoke to this role of function when he identified "distorted function," the secondary use of a folk cultural item for purposes other than the one for which it was primarily designed and manufactured.<sup>48</sup> Rain gutters used as planters, milk cans serving as mailbox holders, and wagon

wheels employed as decorative devices are examples. Nicolaisen noted functional shifts of old, traditional objects to exist and continue within the modern cultural system. Still, the emphasis of functional study is on the persistence of a functional, rural, European-derived material culture in a dysfunctional modern setting.<sup>49</sup>

One criticism of material functionalism is that utility only gives a dubious surface explanation. Deeper meanings exist--on psychological, aesthetic, symbolic, and personal levels.<sup>50</sup> The folk act not only out of practical motivations, critics argue, but also from philosophical considerations that affect perception.<sup>51</sup> Objects manifest fashion and utility, availability and preference, simplicity and elaboration, individual and society.

Another complaint is leveled against the postulation of function as an explanation for specific behavior. Function may be acceptable as a statement of result, but not of cause. Folklorist Elliott Oring made this point explicit by arguing that unintended effects of a phenomenon become confused with a user's intentional motivations. Thus, he discounted function's ability to account for the origin of cultural phenomena.<sup>52</sup> In addition, functions that allegedly generate effects, such as maximizing heat loss of chimneys in the southeastern United States, may be generalized to affect all instances where those conditions may be present. Functional elements, however, vary according to each specific situation and individual.

Another objection to functionalism centers on the assumption of a cultural systemic whole. Henry Glassie concluded from his study of barn building in Otsego County,



New York, that elements, such as economics and aesthetics in a cultural system may affect each other, but they do not act uniformly so that the conception of a homeostatic unity does not apply.<sup>53</sup> After further research, he complained that culture is not an island awaiting discovery but rather exists only in individual minds.<sup>54</sup> A conceptual argument again arises between those who view culture as an analyst's abstraction, and those who consider culture to have a potency of its own. Glassie argues, for example, that while people may be conceived as part of a cultural systemic order because of environment or tradition, their natural diversity also moves them toward disorder.

Despite the range of criticism, functional explanations continue to represent a significant approach to material research. Correlation of practical reasons with behavioral effects so intrinsic to functional analysis suggests a philosophy of logical positivism in which symbolic or inferred arguments not based on observable data are considered meaningless. Objections to functionalism therefore do not necessarily disprove the validity of functional concepts but seem to indicate expressions of belief in the legitimacy of different types of explanation, whether positivist or metaphysical, symbolic or objective, cognitive or superorganic.

### Symbolism

In his model for artifact study, E. McClung Fleming proposed that all objects contain not only "concrete" or practical functions, but also possess abstract functions.<sup>55</sup> Conscious and unconscious beliefs, ideas, projections, meanings, and values, he argued, may emerge from an object's construction and existence even though participants in a culture may not articulate them. Interpretation of abstract qualities of objects is possible through analysis of symbols manifested in the manufacture, use, and persistence

of material forms. The goal of symbolic research is to identify deeper meanings for artifacts, and to infer cultural patterns. Objects are treated as if they contain a potency and life of their own that may be distinct from individual intentions for them, but which may be more revealing for cultural significance.

Symbolic studies generally divide into ethnographic examinations of specific events such as meals or festivals, and into historical research of objects over time and space. Both types of analysis search for deeper meanings for material culture by uncovering shared abstractions of a cultural group. Because of the symbolic nature of artifacts, they can also precipitate group behavior and affect perceptions of other objects, thus implying that individuals do not necessarily control their culture.

A number of historical studies included analyses of material symbols of American patriotism. One study by E. McClung Fleming traced the use of Indian Queen, Neoclassical Goddess, American Liberty, Columbia, and Uncle Sam in various media such as prints, textiles, sculptures, and paintings.<sup>56</sup> He claimed that the popularity of objects at precise periods in United States history reflected values and myths present at successive stages of American history. To Fleming, the Indian Queen indicated Henry Nash Smith's "prime myth of the Garden," because she "stood for the new land of the American continent and the promise of this land, proclaimed by every explorer and settler."<sup>57</sup> America thus appeared unique compared to Europe because patriotic objects of the United States showed a particularly American "historic mission with a great moral ideal."<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, Louis C. Jones also noted the potency of patriotic symbols. He concluded that patriotic objects were reflections of shifting historic moods of optimism and pessimism, and that material symbols through their emotional appeal could also affect those moods.<sup>59</sup>

Another historical study by Edward Price emphasized the unique character of American material culture by examining the particularly "American" central courthouse square.<sup>60</sup> If New Englanders associate communities with commons or greens, he argued, many midwesterners and southerners form the prominent image of their community by erecting courthouses in the center of their towns surrounded by businesses on four sides. Hoosiers, for example, constructed at least two and as many as five courthouses in each of their 92 counties during the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> According to Price, rejection of European market squares and their commercial associations symbolized repudiation of an undemocratic system and a reinforcement of growing county power. American central courthouse squares represented the conflict between public and business interests for control of the central community, and the ultimate dominance of the public interest.

In historical analysis one assumes that symbolic artifacts can be identified by connecting them to themes of American history.<sup>62</sup> Themes presumably affect American cultural behavior although causation is difficult to prove. Because the identification of themes from symbolic evidence is the analyst's subjective prerogative, a problem of fallaciously fitting the data to supply the theme exists. Themes do not provide rationales for cultural behavior, and like functions, they often constitute effects rather than causes. Application of themes also reduces individuals to conforming, passive bearers of historical tradition. In the case of the central courthouse

squares and patriotic symbols, generalizations about the division of American history into successive stages of mood and cultural identity are advanced without specific ethnographic contexts.

Ethnographic studies, on the other hand, examine symbolism in specific cultural contexts. Food research in particular has moved toward this perspective. Mary Douglas suggested a method of decoding meals in order to identify universal, symbolic meaning and concluded that "whenever a people are aware of encroachment and danger, dietary rules controlling what goes into the body would serve as a vivid analogy of the corpus of their cultural categories at risk."<sup>63</sup> Toward the goal of understanding the symbolic conceptions of food by specific individuals, Thomas A. Adler's report on foodways in South Georgia proposed an examination of personal symbolic systems that affect behavior because "there are communications that a mind makes with itself, using symbols and metaphors in an open system of signification through which meaning may be realized."<sup>64</sup> He indicated a reaction against symbolic generalizations concerning whole groups or periods of time, but he still shares the idea that symbols represent significant factors in understanding material culture.<sup>65</sup>

Symbolic studies also have their critics. I. C. Jarvie recently condemned symbolic interpretation for being arbitrary, dubious, and boring.<sup>66</sup> He maintained that proponents of symbolism cannot agree between themselves on the validity of their own subjective interpretation, a situation that creates incoherence and inconsistency. Jarvie pointed to a questionable assumption in their work: "To seek the meaning or symbolic interpretation of an utterance or ceremony presupposes that a determinate meaning exists."<sup>67</sup> For Jarvie and

other critics, "a bystander's explanation of what is going on is quite enough."<sup>68</sup> His criticism raises important issues worth considering. Arbitrary identification of symbols without supportive evidence for their validity seems especially counterproductive to research particularly if a priori assumptions are applied to the data. In many cases, symbolic researchers are guilty of a frequent complaint made about literary critics, namely that too much is read into it. Still Jarvie's alternative seems too simplistic--there do exist meanings for certain artifacts that often defy native explanation. Researchers need to consider symbolic phenomena, but they also need to be wary of limiting themselves to one type of absolute interpretation.

### Structuralism

An obvious characteristic of objects is that they have forms. To speak of structuring principles of those forms implies morphological relationships between similar objects. Structural study arises from an effort to classify artifacts based on such relationships in order to find their cultural meanings. Interpretation of structural patterns tries to answer several questions: (1) How do form and function affect each other? (2) What is the rationale for selection of specific structures? (3) What are the relationships between an object's form and its maker, user, its social setting, and its environment? (4) What determines structure? (5) How did a structure originate? Although structuralism relates to historical, geographical, functional, and symbolic factors, it constitutes a separate approach because of its emphasis on analyzing objects through the relationships of their forms.

Biological structuralists consider cultural phenomena as organisms which are subject to development and change. Objects are assumed to

follow a natural order of "families," "species," and "varieties" analogous to plant and animal categories. A fundamental concept emerges: "The original structure of a given species is generally simple, and more complicated structures develop gradually as the organism assumes more complicated functions, or as environmental conditions become more favorable."<sup>69</sup> From this concept, material culture's development acquires a progressive evolution from a simple and common origin to divergent variations. Development occurs as a result of transmission from one generation to another and migration through cultural agents.<sup>70</sup>

According to the biological model, cultural forms are based on a horizontal orientation of basic shapes. In architecture, for example, floor plans provide the standard for classification. Typical, rather than unique, types are used as a structural basis. Variations in shape or exterior elaboration are not considered significant because a basic structural concepts such as a single square, rectangle, or circle should theoretically identify the object. Biological structuralists thus examine each artifact as if it had a life history with a birth, growth, and decay. After determination of structural systems of common objects, conclusions are made concerning culturally determined forms in particular areas.

Edna Scofield's investigation of rural folk housing in Tennessee represents a typical application of the method.<sup>71</sup> After surveying varieties of house types in the state, she concluded that all southern houses developed from the square "one room log cabin." By conceiving of the rectangular double pen house as two connected square units, she assumed that this growth was a result of an evolutionary

development. Additions of an open hallway, a second story, and an extra wing are therefore only variations on the basic unit. Material culture appears to arise out of a natural, structural evolution in her view. Just as function, theme, symbol, and diffusion play determinative roles in their respective conceptualizations, structure is given a causal power by biological structuralists.

Several characteristics of biological structuralism affect its adherents' perceptions of culture. Consensus provides the means for determining cultural patterns, and thus culture appears as a uniform entity. Scofield admits that she does not consider the atypical form, because according to her, culture dictates conformity. Like most material studies, biological structuralism focuses on rural areas because their landscape preserves stages of historical development. Scofield concedes that she does not consider urban areas in her survey but incredibly excuses their omission because she believes urban forms to be repetitions of rural dwellings.<sup>72</sup>

Another fundamental conception in biological structuralism consists of an acceptance of a natural, almost superorganic order for cultural phenomena. Objects are more than analogous to organisms, they are by their nature organismal. Although objects follow a biological process, rationales for change between stages of development are not explained, but rather assumed to be a genetic succession. Scofield, for example, asserts that reasons for the double pen house arising out of the single pen could not be determined.<sup>73</sup> Assumption of a natural development minimizes individuals' roles in selecting, adapting, and changing material culture.

The task of determining the original structural concept belongs to the analyst. It

follows, then, that assumption of structural similarities indicates a view of culture that stresses order, and development from a simple origin. Like creators of models, the analyst's task consists of simplifying diversity and complexity by ferreting out structural components. An advantage of unitary formulations, according to structuralists, lies in their allowance for cross-cultural comparisons. Eugene Wilson, for example, noted that the basic single pen unit of the southeastern United States corresponded to the English one bay structure.<sup>74</sup> By comparing similar evolutions of both units into central passage houses, he hypothesized a continuity between American and European structural traditions. A serious question remains, however, whether different phenomena can be placed in the same category and treated as comparable when in fact differing contexts may mean they are not.<sup>75</sup>

Another way of structuring artifacts corresponds to linguistic analysis. Rather than assuming a natural order where objects take on organismal qualities, artifacts can be compared to a language system. A structured set of rules, a "grammar," determines the kinds of expressions used. Noam Chomsky laid the foundation for such analysis when he noted that all normal children acquire essentially comparable grammars of great complexity with great rapidity.<sup>76</sup> He explained this fact by positing a structure of rules--base mental concepts that underlie and order expressions. Thus, making expressive decisions depends on available options ordered according to individual perceptions of shared standards and appropriate contexts.<sup>77</sup> From Chomsky's ideas Henry Glassie argued that "culture is



pattern in mind, the ability to make things like sentences or houses."<sup>78</sup> Glassie sought a systematic model that accounted for the design ability of an idealized maker in a particular area--an artifactual grammar. He did not hold the biological view that objects were simple products of passive minds; instead he perceived artifacts as reflections of diverse expressions based on a shared competence.

Glassie selected a geometric base structure, the square, but did not assume an evolutionary construct. Houses do not evolve but the ability to design houses evolves, he argued.<sup>79</sup> That competence is found in numerous structural types generated by the base concept which reflects unconscious individual decisions. Glassie, like the biological structuralists, attempted to identify culture through structure, but he used a linguistic basis which provided an emergent conception of creation that included individual volition based on a shared grammar. Just as classification of language offers clues to rationales for performance, Glassie used his grammar to classify objects in order to shed light on the rationale for the generation of house types.

Glassie's structural analysis has not yet propagated similar studies, but his conceptualization of artifactual grammars has signalled a significant awareness of theoretical relationships between cognitive processes and structural manifestations. Complaints have been voiced that his method substitutes one kind of arbitrariness for another, and that results from such analysis are not adequately comparative.<sup>80</sup> Still, linguistic structuralism forces a productive reassessment of assumptions about the nature of culture and its material products. In addition, his study promises further discussion of the connections between verbal and nonverbal expressions.

### Behavioralism

A recurrent issue in studies of material aspects of American folk culture concerns the role of the individual in society. A fresh approach to American folklife that emerged in the last decade shifts the focus of analysis from the object, region, group, and epoch to the individual. Examination of artifacts is not the end of research in this approach, but a means of understanding specific individual behavior, defined by folklorist Michael Owen Jones as "those activities and expressive structures manifested principally in situations of first hand interaction."<sup>81</sup> Each individual is assumed to embody a unique complex of skills, beliefs, values, and motivations that defy categorization into cultural or regional divisions. Rather than conformity, variation is emphasized; instead of tradition, motivation is stressed. One individual thus reflects one complex of behavior, or stated negatively, one society does not equal one culture, but rather an "organization of diversity."<sup>82</sup>

Through intensive investigation of one individual maker of objects, behavioralists seek to find clues to understanding personality, creativity, mental processes, and aesthetic. They are not so concerned with traditional historical-geographical questions of origin and dissemination as they are with explaining the diversity of human processes and expressions. They want to understand the modern context instead of reconstructing the past.

Looking to "extend the dimensions of scholarship," Michael Owen Jones argues for adding a behavioral approach to folklife research.<sup>83</sup> His The Hand Made Object and Its Maker offered a departure from previous material studies by examining one chairmaker in

detail to find explanations of expressive behavior, an expanded view of folklife. For Jones, "folk" as a descriptive term became a vague abstraction for process, not a group of people. He avoided considering societal constructs because they obscured the goal of understanding the individual. Societal models of culture, he felt, imposed a false sense of consensus and conformity.

To reach his goal, Jones sought to identify a craftsman's beliefs, values, and aspirations, and analyze how they affected the manufacture, use, and sale of the craftsman's products. The maker's objects provided symbolic projections of self, and clues to relationships with people around him. By understanding personal motivation, Jones obtained a source for evaluating objects' meaning, and their reflection of the craftsman's behavior.

Similarly, other studies have begun to question a priori assumptions about tradition and culture.<sup>84</sup> William Ferris, for example, reacted to Melville Herskovitz' position that Afro-American folk culture was preserved by a linear transmission from older black artists to younger generations.<sup>85</sup> He discovered a Mississippi Delta black sculptor whose artistic expression was not influenced by direct, "linear" training, but by individual projections of personality and inspiration from dreams. Ferris argued that such creativity was not a negation of traditional life but a "major affirmation of Afro-American culture."<sup>86</sup> Like Jones, the significance of Ferris' research lay in arriving at statements about the meanings of an individual's expressive behavior.

The behavioral approach suggests a significant supplement to previous folklife scholarship. Differences in architecture, for instance, were assumed in the past to reflect stylistic,

structural, historical, or functional differences, but more emphasis on individual inhabitants may indicate conceptions of dwelling that influence architectural tradition.<sup>87</sup> Such considerations indicate explanations for the diversity of human life through understanding of individual cognitive systems.<sup>88</sup>

The task outlined by proponents of the behavioral approach is not an easy one. Every element of an individual's life is considered significant, and the analyst may find himself making subjective statements about the relative importance of certain factors. Ideally, analytical perceptions of unconscious aspirations or projections would be checked with the informant, but the folk artist may not be able to recognize such inferences or may acquiesce to the researcher's interpretation. Thus, the behavioral approach presents serious field work problems, not only because an extraordinary amount of observation is required but because rationales for behavior often are the most difficult information to elicit. Nonetheless, behavioral approaches offer an analytical means for dealing with material folk culture in the modern setting, and for bringing folklife research down to its least common denominator, the individual.

### Conclusion

The variety of existing approaches to the study of objects reflects the goals of individual researchers. In general, historical reconstructers particularly contribute to the museum movement; cultural geographers show a special concern with mapping the effects of landscape on humans; behaviorists attempt to test psychological concepts. Other disciplines

including art history and semiotics suggest additional approaches to material research although they have not entered the mainstream of folklife study. Material research continues to possess a multidisciplinary nature more than an interdisciplinary one. Indeed, the study of material aspects of American folk culture is a field without a unified academic concept, but one which reflects a common interest in using artifacts as evidence for views of culture. In order for folklife to become a core formulation for differing perspectives, it needs to develop cross-disciplinary communication, so as to reap the full benefits of various disciplinary contributions toward a folklife perspective.

Folklife researchers use material research to describe culture, but the conceptualizations of various approaches point to fundamental assumptions that affect differing views of culture. Historical reconstruction, cultural geography, and biological structuralism methods suffer from their adherents' arbitrary selection of culture as a starting point to deduce explanations of specific behavior. This deductive reasoning often reduces complex factors to simple causes which neglect motivation, volition, and rationale of the individual who interacts with his physical and spiritual surroundings. The basis for explaining the use, manufacture, and distribution of artifacts by individuals should rest in studying an individual in depth which will lead to inductive conceptualizations of that person's relationships with others. For historic artifacts, reconstruction of individual lives associated with them can contribute to a better understanding of the objects and society under study. Only through such approaches can constructs of society and culture be meaningful.

By applying the inductive method, other currently ambiguous notions of group, region, and epoch may also be shown to be either significant or meaningless, or perhaps in need of modification. Like culture, these terms are analytical inventions that still need to be tested. The propagation of vague assumptions of group and region stem from isolating objects from individuals in their environmental contexts. By examining objects as static units apart from their users, many material researchers have fallen victim to creating false categorizations not based on native cognitive systems, drawing comparisons between unrelated items, and generalizing causes and effects without sufficient ethnographic data. Behaviorists, functionalists, and linguistic structuralists, however, have moved toward realizing the need for extensive ethnographic data to arrive at an accurate depiction of traditional life.

Except for behaviorists, "material" has connoted a stress on objects. Henry Glassie is certainly correct when he states that we know more about the "history of things" than we do about the "history of people."<sup>89</sup> Studying artifacts is ideally a means to understand the manifestations of a person's knowledge about both verbal and nonverbal phenomena. Rather than being overly concerned with defining "folk material" by the items that compose it, a more productive endeavor is to consider objects as expressions of individual behavior and as products of traditional learning processes. By shifting the emphasis of interpretation, research becomes less preoccupied with determining categories, and more with achieving a conceptual understanding of the processes that produce objects. Food, for example, is considered an important cultural artifact because natural materials are transformed into palatable forms by humans. To be meaningful, foodways studies commonly include

the whole food cycle from raising animals and crops and its concomitant beliefs, to methods of disposal. Customary elements such as ceremonies, food taboos, and saying grace also coincide with food tradition. Focusing on the material aspect, food, cannot be separated from verbal and social expression, thus suggesting structural relationships between components surrounding the objects. A researcher also cannot separate the individual consumer who displays distinct tastes, aesthetics, beliefs, needs, and values from a study of food tradition. Therefore, "folk" can be viewed as traditional processes displayed by individuals, and "material" as an individual's total physical and psychological environment which is reflected in the use of objects.

All the concepts described in my essay share a concern with objects in the "American experience." A larger data base of artifactual evidence gathered by more systematic collection is still needed for further conceptualizations in American material study. American collection of artifactual evidence has been noted by the limited contributions of disparate, but devoted, individuals. More systematic gathering of needed data through team research and quantification has not been adequately explored. Museums and archives provide additional valuable resources for further identification of American artifacts that can shed light on the elusive "American experience."

In order to depict the total American experience, researchers need to redress the scholarly neglect of material traditions in cities and other modern settings. Early folklife scholars originally called for the study of disappearing traces of the rural past, especially before the industrial revolution, but I consider the opportunities for studying vital, contemporary forms of material culture in urban and modern

settings just as urgent a mission. American material folk culture is not dying; it is changing. Many material concepts described in this essay reconstruct the past through scattered remains and faded memories, but the present provides invaluable possibilities for first-hand documentation. Of course scholars need to appreciate the past to fully understand the present, but material study has been too fixed in distant epochs which may lead critics to question the field's relevance to contemporary life. Rather than seeing a rural-urban or past-modern dichotomy, a fuller description of America's traditional material heritage and the experiences it reflects will be possible through formulation of spatial and temporal continuums.

The outlined concepts of material study presented here differ most notably over their preference for an appropriate type of explanation. In general, functionalists explain a phenomenon by determining practical considerations, cultural geographers explain it by effects of migration and environment, reconstructers look to historical events for explanation, structuralists stress the importance of forms, and behavioralists look to psychological factors. Rather than being distinct, the various explanations can be examined together for evaluations of relative possibility of meaning, and assessments of probable cause. Henry Glassie's Folk Housing in Middle Virginia suggests the benefits from this evaluative formulation. In his structural description of architecture in a specific geographic area, Glassie took into account historical events, environmental influences, symbolic inferences, and practical considerations to explain existing cultural patterns. Because he dealt with a



distant epoch, revealing cases of specific individuals who participated in the architectural process were lacking, but he presented a strong conceptual argument by carefully assessing the explanatory roles of various concepts. The purpose of Glassie's study, to uncover rationales for behavior, directly addressed the behavioralist goal. In contemporary research, the still developing behavioral approach can offer the framework in which to incorporate the legitimate contributions of other concepts while focusing on the most basic element of cultural expression--the individual.

Material study, then, has a solid foundation of theories and methods on which to build future scholarship. By expanding those concepts to include the integrally related realms of oral and social traditions, the object-oriented study of folklife can come closer to achieving its rigorous task of describing the totality of traditional life. A conceptual understanding of the approaches to the study of objects is a prerequisite for future theoretical formulations. Material research can no longer be treated as a mere appendage to the traditional study of folklore, because students of material aspects of culture are evaluating and challenging folklorists' views of "folk," "American," and "culture," by widening the "material" they study.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Richard M. Dorson, "Concepts of Folklore and Folklife Studies," in Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 1-50, especially pp. 2-3, 40-41 for his discussion of material studies.
- <sup>2</sup> See Sigurd Erixon, "Folk-life Research in Our Time," Gwerin 3 (1962): 275-91. Don Yoder gives a summary of western European ideas of "folk" in "The Folklife Studies Movement," Pennsylvania Folklife 13 (1963): 43-56.
- <sup>3</sup> See Michael Owen Jones, The Hand Made Object and Its Maker (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), especially pp. 20-21; Richard M. Dorson, "We All Need the Folk," Journal of the Folklore Institute 15 (1978): 267-69; Burt Feintuch, "A Contextual and Cognitive Approach to Folk Art and Folk Craft," New York Folklife 2 (1976): 69-78, especially pp. 72-73.
- <sup>4</sup> Examples are Robert Thomas Teske, "On the Making of Bobonieres and Marturia in Greek Philadelphia: Commercialism in Folk Religion," Journal of the Folklore Institute 14 (1977): 151-57; Bruce Nickerson, "Ron Thiesse, Industrial Folk Sculptor," Western Folklife 37 (1978): 128-33; J. Larry Smith, "The Kitchen Garden: A Case Study in Urban Folk Culture," Pioneer America Society Proceedings 2 (1973): 83-92; Elaine Eff, "The Painted Window Screens of Baltimore Maryland," Clarion 6 (Spring 1976): 5-12; Simon J. Bronner, "Material Folk Culture Research in the Modern American City," in American Material Culture and Folklife: A Symposium, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Cooperstown: Cooperstown Graduate Association, forthcoming).
- <sup>5</sup> Dominance of rural material studies is evident from a count of papers on material aspects of culture listed in Programs and Abstracts of American Folklore Society Meetings for 1976-1978.

Year	Rural		Urban	General
	Agricultural	Maritime		
1978	11	4	0	7
1977	8	2	1	9
1976	17	2	2	16

- <sup>6</sup> See Richard Bauman and Roger D. Abrahams with Susan Kalčik, "American Folklore and American Studies," American Quarterly 28 (1976): 360-77.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard M. Dorson, "Folklore in America vs. American Folklore," Journal of the Folklore Institute 15 (1978): 97-112; idem, American Folklore and the Historian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), especially p. 63. The same point is made by Cary Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," in Material Culture and the Study of American Life, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), pp. 41-64.

- 8 Examples are Theodore H. M. Prudon, "The Dutch Barn in America: Survival of a Medieval Structural Frame," New York Folklore 2 (1976): 122-42; John Vlach, "The Shotgun House: An African Architectural Legacy," Pioneer America 8 (1976): 47-70; Patricia Irvin Cooper, "A Quaker-Plan House in Georgia," Pioneer America 10 (1978): 15-36; Peirce F. Lewis, "Common Houses, Cultural Spoor," Landscape 19 (1975): 1-22.
- 9 An example is Henry Glassie, "The Types of the Southern Mountain Cabin," in Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968), pp. 338-70.
- 10 See A. L. Kroeber, "The Superorganic," American Anthropologist 19 (1917): 162-213.
- 11 See Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things and Appropriate Myths: The Artifact's Place in American Studies," Prospects 3, ed. Jack Salzman (New York: Burt Franklin, 1978), pp. 1-49, especially pp. 14-17.
- 12 Henry Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 16-17.
- 13 See Yoder, "The Folklife Studies Movement," pp. 43-56; *idem*, American Folklife (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976).
- 14 Dorson, Folklore and Folklife, p. 2.
- 15 See Alexander Fenton, "An Approach to Folklife Studies," Key-stone Folklore Quarterly 12 (1967): 5-12; J. Geraint Jenkins, "Field Work and Documentation in Folk-Life Studies," Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 90 (1960): 250-71.
- 16 Iorwerth C. Peate, "The Study of Folklife: and its Part in the Defence of Civilization," Gwerin 2 (1959): 97-109.
- 17 See Norbert Riedl, "Folklore and the Study of Material Aspects of Folk Culture," Journal of American Folklore 79 (1966): 557-63; Don Yoder, "Historical Sources for American Foodways Research and Plans for an American Foodways Archive," Ethnologica Scandinavica 2 (1971): 41-55; Henry Glassie, Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), pp. 238-39.
- 18 See Howard Wight Marshall, "Folklife and the Rise of American Folk Museums," Journal of American Folklore 90 (1977): 391-413; Tony Lazewski and Gary O. Molyneaux, "Is This Place Actually Historic? The Accuracy of Recreated Villages in Presenting Local History," paper read at the Pioneer America Society, Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, 1978.

- 19 John T. Schlebecker, "Stockmen and Drivers During the Revolution," Pioneer America Society Proceedings 2 (1973): 4-15.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 21 W. F. H. Nicolaisen, "The Folk and the Region," New York Folklore 2 (1976): 143-49; Henry Glassie, "Meaningful Things," p. 22.
- 22 See Philip L. Wagner and Marvin W. Mikesell, "The Themes of Cultural Geography," in Readings in Cultural Geography, ed. Philip L. Wagner and Marvin W. Mikesell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 16-17; Richard March, "The Tamburitza Tradition in the Calumet Region," Indiana Folklore 10 (1977): 127-38; Stephen Stern, "Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity," Western Folklore 36 (1977): 7-32, especially 10-12.
- 23 Fred Kniffen, "Mill Stones and Stumbling Blocks," Pioneer America 7 (1975): 6.
- 24 Glassie, Pattern, p. 33.
- 25 Fred Kniffen, "American Cultural Geography and Folklife," in American Folklife, ed. Don Yoder (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 67.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 52-3.
- 27 Howard Wight Marshall and John Michael Vlach, "Toward a Folklife Approach to American Dialects," American Speech 48 (1973): 163-91.
- 28 Kniffen, "American Cultural Geography," pp. 51-69.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- 30 See Carl Lindahl, J. Sanford Rikoon, Elaine J. Lawless, A Basic Guide to Fieldwork for Beginning Students (Bloomington, Indiana: Folklore Publications Group, Folklore Monograph Series, Volume 7, 1979), pp. 47-51; Barre Toelken, The Dynamics of Folklore (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), especially p. 38. Examples of folkloristic studies of specific houses are Warren Roberts, "The Whitaker-Waggoner Log House from Morgan County, Indiana," in American Folklife, ed. Don Yoder (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), pp. 185-208; Simon J. Bronner, "Traditional Brick Construction: The Harris House and Related Structures in South-Central Indiana," Pioneer America 11 (1979) [in press].
- 31 See Peter O. Wacker, "Cultural and Commercial Regional Associations of Traditional Smokehouses in New Jersey," Pioneer America 3 (1971): 25-34; *idem*, "Folk Architecture as an Indicator of Culture Areas and Cultural Diffusion: Dutch Barns and Barracks in New Jersey," Pioneer America 5 (1973): 37-47.

- 32 Fred Kniffen, "Folk Housing: Key to Diffusion," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 55 (1965): 553-55.
- 33 Estyn Evans, "Folk Housing in the British Isles in Material Other than Timber," Geoscience and Man 5 (1974): 54.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Kniffen, "Folk Housing," p. 553.
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- 37 John F. Moe, "Concepts of Shelter: The Folk Poetics of Space, Change, and Continuity," Journal of Popular Culture 11 (1977): 219-53.
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- 39 Ibid., p. 63.
- 40 Glassie, Pattern, especially pp. 1-17.
- 41 Examples are Moe, "Folk Poetics," pp. 219-53; Michael Owen Jones, "The Concept of 'Aesthetic' in the Traditional Arts," Western Folklore 30 (1971): 77-104; Roger E. Mitchell, "'I'm a Man that Works': The Biography of Don Mitchell of Merrill Maine," Northeast Folklore 19 (1978): 1-130.
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- 43 See Frederik Barth, "Ecologic Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan," American Anthropologist 58 (1956): 1079-89; Roy A. Rappaport, "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations Among a New Guinea People," Ethnology 6 (1967): 17-30; Laurence A. Hirschfeld, "Art in Cunaland: Ideology and Cultural Adaptation," Man 12 (1977): 104-23.
- 44 Roberts, "Function," p. 11.
- 45 Roberts, "Folk Architecture in Context," pp. 39-42.
- 46 Ibid., p. 40.

- 47 Henry Glassie, "Structure and Function, Folklore and the Artifact," Semiotica 7 (1973): 333-41.
- 48 Wilhelm Nicolaisen, "Distorted Function," paper read at the American Folklore Society meeting, Portland, Oregon, 1974.
- 49 Warren Roberts, "The Folklife Research Approach to Textiles," paper read at the Textile Conservation Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1978.
- 50 Glassie, "Meaningful Things," p. 34.
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- 52 Elliott Oring, "Three Functions of Folklore: Traditional Functionalism as Explanation in Folkloristics," Journal of American Folklore 89 (1976): 71.
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- 54 Glassie, "Meaningful Things," p. 14.
- 55 E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," Winterthur Portfolio 9, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1974), pp. 153-73.
- 56 E. McClung Fleming, "Symbols of the United States: From Indian Queen to Uncle Sam," in Frontiers of American Culture, ed. Ray B. Browne, Richard H. Crowder, Virgil L. Stafford (Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1968), pp. 1-24.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 59 Louis C. Jones, Outward Signs of Inner Beliefs: Symbols of American Patriotism (Cooperstown, New York: New York State Historical Association, 1975).
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- 61 David R. Hermansen, "Hoosier Hysteria in the 19th Century," Historic Preservation, April-June 1971, pp. 34-38.

- 62 Carson, "Doing History with Material Culture," p. 42.
- 63 Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," in Myth, Symbol, and Culture, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), pp. 61-82. The quote is on p. 79.
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- 65 Personal communication, April 1979.
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- 71 Scofield, pp. 229-40.
- 72 Ibid., p. 239.
- 73 Ibid., p. 232.
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- 78 Glassie, Folk Housing in Middle Virginia, p. 17.
- 79 Ibid., p. 111.

- 80 See George McDaniel's review of Folk Housing in Middle Virginia in the Journal of American Folklore 91 (1978): 851-53.
- 81 Michael Owen Jones, "Ask the Chairmaker," paper read at the American Studies Association meeting, Boston, 1977.
- 82 For a discussion of "organization of diversity," see Anthony F. C. Wallace, Culture and Personality (New York: Random House, 1961).
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- 86 *Ibid.*, p. 131.
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- 88 See Stanley Bailis, "The Social Sciences in American Studies: An Integrative Conception," American Quarterly 26 (1974): 202-24, especially p. 220.
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