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Publication Date
2011

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

The Sociogenesis of Idiocultures

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Communication

by

Deborah Downing Wilson

Committee in charge:

Professor Michael Cole, Chair
Professor Tom Humphries
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2011
The Dissertation of Deborah Downing Wilson is approved, and is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2011
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation has arisen from a genuinely collaborative effort with a large research team and an even larger group of colleagues\(^1\), all working under the leadership of romantic scientist, Michael Cole. As my advisor and the head of my dissertation committee, Mike not only opened doors for me, but led me through them. He convinced me that I needed to live for a while inside the phenomenon I wished to understand, and then helped me find a way to make that happen. He has counseled me through every phase of this research and has been an endless source of insight and inspiration. Those who know him will hear his voice on every page.

I thank the students of COHI 130 SP2008 and my co-facilitator, Rachel Pfister, who trusted me, and jumped into the simulation with both feet. This is truly their accomplishment. I hope my account of it does them justice. I am grateful to fellow researcher (and my officemate) Virginia Gordon, and to senior research scientist (and my commuting partner) Jay Lemke, who have tirelessly read and discussed these pages with me, becoming my trusted collaborators and my friends.

I am privileged to be a member of the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, where Sonja Baumer, Camille Campion, Kristen Clark, Mike Cole, Beth Ferholt, David Gonzales, Ginny Gordon, Robert Lecusay, Jay Lemke, James Levin, Ettienne Pelaprat, Rachel Pfister, Tamara Powell, Ivan Rosero, Stefan Tanaka, and Greg Thompson, have all spent a disproportionately large number of their weekly lab

\(^1\) Some names show up more than once. This is because some people play several roles in my life, and I do not want to miss this opportunity to offer my appreciation for each of them.
meetings listening to my presentations, my rants and digressions, talking me off ledges and through the ideas that fuel the discussion that follows. The LCHC has been my professional and intellectual home for the past six years, and hopefully for many years to come. I could not ask for a more stimulating, collaborative, or nurturing group of colleagues.

I came to academia late in my life, and was in every way a foreigner to the culture. I owe a huge debt to the professors and teachers who skillfully and patiently shepherded my enculturation: Morana Alac, Isaac Artenstein, Boatema Boateng, Maria Charles, Michael Cole, Nitin Govil, Michael Hanson, Tom Humphries, Bud Mehan, Carol Padden, Steven Parish, Olga Vasquez, and Elena Zilberg. Thank you.

Many members of the Communication Department, Gayle Aruta, Claudia DaMetz, Jaime Lloyd, and Judy Wertin, went well beyond what was required or expected of them to see me through the ins and outs of graduate life. I must thank in particular Karen Feigner and Brenda Macevicz whose humor and friendship saw me through the hardest times, and my friend Bruce Jones, who counsels my relationships with all things technical or furry.

To my cohort, the deadly sins, Lauren Berliner, Kate Levin, Stephanie Martin, Carl McKinney, Reece Peck and James Perez …I love you all and am proud to be envy. I am grateful for all of the friendly conversations, timely words of encouragement, and nods of understanding from my fellow graduate students, John Armenta, Muni Citrin, Kimberley deWolff, Laurel Friedman, Aaron Gurly, Emma Johnson, Ben Medeiros,
Maria Mercado-Anaya, Kelly Moore, Charles Moran, Katrina Peterson, Harry Simon, Pawan Singh, Michaela Walsh, and Eduardo Santana.

Thank you to the members of my dissertation committee, Mike Cole, Tom Humphries, Jay Lemke, James Levin, Hugh Mehan, and Carol Padden, who have been consistently generous with their time, their expertise, and most importantly, their goodwill. I have felt their support throughout every phase of my graduate career.

Finally, thank you to my dear husband and my precious family, my refuge and my heartbeat, for the things they have done, and especially for the things they have done without, to support me in achieving this goal.

This research was supported in part by the UCSD Department of Communication, The Laboratory for Comparative Human Cognition, and a fellowship from CalIT2.
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Sociogenesis of Idiocultures

by

Deborah Downing Wilson

Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

University of California, San Diego, 2011

Professor Michael Cole, Chair

This research explores the ways small group cultures are created and common understandings among previously unacquainted individuals are achieved. The genesis of culture is conceptualized here as a collective narrative process – a creative meaning-making endeavor that entails ongoing negotiation and adaptation, affective investment, the synchronization of previously learned systems of symbols and practices, the development of hybrid and new practices, and the formation and definition of group boundaries.

Central to this work was the implementation of a research strategy, referred to as Romantic Science, which emphasizes the lived experiences of the participating observers, incorporating the researchers’ “scientific knowing” with the feelings they have as they explore new areas of knowledge in relationship with others. These
feelings are conceptualized, not as secondary or auxiliary forms of understanding, but as key elements of our cognitive and communication processes.

A social simulation game, BaFa’ BaFa’, was adapted for use as a research tool that brought people together in meaningful relationships, provided them with legitimate roles inside a group activity where their actions had real consequences, and evoked the measure of affective investment that this paper argues is necessary for successful engagement in the genesis of small group cultures.

Forty university students were engaged as ethnographic co-researchers for a period of ten weeks and immersed in simulated cultures in order to investigate cultural genesis in a systematic and theoretically informed manner, and to tell their story of cultural creation with the authority that comes from first-hand experience. This narrative report, which includes the ongoing interpretations of all participants, is the result of a meso-genetic approach to documentation and analysis.
PROLOGUE

Personal History

This research has evolved from my work at University College London (UCL) and my association with biologist and evolutionary psychologist, Henry Plotkin. Among Plotkin’s many goals was a desire to contribute to the development of a natural science of culture, one that could coexist comfortably with evolutionary theory (Plotkin, 2003). It was his belief that some of the most important advances in this area had been introduced by the 20th century Russian psychologists, of whom Lev Vygotsky was perhaps the most influential. Plotkin also introduced me to the works of Fredric Bartlett (1932) and others who applied the idea of narrative schemas to further our understanding of cultural processes. (These works will be discussed in more detail as appropriate.)

In previous research I followed Bartlett’s lead and passed information orally through a dozen generations of storytellers in order to reveal the way socially constructed narrative schemas influence cultural genesis and change (Downing-Wilson, 2004). Along with Jerome Bruner, James Wertsch, Elinor Ochs, and others, I began to think of cultural genesis as a multi-vocal narrative process, one that is negotiated, contested, containing many subplots, having historical roots, and many possible outcomes.

Plotkin directed me to Michael Cole’s Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition (LCHC) because of Cole’s long term interest in culture and development. As a member of LCHC I came to share Cole’s commitment to Romantic Science, which
will be explained later in the dissertation, and expanded my area of interest to include
development and change in the attitudes of undergraduate students as they become
enmeshed in new cultural settings (Downing-Wilson, 2008). From this background the
parameters for my dissertation research emerged; my goal was to apply Romantic
Science methods to the study of cultural genesis within small newly-forming groups of
undergraduate students.

**Development of the Dissertation Research**

There are good reasons for documenting the process of cultural genesis and
transformation. We are inundated with research showing the extent to which we are all
products of our cultures, but very little showing that our cultures are also the products
of our own endeavors. By telling only half the story, particularly the half that ignores
the generative roles that each of us play, we are missing the opportunity to remind
ourselves and teach our students that we ourselves are the prime instruments of cultural
innovation and change. So, along with a desire to achieve a richer understanding of
cultural genesis in the context of small group cohesion and functioning, I was intent on
designing a project in which I could take undergraduate students with me on my
exploration. My hope was that in accomplishing my research, I would also demonstrate
to my students that in carrying out their daily lives they could be powerful agents of
social transformation.

My strategy was to create a medium in which cultural genesis could occur in a
relatively short period of time. I sought for us to observe this process, both from the
outside, as social scientists, and from the inside, as engaged, responsive, intentional participants. I needed a procedure that would allow culture to emerge as naturally as possible, and at the same time, would evoke revealing talk from inside our living involvement with cultural processes.

The use of simulations as a research tool was inspired in part by the fact that members of the LCHC share a long history of successfully using games to situate players within playworlds that support acting with intention (Cole 1996). Games provide people with legitimate roles inside a group activity where their actions have perceivable effects on the outcome. Games direct players’ attention to relevant tasks or events, and provide the necessary concepts or tools to successfully take part, and importantly, games stimulate conversation. A social simulation, a very particular sort of game, brings people together in working relationships where players are affectively engaged and perceive themselves as having central roles in a developing story.

I searched for a game that would simulate cultural processes - one that would allow us to retain many of the elements of “real-life” tasks, particularly unscripted interactions among the participants, unpredictable responses, and the emergence of artifacts and relationships that would be free to develop reflexively over time. At the same time I wanted a simulation that would permit us to build in factors that might spark the processes we were all seeking to understand, and would facilitate focus by simplifying, reducing, and controlling the problematic elements of the interactions. My plan was to make certain kinds of cultural phenomena more accessible for observation,
and to provide a measure of simplicity and clarity into what was otherwise a complicated and nebulous undertaking.

The solution came to me in the form of an email from Mike Cole which read: *Bud Mehan told me about this. I think it could make a DYNAMITE object of serious, microgenetic research.* The “this” Mike referred to was the BaFa’ BaFa’ cultural simulation game, designed by Gary Shirts (1977), which has been widely and successfully used for three decades as a tool for teaching cross-cultural sensitivity (Sullivan & Duplaga, 1997). The idea behind BaFa’ BaFa’ is to give participants an opportunity to experience cultural border crossing in a safe space, and to reflect on and unpack their experience without the prejudices and constraints that real-life border crossing often includes.

In the standard version of BaFa’ BaFa’, participants are divided into two groups. Each group spends about an hour learning a different set of cultural norms that will govern their interactions. The groups then exchange members for short periods of time in an effort to learn about the other group’s culture. The goal is to learn as much as possible about the other group’s values, customs and norms without directly asking questions – much like we are forced to learn when we travel to a foreign country. Because the two cultures in the simulation are vastly different (one geared toward community spirit and sharing, the other focused on personal achievement) there is ample potential for misunderstanding when moving from one group to the other. During the simulation, each group develops hypotheses about the other culture which are tested when the two groups come together in the end to talk about their experiences.
I was intrigued by the reports of a heightened polarization, or stronger-than-expected affinity with one’s group after very brief periods of ‘enculturation’ in BaFa’ (e.g. “Whether or not they are on the Alpha or Beta side of the simulation, they demonstrate extreme loyalty to their cultures after just a few minutes of enculturation” [Sullivan & Tu, 1996]; “I can’t believe thirty minutes of conditioning led me to think like that! Like a Betan! And all the others, too!” [Pruegger & Rogers, 1994]; “While the simulation resulted in a higher level of cultural sensitivity, it also produced strong feelings of group affiliation and ethnocentricity” [Sullivan & Duplaga, 1996].) It appeared as though BaFa’ BaFa’ contained the necessary ‘seeds’ (a few simple rules and artifacts) for planting small group cultures.

BaFa’ BaFa’ was originally developed as an experiential teaching aid, not as a research tool. In its standard form it is most usefully evaluated through retrospective accounts of attitude change (e.g. Sullivan & Duplaga, 1997). The speed with which groups cohere and attitudes change in BaFa’ BaFa’ is remarkable, but the game’s brevity, while hyper-efficient for training purposes, obscures the processes of cultural formation and change. In order to address questions related to the ways that small cultures come into existence, persist and are transformed over time, the BaFa’ BaFa’ time frame had to be extended. The bi-weekly scheduling of a university course provided the basis for thinking of the sequential class meetings as generations of cultural experience, where solutions to problems developed in one meeting could be accumulated and passed on in the next. I hypothesized that if I slowed down the simulation and let the two cultures evolve over the academic quarter, the participants
would have the opportunity to come to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of cultural processes, as well as the time to reflect on and write about those processes in weekly field notes and reflection papers.

Because BaFa’ BaFa’ was designed for use in half-day seminars, the rules were few and easy to learn; just enough to deal with the situations that were likely to arise in the short playing period. The rules so written proved perfect for my purposes as well, precisely because they were inadequate to meet the demands of prolonged social interactions. In a more extended timeframe they would require embellishment and additions as the events of the simulation unfolded, allowing us to observe the process of social norm formation and change in situ. Small adjustments to the game were made, but the central idea and the spirit of the game were retained.

**The Project**

In the Spring of 2008, forty-one undergraduate students, one professor, one graduate teaching assistant and I entered into what we believed to be a cultural simulation game. Ten weeks later, we emerged from what we knew had been a very real cultural experience. Ours was a participatory science investigation, designed to allow for the active creation of knowledge. Participants in the simulation came to the project already steeped in family, university, community, and national cultures. There were times when they spoke as citizens of their fabricated cultures, making the simulation their primary point of reference and referring to the game activities as real. At other times they spoke as observers, looking in on the game from an outsider’s
perspective. My challenge was to understand the ways these different systems of meaning making came together to inform the students’ participation in, and interpretation of, the events as they unfolded.

I expected our project to shed light on the ways culture emerges in newly-forming groups, and the ways common understandings are developed among potential group members. I hoped to see evidence of the students’ identification with their group, the invention and elaboration of cultural conventions and materials, as well as the borrowing and adaptation of cultural products from other groups when they came in contact with each other. Despite some hints from the relevant literature, I was completely unprepared for the strong emotional investments demonstrated by both the students and the researchers, for the almost immediate formation of well-defined in-group vs. out-group boundaries, for the complexity and intensity of the negotiations that took place when these boundaries were breached, or for the sustained identification with the “natal” group long after the simulation phase of the investigation was over.

As the project progressed I developed a new appreciation for social simulations, both as research tools in the social sciences and as powerful pedagogical aids. Not only did they allow us to expose and analyze the social processes that we were seeking to understand, they also elicited powerful feelings from all involved; feelings that intensified our commitment to the project, and came to guide our decision-making as the events of the simulation emerged.

In keeping with the underlying idea that cultural genesis can be fruitfully conceived of as multi-vocal narrative, this dissertation unfolds as a story – a story with
many authors - 44 to be exact. As the sole storyteller, the burden of providing a rendition of the events that is faithful to each of my co-authors weighs heavily.
PART I: TOOLKIT OF IDEAS AND METHODS

“Insofar as we make use of our healthy senses, we ourselves are the best and most exact scientific instruments possible.”

Goethe, Verses in Prose

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2 In Rudolf Steiner’s Nature’s Open Secret, p.212.
Toolkit of Orienting Ideas

At the heart of this work is the notion of a co-constitutive relationship between people and culture. In living our everyday lives we are creating our cultural worlds even as we are becoming a part of them. Normally we go about this process unaware, but I wanted to “do culture” in a conscious way. I wanted to document the genesis of culture from the inside, providing a rich, theoretically informed, multiperspectival account of the process. I was specifically interested in participating with others in forming new groups, and in revealing our insiders’ perspectives in a way that reliably represented the experiences of all of those involved. In the first half of this section I discuss the literature that led me to use narrative theories to think about the way we organize and make meaning of life’s events, seeing daily life as an ongoing co-authored story in which we each play a role, and by extension, conceptualizing cultural genesis as multi-vocal narrative process. The narrative section is followed by a selection of classic research on small group processes. These are included as an historical foundation for the present research, and because they provide a theoretical framework and a vocabulary for discussing my research findings.

Culture Genesis as a Multi-vocal Narrative Process

According to Jerome Bruner (2002) storytelling is entwined with and constitutive of human life. It transforms mere existence into human experience. Through narrative our acts may become meaningful, grand, heroic, or memorable.
Stories are problem solvers. Bruner (2002) writes, “[Narrative] is a way to domesticate human error and surprise. It conventionalizes the common forms of human mishap into genres – comedy, tragedy, romance, irony, or whatever format might lessen the sting of our fortuity” (p. 31). Narrative achieves these feats not only because of its structure, but because of its flexibility. Stories are the product of language, remarkable for its sheer generativeness, permitting countless versions to be told. Each version is particular, local and unique, and yet can have tremendous reach. Stories don’t just bring another’s experiences to life, they bring us to life, in the sense that we come to see ourselves, or feel ourselves, in the other person. We sense that the character’s troubles have the same shape as our own troubles. “Prototypical plights become root metaphors for the human condition” (Bruner, 2002, p. 60).

Conversation is the medium that would establish and maintain our relationships in the simulation. I was counting on informal discourse in the form of gossip, complaining, asking for help, offering advice, and other talk, to interweave the students’ experiences and create common ways of feeling, thinking, acting, and experiencing their cultures. I wanted them to talk about the events that were important to them – events in the present, events that had happened previously in the simulation or may happen in the future, events heard about from others, and events they could imagine happening. Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps (2001) call this everyday talk living narrative and dub it “the central proclivity of humankind” (Ochs & Capps, p. 2). Through living narrative the students would logically and temporally order the simulation events and impose a measure of coherence upon their experiences.
Our everyday conversations about fresh events, those stories that we create with others, are different from those we tell to others in that they are not fully organized into standardized narrative structures. Life doesn’t unfold in well-formed plots with beginnings, clearly defined central characters, and tidy endings that tie up all of the loose logic threads. Instead, the collaborative narrative process becomes a creative space where life’s moments are brought into the light. Interlocutors move freely from the role of teller to the role of listener and back again in order to provide the commentary and criticisms that shape the direction and content of the developing story. Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) refers to daily discourse as our “primary narrative genre” and argues that the true essence of any narrative emerges in that space between the teller and the listener, at the “boundary between two consciousnesses” (p. 106). Story tellers and listeners, in the acts of recounting, interpreting, responding and clarifying, become co-authors in the moment-to-moment, locally organized, emergent narrative achievement that we know as culture (Ochs & Caps, 2001).

In National Narratives and the Conservative Nature of Collective Memory, James Wertsch (2007) suggests that we socially construct and actively maintain “schematic narrative templates” that help us deal with the contradictions of living inside cultural systems that are at once constant and ever-changing (p. 23). These templates exert a powerful organizing force on the narratives we create, directing our attention to information that fits within their structures, excluding information that is inconsistent with earlier assumptions, predisposing us to certain conclusions and

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3 Bakhtin defines the novel as “secondary narrative genre” in that it involves the “digestion and absorption” of primary genres (p.106).
precluding others. These templates belong to particular narrative traditions that have developed over time as the result of historical events that are specific to particular communities, times and spaces: Therefore, schematic narrative templates can be expected to differ from one cultural setting to another. These constructions are not readily available to consciousness. Instead, they become second nature to us, or as Bartlett (1932) noted, they are used in an “unreflective, unanalytical and unwitting manner” (p.45). We are born, develop and learn within these narrative schemas, and so function inside them unaware of their presence or their power in our lives.

Narrative Schemas and Affect

Fredric Bartlett (1932) explored the nature of narrative structures by observing the oral passing of stories from one narrator to another. He found that narratives were immediately labeled with, an "atmosphere of attitude" which he dubbed “affective determination” (p. 80). This attitude set the stage for the first reproduction of the narrative and remained consistent throughout the life of a story, exerting profound influence on a strongly constructive memory process. In addition Bartlett found that the original material had, in every case, been enhanced and/or reduced by the subjects to a story form that could be "satisfyingly dealt with" (p. 94) or fit into a format that the subject deemed reasonable.

Bartlett reports that in general the material was altered "to any form which any ordinary member of a given social group will accept with a minimum of questioning" (p. 175). Bartlett emphasized the historical nature of these narratives. They have no
beginning in that each one is built upon the narratives that one has heard or lived before. He took the predictable progressive changes in story content to be evidence of socially acquired schematic frameworks at work in both the acquisition and recollection phases of collective memories, and in doing so Bartlett established a precedent for using multi-vocal narration as a research tool for better understanding cultural production.

Schema theories attempt to explain how groups are able to function as integrated systems, in particular how they are able to communicate richly detailed and highly nuanced information rapidly and efficiently (Rubin, 1995; Rumelhart, Smolensky, McClelland & Hinton, 1986). Vygotsky (as interpreted by Wertsch, 1985) singled out distinctive vocabularies and characteristic patterns of thinking as having the most profound impact on how a group goes about managing information. Neither of these bodies of information stand alone, and both are acquired through interaction with others. According to Vygotsky, social activity perpetually redefines the tools, concepts, and capacities that members of a group possess, but also "factors of context, habit or some other type that encourage subjects to privilege the use of one tool over others" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 229). Rumelhart, Smolensky, McClelland & Hinton (1986) conceptualize these bodies of cultural information as schemas, or multidimensional networks which include knowledge gleaned from all levels of daily experience. Schemas envelop information about causal, temporal and spatial relationships, and integrate attitudes, actions and intentions as well.
Plotkin (2003) offers the following formulation, "schemas encompass all aspects of experience and activity, and form, if a metaphor from astrology is not too way out, mental centers of gravity which attract to themselves particular experiences which they then shape" (p.175). Paraphrasing David Rumelhart, Plotkin emphasizes, "above all, schemas are active, dynamic and generative structures" (p. 177). A schema is an implicit fluid framework, less restricted to a particular situation than a script, conceptually richer than most theories, that emphasizes relationships, minimizes small variations, and can continually be updated as new information or events are introduced (Rubin, 1995).

Schema theories help account for the emotional or affective component of cultural experience. Greco and Stenner (2008) conceptualize emotion as an interstitial phenomenon, analogous to a current through which all other social processes are negotiated. I envisioned emotion as the medium in which all other schematic elements are suspended in dynamic fluid relationship. This is why Bartlett (1932) says all memories begin as a whisper of emotion. Emotion functions like a switch or a key providing instant access to all that is contained within richly embellished schemas.

It was for this reason that I decided to include two cultural “legends” or stories at the outset of the simulation. I intended for these stories to establish a historical basis and an affective climate for the progressive narratives that each culture would be creating. I attempted to evoke two different affective environments or moods on the first day of the simulation that were intend to permeate the narrative schemas of each of the groups as they developed. In the Alpha or communal group this was accomplished
by creating a home-like nurturing environment, complete with comfort food and music. The Beta group was ushered into a business meeting that was impersonal and highly structured.

**Narrative Framing**

Narrative framing provides a way to think about how people, in the process of new group formation, go about synchronizing previously acquired systems of symbols and practices – about how they integrate various, often incompatible, ways of making meaning. Narrative framing is a concept used by both Wertsch (1998, 2002) and Bruner (1991) to talk about the social organization and mediation of perception. Narrative Frames are social constructions that impose order on the world by establishing particular attitudes or perspectives which privilege certain interpretations over others. These frames come from all corners of life. There are different orders of narrative frames, some are dominant and are constructed over long periods of time through institutions like church, school or political ideology. Smaller frames are constructed through families and small groups and may be enduring or fleeting in duration. Larger frames provide backdrops against which smaller frames are referenced. It’s useful to think of framing as a process, an endless modification of existing frames as they are brought into service in new circumstances. We acquire numerous frames and employ them in changing combinations as life’s events unfold. In the analysis of my data I used the idea of narrative frames to explain the ways participants perceived the events of the simulation. At times several frames were in
use. These were not always compatible and needed to be switched, discarded, or altered in order to reconcile a participant’s actions with his or her previously held beliefs.

Narrative and Identity Formation

Narrative theories also attempt to explain the process of creating personal and group identity. Ricoeur (1991), Gergen & Gergen (1997), and Bruner (2002) make the bold proposal that there is no such thing as an essential self. Instead, we use unspoken, implicit cultural models of what selfhood might be to tell ourselves stories about who and what we are, what has happened, and why we do what we do. Our self-making stories accumulate over time and pattern themselves on conventional genres as we continually rewrite them to fit new circumstances. Bruner puts it like this:

A self-making narrative is something of a balancing act. It must, on the one hand, create a powerful conviction of autonomy, that one has a will of one’s own, a certain freedom of choice, a degree of possibility. But it must also relate the self to a world of others – to friends and family, to institutions, to the past, to reference groups. But the commitment to others that is implicit in relating oneself to others of course limits our autonomy. We seem virtually unable to live without both, autonomy and commitment, and our lives strive to balance the two. So do the narratives we tell ourselves (Bruner, 2002, p.78).

Paul Ricoeur (1991) suggests that through narrative we reinterpret our identities within social, cultural and historical context. Narratives work to synchronize ideologies and power relations, defining what identities may be possible in a given cultural context. Through narrative we find voice and agency, which Ricoeur calls the ability to emplot (p. 32). He holds emplotment, or the authoring of our own roles in the many
unfolding narratives that we will take part in over our lifetime, as the central process in identity formation and maintenance. Through emplotment, we shape our identity and the ways in which selfhood is expressed (Ricoeur, 1991).

**Narrative Manages the Temporal Dimension of Life**

We use narrative to make sense of life’s events, and to define our own roles in these events, but we also use narrative to author our world as it emerges from the past, unfolds in the present, and moves into the future. Bruner describes the process like this:

We seem to have no other way of describing "lived time" save in the form of a narrative. Which is not to say that there are not other temporal forms that can be imposed on the experience of time, but none of them succeeds in capturing the sense of lived time: not clock or calendrical time forms, not serial or cyclical orders, not any of these. It is a thesis that will be familiar to many of you, for it has been most recently and powerfully argued by Paul Ricoeur (1984) (Bruner, 2004, p.692).

In telling our stories, we are not only recounting the important events in our lives, we are also making meaning of these events, and importantly, integrating the past (in the form of cultural-historical memories and norms) and the future (in terms of what we believe is probable or possible) into our understanding of current events in order to inform our immediate decisions (Abbott, 2005). This process is called prolepsis, “a cultural mechanism that brings the future into the present” (Cole, 1996). Against a backdrop of history, we forecast the future, and from this construal we formulate our plans of action for today. Jerome Bruner (2002) says storytelling is forever in the now,
at center stage, a dialect between the comfort of the familiar past and the allure of a possible future.

Michael Bernstein (1994) demonstrates, using everyday conversations, that we infuse continuity, or a sense of unity into our daily narratives through techniques such as foreshadowing, backshadowing and sideshadowing (p. 2). (See also Gary Morson, 1994). In foreshadowing, there is an impending sense of the future, based largely on past experience, and central characters are interpreted in light of the causal roles they are assumed to be playing in the unfolding story’s outcome. In backshadowing, the future is known and characters are interpreted within the knowledge of what the future holds, and what outcomes we know their actions will certainly produce. Both strategies serve to narrow the possible narrative trajectories, making the information more manageable, forefronting those characters and actions that appear central to the plot, and overlooking all others in order to maintain a linear and logical story structure.

Narrators use sideshadowing when they present events as ambiguous, unstable, vulnerable to contradictory interpretations, or even unknowable. Unlike foreshadowing and backshadowing, sideshadowing allows for intricate plots to unfold, where small events occur within fields of almost infinite possibility and trigger unforeseeable butterfly effects. In sideshadowing no effort is made to bury or tie up loose ends in pursuit of closure (Ochs & Capps, 2001).

Ochs and Capps (2001) argue that the tension between the desire to construct a seamless storyline and the desire to capture the meaning and complexity of our lives drives our impulse to narrate. In multivocal-narration our stories are held in suspension
among the narrators and between the two imperatives, repeatedly subjected to foreshadowing, backshadowing, and sideshadowing, until satisfactory understandings are achieved. Presents are turned into pasts, these pasts are used to predict the future, and a single line of development emerges from multiple possibilities. According to Morson (1994) “Alternatives once visible disappear from view and an anachronistic sense of the past surreptitiously infects our understanding” (p. 6). Morson captures perfectly my reason for extending the experiment to span several generations of involvement. These processes must occur over time, and one episode of BaFa’ BaFa’ was not sufficient for this to happen.

**Multilevel Narratives**

This co-constructive process of collaborative narrative construction takes place on multiple levels—from small group interactions like the family units studied by Elinor Ochs and her colleagues, to the “nation creation” that is the focus of Homi Bhabha’s (1994) work. Ochs and Capp (2001) discuss the communicative means through which family units construct shared systems of meaning-making:

Everyday conversational narratives realize an essential function of narrative: a vernacular, interactional forum for ordering, explaining, and otherwise taking a position on experience. People apprehend their lives through the filter of narrative and build communities through the co-authoring of narrative; inversely, collaborative probing and redrafting of events propels, shapes, and keeps narratives alive (pp. 57-58).

Bhabha, on the other hand, stresses those narrative strategies that shape individuals into cultural beings and constitute “the nation” as a whole. He draws our
attention to the moment-by-moment performances of culture which are carried along by, and interpreted within, the tide of culture as it surges through time.

The scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture, while the very act of narrative performance interpolates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of nation as narration, there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performance. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of writing the nation (Bhabha, 1994, pp 145-146).

What Bhaba refers to as the “performative” and the “pedagogical” work together, or infer each other in a manner that is reminiscent of Clifford Geertz’ (1957) classic story of Javanese village life where the cultural current, or the moral and aesthetic mood of the people is infused with the notion that nature is tremendously powerful, mechanically regular, and highly dangerous. Within this current, “right behaviors”, like calm deliberateness, untiring persistence and dignified caution are performed quite naturally. This leads us to think about culture writ large as an epic tale which sustains the larger social norms that underlie and support an ongoing narrative process, which in turn recreates those norms in the telling of small day-to-day events.

Seylah Benhabib, Director of the Yale University Program in Ethics, Politics and Economics, offers a similar explanation, but highlights the role in the generative process of the authors’ conflicting moral evaluations of the events being narrated:

Culture presents itself through narratively contested accounts for two reasons. First, human actions and relations are formed through a double hermeneutic: We identify what we do through an account of what we do; words and deeds are equiprimordial, in the sense that almost all socially significant action beyond scratching one’s nose is identified as a certain type of doing through the account the agents and
others give of that doing. This is so even when, and especially when, there is disagreement between the doer and observer. The second reason why culture presents itself through contested accounts is that not only are human actions and interactions constituted through narratives that together form a “web of narratives” (Arendt [1958] 1973), but they are constituted through the actors evaluative stances toward their doings. In other words, there are second-order narratives entailing a certain normative attitude toward accounts of the first order deeds. What we call “culture” is the horizon formed by these evaluative stances, through which the infinite chain of space-time sequences is demarcated into “good” and “bad,” “holy” and “profane,” “pure” and “impure.” Cultures are formed through binaries because human beings live in an evaluative universe (Benhabib, 2002, pp. 6-7).

In practice, narrative is a quest for meaning when experiences often seem devoid of any sense (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Narrative is situated, at once shared and personal, and unlike a chronological listing of events, narrative encapsulates the player’s actions within a moral framework and so provides a glimpse of the larger social ethos within which the events are played out. Any narrative is incomprehensible outside of the cultural system that justifies the actions of the players. According to Gergen & Gergen (1986) “All events in a successful narrative are related by virtue of their containment in a given evaluative space. Therein lies the coherence of the narrative” (p. 26).

These authors have helped me to conceptualize the genesis of culture as a collective narrative process – a creative meaning-making endeavor that entails ongoing negotiation and adaptation, affective investment, the establishment of personal identity, the synchronization of previously learned systems of symbols and practices, and the development of hybrid and new practices. Importantly narrative theory works in perfect harmony with the foundational argument of this dissertation, that culture is a
two way process through which we are both creative and created. In the authoring of our personal stories, we are also co-authoring larger social narratives, which in turn have profound influence on the kinds of personal stories we can write. Once again Bruner says it well:

My second thesis is that the mimesis between life so-called and narrative is a two-way affair: that is to say, just as art imitates life in Aristotle's sense, so, in Oscar Wilde's, life imitates art. Narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative. "Life" in this sense is the same kind of construction of the human imagination as "a narrative" is (Bruner, 2004, p. 692).

In summary, I use narrative theories of culture to help explain the way we “wrote ourselves into the story” or came to identify ourselves as part of one or another of the simulated cultures. Narrative schemas offered a way to think about the emotion or affective dimension of the simulation experience. Narrative theories established the notion of perceptual frames, which I used to conceptualize the ways all of us in the simulation struggled to synchronize our previously learned cultural habits in order to accomplish the tasks we were facing. Narrative theories naturally accounted for the passage of time, and were the impetus behind my decision to include a “legend” for each of the simulated cultures, providing an historical basis from which the cultures’ narratives could emerge. Finally, narrative theories of culture laid the groundwork for my decision to use personal narratives in the form of ethnographic field notes as the primary source of data for my analysis.
Cultural Genesis in Small Group Interaction

Conceptualizing culturalgenesis as a narrative process demands that we think of culture, not as a single thing, but as an abstract notion that emerges from observing a collection of things in concert, like material artifacts, behaviors, and beliefs. For culture, so defined, to emerge, this collection must be shared within a group of people. Many things are commonly shared among people, but this does not denote a culture unless the sharing occurs within an identifiable group, and at the same time is relatively uncommon in other groups. Below I have attempted to disassemble this concept in a way that provides a vocabulary for discussing cultural genesis within the present research project.

I begin by borrowing Gary Alan Fine’s (1987) idea that the collection of norms arising within small groups can usefully be thought of as *idiocultures*, and Michael Cole’s (1996) understanding of the role artifacts play in the creation and transmission of culture. I include in some detail Rose and Felton’s (1955) lean and elegant experiment revealing the production and repetition of descriptive labels within and between small groups of individuals, and Sherif and Sherif’s (1953) work bringing together participants with no established relationships in order to observe the creation of structured groups and the changes wrought by inter-group interaction. Each of these authors sheds light on the processes that sustained this simulation and their ideas inform the analysis that will follow.
Small Group Idiocultures

Gary Alan Fine (1987) uses the term *idioculture* to describe the cultural formations that emerge in small groups. He holds that in order to understand the persistence and evolution of cultural practices of communication, we must consider what these practices mean to the actors. An idioculture, or the “meaningful traditions and artifacts of a group; ideas behaviors, verbalization, and material objects” (p. 124) emerges from collective intentional activity and develops and evolves over time in response to the challenges that the group experiences.

It’s important to clarify that the term idioculture does not refer to the individuals who make up a cultural group (although the idioculture can only be manifest through the actions of group members), but to the group’s unique cultural package. Fine’s work with little league baseball helps to make this clear. A team’s players, coaches and spectators will come and go. The location and specifics of the ballpark may change. The uniforms and equipment all undergo transformation over time. Even the rules of the game are subject to interpretation. But there is an enduring, cohesive set of ideal forms of the physical and procedural tools of the game, and of ways of thinking and playing that persists and is normalized within a group of players, and this, according to Fine, is the idioculture of a little league baseball team (Fine 1979, 1982). “Members of a group recognize that they share experiences, and that these experiences can be referred to with the expectation they will be understood by other members, thus being used to construct a reality for the participants” (Fine, 1982, p. 124).
Cole (1996) sees this process routinely in his Fifth Dimension (5thD) programs, which he often refers to as idiocultures. “The shared culture that grows up in the 5th D may not, initially, be evident to a casual observer…” (p. 302), but through continued engagement in the activities a heightened awareness of the culture develops. The bustle of “…kids coming and going, and arguments in progress, and computers blinking…” seems mysterious and chaotic to newcomers. Before long, however, they notice that “everyone seems to know what to do… no one bumps into each other, or fights with anyone else...the students become aware that they are entering a system of shared understandings” (p. 303). Cole goes on to say that enculturation into such a group involves the “acquisition of knowledge, changing role structures, and new ways of mediating one’s interactions through the artifacts that the culture makes available” and is continually at risk from outside influences, both in the immediate and the larger social contexts (p. 305).

In the present research I think of the two different collections of cultural products that develop through the simulation as two different idiocultures. I keep in mind that these did not appear magically, but were created out of already existing “cultural starter kits.” Not only were they embedded inside the larger culture of the class, and by extension, of the university, but they also bore influences from the cultural heritages of the people comprising the two groups.
Culture as the Accumulation of Artifacts

Perhaps the one distinguishing characteristic of the human species is the capacity, and the necessity, to live in a world transformed by the actions of earlier humans (Cole, 1996). In what Tomasello (1999) refers to as the “ratchet effect” these transformations are accumulated across generations in the form of artifacts. Culture consists of all the material and/or ideal artifacts accumulated over the social group’s history, whether that history is of long or short duration (Cole, 1996). Vygotsky referred to artifact mediated actions as the “cultural habit of behavior” which enables human beings to begin to regulate themselves “from the outside” (1930/1994). As A. R. Luria (1928) put it, artifacts incorporated into human action not only “radically change his conditions of existence, they even react on him in that they effect a change in him and his psychic condition” (p. 493). The flip side of this process is the ongoing reformation of the artifacts as they are brought into service in pursuit of changing goals. As contexts evolve, new information is acquired, and new ways of doing things are developed, the resulting new knowledge is incorporated into the “toolkit” of artifacts, which is passed on in its modified form to immediate others and to future generations. This process leads James Wertsch to label artifacts “carriers of sociocultural patterns of knowledge” (1994, p. 204).

Cultural Genesis as the Emergence of Shared Habits: A Barebones Model

Mediating artifacts may be material, but they are also ideal in that they embody the solutions to problems previously faced by others. Rose and Felton (1955) were
interested in discovering the minimum requirements necessary for the emergence of the rudimentary expression of certain shared experiences that qualify as cultural artifacts. They offered a minimal definition of culture as “the capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”, and brought together groups that were barely large enough, in sessions that were barely long enough, for behavioral habits to develop (Rose and Felton, 1955, p. 383).

Rose and Felton brought small groups of participants together in a series of informal sessions. At each meeting they were asked to examine a collection of inkblot cards and to develop descriptive labels for referring to the different images. Each successive meeting called for the examination and discussion of cards that had been talked about in previous sessions, allowing each person to copy (or not) labels previously created by others or by oneself. As the experiment progressed, the memberships of the groups were rearranged at certain intervals. This procedure allowed responses to be invented by a participant in one group, copied, borrowed, or changed by other members of that group, repeated as a habit, and ultimately, with an interchange of group members, to be diffused to other groups where it might be borrowed by still other participants.

The participants’ descriptive labels were categorized by Rose and Felton as either inventions (the first appearance of the description), culture borrowings (repetition of a description by those in the same session it was used), habits (repeated use of a description by the same participant in consecutive trial sessions), and culbits (descriptions borrowed from others that become habits). Rose and Felton found that
although *invention*, *borrowing* and *habits* fluctuated according to various social circumstances, *culbits* increased relentlessly regardless of social circumstance (p. 391). In other words, once a description was accepted, it was apt to remain in stable use within the group. A surprising finding was that once a description attained *culbit* status, all innovation (novel descriptions of a particular inkblot) stopped.

Rose and Felton’s method provides a narrowly controlled and focused look at cultural genesis. They isolate and focus specifically on the production and transmission of group-specific ways of categorizing and sharing information. Their findings are useful in thinking about the creation, adoption, and adaptation of culture within and between the groups that participated in this research.

Like Rose and Felton, I was interested in how new ways of communicating (words, gestures, patterns of behavior. e.g. cultural artifacts) arise, take hold, persist and change within small groups. I differ in approach in that Rose and Felton attempted to isolate these practices in order to examine and measure distilled bits of culture as they emerged in a laboratory setting; it was my goal to observe these same phenomena as they emerge in a more natural setting where emotions, value judgments and personal commitments were made visible. It was my plan to identify artifacts that emerged during the simulation, and follow the transformation of these artifacts as they were brought into service as circumstances of the simulation demanded, in order to reveal the convergence of opinions and attitudes within the groups, as well as the formation of common attitudes about the outgroups.
Small Groups in Interaction

The classic Robber’s Cave experiment by Muzafar and Carolyn Sherif is more similar to mine in spirit and approach than any other. The Robber’s Cave experiment differs from my work in that the Sherifs are speaking from an outside observer’s perspective, drawing correlations and developing theories from the informed observation of others’ behaviors. What I have done, and what I believe distinguishes my project from other research on the emergence of culture, is to both immerse myself in the processes I wish to understand and give voice to others who engage in these processes with me, in order to create a multi-vocal insiders’ account of cultural genesis.

Muzafar and Carolyn Sherif (1953) brought 24 boys (age 12) together in an isolated summer camp to test two hypothesis: When individuals having no established relationships are brought together to interact in group activities with common goals, they will produce a group structure with established roles and norms; if two in-groups are thus formed and brought into functional relationship under conditions of competition and group frustration, attitudes and hostile actions in relation to the out-group will rise and be standardized by in-group members.

The 24 boys were carefully screened – all white, from middle class “stable homes”, and all unknown to each other – to assure that any results could not be attributed to preexisting issues or personal relationships among the boys. They were divided into two experimental groups, and matched as carefully as possible on various physical and psychological characteristics. For the first few days the boys engaged in standard camp activities within their own groups, swimming, hiking, canoeing. Two
mini-cultures developed, each with its own name (the Rattlers and the Eagles), group symbol, social structure, and norms of appropriate behavior. When the boys were told there was another group in residence, some of them spontaneously suggested that some sort of sporting challenge should be arranged – a detail that is significant in that it suggests a measure of in-group favoritism had occurred even before the out-groups were introduced.

The second stage of the experiment began when a series of between-group contests was announced. The winning group was to receive a trophy cup, and each member would win a new penknife. The losing team would receive nothing. From the moment of the announcement, the boys never passed up the chance to insult members of the out-group, or sometimes, to physically attack the out-group boys or their living quarters.

Through a variety of camp games, which were actually carefully designed mini experiments, the Sherifs were able to document systematic and regular in-group favoritism in attitudes and judgments. In one of the games the goal was to collect beans that had been scattered over the grass. Each boy’s gathering was placed on an overhead projector and displayed on the camp dining hall screen, and then everyone estimated how many beans each boy had collected. In reality the screen was rigged so that the number of beans projected was always the same, but the boys consistently overestimated the count for their own team members, and underestimated that of the out-group.
A surprise finding was that across more than a dozen experiments, it was always the winning team that demonstrated the highest levels of in-group favoritism and of out-group degradation. Up until this point it had been hypothesized that increased levels of frustration would result in increased levels of aggression against members of the out-group (e.g. Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower and Sears, 1939) or that the losing team would display the highest levels of favoritism and derisive behavior, but the opposite seemed to be true in the Robber’s Cave project.

The Robber’s Cave Experiment also revealed changes within the two groups. Psychological assessment of the in-group members showed shifts and reversals of friendships away from earlier spontaneous choices and toward more central members of the in-group. The Sheriffs saw evidence early on that the boys were developing a hierarchy among themselves, not so much in the way they were treating each other, as in the extent to which initiatives in group activities were taken, and whether or not such initiatives were effective. By the end of the first week, each group had and recognized that they had a leader (Mills in the Rattlers and Craig in the Eagles). From this period on, initiatives by the other boys were only effective when the leader approved them. Leadership among the boys had its limitations. Baseball was extremely important to these boys, but in neither of the groups was the leader also the captain of the baseball team. In both groups the leader told the baseball captain which position he wanted to play, and the Sheriffs report numerous instances of the leader taking liberties in baseball and not being censured by the captain, but when Craig of the Eagles wanted to umpire, the entire group - not just the captain - told him no, that staff should umpire, and he
accepted this. In short, he was exceeding the bounds of his leadership, and he accepted
the group's judgment. What the Sherifs did not find was evidence of multiple
leadership, where shifts in control coincided with shifts in activities. Once the group
structure was established, it was stabilized and surfaced repeatedly over the extent of
the project.

During the final stage of the Robber's Cave experiment a series of superordinate
goals was introduced, chosen to be compelling to both groups, and unachievable by the
efforts and resources of one group alone. This established a state of interdependence
between the groups, requiring the boys to face common problems, jointly plan
solutions, and execute these plans together. In this stage the prevailing friction between
the groups was reduced and the boys became reciprocally cooperative and helpful.

According to the Sherifs, the change in behavior and patterns of interaction between the
two groups was striking to all observers, and was corroborated by the boys responses
on a written stereotype assessment measurement that asked the boys to rate each other
as either favorable or unfavorable on six different dimensions. The ratings, collected
before and after the final phase of the experiment, showed both a decrease in negative
stereotyping of the outgroup, and a decrease in positive stereotyping of the ingroup.

Following the “Robber’s Cave” experiment, Sherif (1966) reports what he
believed to be the key elements of small group formation and functioning. The first
component is the identification of a common goal that fosters interactions, and those
interactions must be seen to produce effects different from those the members are able
to produce on their own. One example offered by Sherif was the tug-of-war. No boy
could resist the lure of the competition, and individual performance was not a viable option. The second component is the emergence of a group structure and stable intra-group relationships that clearly delineate the in-group from other groups. This process is normally accomplished by the tendency of players to fall into roles or jobs that they can perform efficiently, and is often facilitated by the emergence of leaders who then assign roles to the less aggressive participants. The last component is the standardization of a set of norms which regulates relationships and activities within the group, and with nonmembers and out-groups. Each of these components takes time to develop, and their strength and durability are directly correlated with the extent of the group’s history.

The take-away message from the Sherifs’ work is this: We make judgments about other groups of people as if the groups and the people in them have characteristics that persist through time. However the Sherifs’ evidence suggests we are making those judgments based on how we relate to those groups at the moment we judge them, and as relationships change, so do our judgments. Our evaluations are about actions, ours and theirs. They are about what we are planning to do, and how those plans relate to what the others are doing, or more correctly, what we perceive them to be doing. We’ve come to believe that we see people as they truly are, and that we assign them to real categories, like nationality, race, religion, occupation, and gender. We also believe that group membership results in the assimilation of particular sets of norms for thinking and acting. But the Sherifs’ studies show that group affiliation functions in ways that are quite different than we may think. It isn’t the
group we belong to that affects our judgments; it’s where that group is, what’s happening around it, and how we must respond to the situations we find ourselves in based on group membership.

The Psychological Foundations of Cultural Genesis

The following collection of research is included in this discussion of orienting concepts because it is helpful in accounting for the intense and lasting personal investments that the participants made in this simulation. I begin with two ideas introduced by Kurt Lewin (1948) which have had a profound impact on our understanding of group cohesion. Lewin calls these the “interdependence of fate” and “task interdependence”. I found both ideas directly relevant to my research project and instrumental in my data analysis.

According to Lewin, groups emerge, not because the members share common characteristics (although they may) but because the members understand that some element of their fate depends on the fate of the group as a whole. My research project had, in fact, been planned such that the fate of the individual participants in our simulation (in so far as their success in the events of the simulation and the class were concerned) was inextricably bound to the fate of their group. In fact, the students’ success in the assigned tasks was wholly dependent on their ability to function as a cohesive unit. However, Lewin (1948) shows that common fate is the weakest form of interdependence. More crucial is the degree to which the goals of the members of the
group are interdependent. The most powerful bonds are created when each member’s achievements have implications for the achievements of the other group members.

Deutsch (1949) tested Lewin’s hypothesis by assigning half of the students in his university psychology course to small study groups and informing them that they would be evaluated according to the progress of their group – in fact all members of a group were to receive the same grade. The other half of the students were also placed in study groups, but told they would be graded individually. Over a period of five weeks, the interdependent groups scored higher in measures of cooperation, participation and communication. The members appeared to like each other more, were less aggressive, and on several academic measures were more productive than the students in the individually graded condition.

In our simulation, all students were graded individually. However, the success of their cultures was entirely a team effort. No one student could create culture alone. Moreover, the extent to which the student’s fate was interdependent with that of their teammates differed depending on which culture they participated in. In light of Lewin’s theories I predicted the more communal of the two simulated groups would develop more cooperative, less aggressive ways of interacting than would the group whose ethic favored individual effort, and to some extent the simulation data bore this out.

Deutsch’s findings in regards to academic achievement have been repeatedly corroborated (See for example: Rosenbaum, Moore, Cotton, Cook, Hieser & Shover, 1980; Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson & Skon, 1981), but more pertinent to this
discussion are the findings that the students in the interdependent condition “liked each other more” and were more cooperative and communicative. “Cohesion” is the word most often used in the literature on group processes to describe solidarity (Brown, 2000). But what does it mean, exactly? Hogg (1992) defines group cohesion in terms of the members’ attraction, not to the others in the group, but to the idea of the group itself. In other words, members are attracted to other members of the group because they are members. What they are like as individuals is a secondary consideration.

Surprisingly, similarity among members is not a defining factor in group cohesion. More important is whether or not a group can be successful in achieving its goals. This was first demonstrated by Anderson (1975) who created two kinds of groups, one consisting of people with (self-reported) dissimilar backgrounds and values, and the other with people who scored similarly to each other on the self-report measure. The participants were asked to take part in a two-session project in which they would design a new student dormitory. In one condition (facilitated) each student was given an identical packet of briefing and training materials. In the other condition (impeded) each student in a group received a different packet of support materials. At the end of the first session all of the participants were asked a single question: “Would you like to remain in your group for the next session?” The majority of the students in the facilitated condition (85 percent) wished to remain with their group for session two, while only 45 percent of those in the impeded condition wanted to stay put. Similarity of background and values had no effect on the participants desire to stay with their group. These findings were also supported by our data. As you will read in more detail
later, despite the fact that they were randomly assigned at the beginning of the experiment, at the end of the simulation only three of the forty participants voiced a desire to change cultural groups.

The knowledge that success in attaining group goals encourages group cohesion meshes nicely with Sherif’s (1966) argument that success breeds cohesion because it accentuates the positive aspects of group affiliation for the members. Group membership becomes valuable to us when it orients us in a positive way towards life outside the group.

**Cultural Genesis as a Meaning-making Process: The Need for Closure**

Leon Festinger (1954) argued that there is a fundamental connection between culture and the human *need to know*. What people want most, according to Festinger, is to possess a valid set of beliefs with which to make decisions and judgments. He points out that our physical world, no matter how elaborate, does not offer standards for validating our personal beliefs, attitudes or opinions. For that we must turn to others. According to Kruglanski and Webster (1996) the pursuit of a common reality underlies social processes, like collective narration discussed above, and promotes uniformity in beliefs and norms among members of the same community. Kruglanski and Webster take an even stronger position than Festinger’s *need to know* theory, holding that our desire to have answers is so powerful that any answer is preferable to confusion and ambiguity. They argue that our need for cognitive closure, or the need to stop thinking
about an issue and move on, is often more pressing than our concerns for veracity or validation.

The human need for cognitive closure is implicated in cultural genesis in two ways. It first fuels the process of constructing common realities, and then is instrumental in the freezing and perpetuation of cultural norms or patterns over time. One of the processes that the need for closure sets in motion is our tendency to eliminate obstacles to consensus. Kruglanski and Webster (1991) designed a series of experiments aimed at revealing the ways we redefine group boundaries in an effort to attain consensus on issues that are important to us. The task was for groups of strangers to come to an agreement on definitions of harassment. They found that when participants’ need for closure was heightened (through exposure to noise and time pressure) they were more inclined to expel or denigrate dissenters while positively evaluating the conformists who contributed towards the emergence of a group consensus.

Once a particular group has attained a level of consensus and developed sufficient identifying elements, a number of processes come into play to ensure the continuation of those established cultural norms. One of these processes is in-group favoritism. The desire for consensus as a means of closure invests one’s group with particular value as a source for that closure. Turnover in membership would weaken the group’s consensus, hence the delineation and preservation of one’s reference group takes on new importance.
Kruglanski and Freund (1983) found that as the need for closure increases, so does the tendency to form stereotypes on the basis of false information. This was shown to work in several ways. Participants high in need for closure judged out-group members predominantly on the basis of negative stereotypes, creating a perceived homogenization of the out-group. In doing so, a homogenization of in-group members happened as well in that they all used the same stereotypes and formed identical evaluations of the out-group members – they all start to think alike about the out-group. In addition, in-group members were inclined to build positive stereotypes with which to characterize other in-group members.

**Group Membership is Situationally Specific**

The salience of group membership in any given circumstance is important. When we are aware of our membership in a group we are most apt to conform to that group’s behavioral norms. A robust body of research and literature on academic stereotype threat, or the tendency for students to perform in self-fulfilling ways on academic measures, shows that when students are reminded of their membership in a group, they will behave in ways that are consistent with public opinion about that group. (For an overview of this literature see Gresky, Eyck, Lord & McIntyre, 2005.) In one relevant study by Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady (1999) Asian American women at Stanford University were reminded either of their identity as women (who are perceived to struggle in math) or of their identity as Asians (who are assumed to excel in math) before taking math exams. When the students were reminded they were Asians
they scored significantly higher on the tests than they did when reminded of their
identity as women.

Conversely, when we are distracted and our status as a group member is not
particularly salient, we no longer behave in ways that are consistent with group
membership. John Darley and Dan Bateson (1973) famously brought this into focus
when they designed an experiment focused on theology students at Princeton. All of
the students were asked to walk across campus to give a talk. Half were asked to speak
on the parable of the Good Samaritan, the other half on the availability of seminary
jobs. In one condition students were told that they were late and should hurry over to
the speaking venue. Participants in another condition were told that they had just
enough time to get there and set up, and in the third condition, that there was plenty of
time, but they should head on over and listen to the other speakers. The assumption
was that the upcoming speaking assignment and the looming time restrictions would
overpower any beliefs the students might have about how seminarians should respond
to people in need. Along the way each of the students encountered a man slumped in
a doorway who moaned as they walked by. Our common sense tells us that a person
studying for the ministry would be sympathetic and helpful, and in the self-report
questionnaires filled out at the beginning of the experiment, each of the participants
agreed. But the results showed that neither the extent to which the students rated
themselves in the “kind” and “charitable” categories, nor the topic of the speech they
were planning to deliver predicted whether or not they would stop to help a man in
need. The only predictor was how much time the participants felt they could devote
without being late for their appointments. Some of the students, while reading their preparation notes on the Good Samaritan, actually stepped over the prostrate man.

These works reveal the situated nature of our identification with groups and deployment of group norms. When we are cognizant of group membership, we behave in ways that reflect the norms and values of the group. As we move in and out of our different group affiliations, our identities and our actions are reflexively transformed. Outside of circumstances where a particular group membership is salient, the mindset and behaviors that mark us as a member of that group are abandoned.

I found this information works nicely with the narrative framing ideas discussed earlier in this chapter. When cognizant of membership in a cultural group, we unconsciously select narrative schematic frames appropriate to that group. As we move in and out of our various idiocultural affiliations we frame, and so perceive, the world differently, and behave accordingly.

In summary, in the present research cultural genesis is conceived as a multivocal narrative process which is located in small group interaction. The goal of the simulation was to create small-group cultures, or idiocultures (Fine, 1987). Within these idiocultures, I hoped to reveal the emergence, stabilization and evolution of shared habits, or culbits (Rose and Felton, 1955). I planned to sustain the group interactions long enough to allow the construction of structured relationships among group members, and to bring two groups in contact in order to observe the development of ingroup vs. outgroup identities (Sherif and Sherif, 1953). Having accomplished the
above, I turned to the literature on small group cohesion (e.g. Lewin, 1984; Festinger, 1954; Kruglanski, 1983) in an effort to explain my research findings.
Toolkit of Methodology and Methods

Earlier I discussed the fact that I have adopted the route of Romantic Science for this thesis. Although these ideas can be traced back to Aristotle, it is Romantic Science as proposed by Goethe and elaborated by those for whom romantic science provides a guide to educational practice that are my major inspiration. In the sections to follow I first analyze the idea of romantic science as an overarching, guiding framework and then describe the particular methods that I used to implement that framework using deliberately selected methods appropriate to the concrete circumstances of a cultural simulation.

Romantic Science Research and Participatory Science Pedagogy

Goethe (1749-1832) systematically developed what now is known as “Romantic Science,” an idea that exerted profound influence on Hegel, Marx, Vygotsky, Luria, and Polyani, each of whom frequently cited Goethe in his own work. Goethe formulated a mode of scientific inquiry that consciously incorporated the “metamorphosis of the scientist” (Amrine, 1998). He saw scientific experiments, not as isolatable sources of knowledge, but as artistic practices through which our perceptions are refined over time. Science, in Goethe’s formulation, is a natural process in which everyone participates and is changed, and scientific discovery is the product of a period of time rather than the result of individual endeavors (Zajonc, 1998).
Romantic Science is defined by its method of research, and by the kinds of knowledge or experiences this method may produce. Goethe argued that knowledge is the product of a collaborative relationship with nature – of a sympathetic participation in the development of natural phenomena (Zajonc, 1998). Nature, Goethe tells us, does not reveal her secrets under torture (Blunden, 2009).

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) in his interpretations of Goethe’s scientific writings, established the theoretical foundations for what was then a radical form of education (Steiner, 1968). Steiner’s vision, manifest today in the Waldorf School model (Petrash, 2002; Barnes, 2000), is built on the idea of participatory science, where learners embark on a journey of discovery, entering into the dynamic processes they are trying to understand. Instead of critiquing scientific hypotheses conceived by others, students of romantic science undertake a series of experiments ordered in such a way that, upon their completion, the underlying idea becomes intuitive (Steiner, 1968).

In *Empirical Observation and Science*, Goethe (1798, 1988) wrote that knowledge develops in three stages: the first is the identification of an *empirical phenomenon*, as it is readily observed in nature; this is then elevated to the level of *scientific phenomenon* through experimental methods which attempt to replicate the phenomenon under conditions different from those in which it was originally observed; finally, the *pure phenomenon* emerges as it appears in a continuous sequence of events, not as something that can be understood in isolation (Zajonc, 1998). In fact, as Goethe has Mephistopheles tell his student in the often-quoted passage below, any effort to
focus on parts of knowledge, frozen, extracted from their natural unfolding, and linearly sequential, can never discover the meaning of the living whole.

And so the philosophers step in
To weave a proof that things begin,
Past question, with an origin.
With first and second well rehearsed,
Our third and fourth can be deduced.
And if no second were or first,
No third or fourth could be produced.
As weavers though, they don’t amount to much.
To docket living things past any doubt
You cancel first the living spirit out;
The parts lie in the hollow of your hand.
You only lack the living part you banned.

(Goethe, in Faust, 1988, translated by P.Wayne)
**Peopled Ethnography**

My implementation of a Romantic Science methodology is much like *peopled ethnography*, the bottom-up approach to the analysis of cultural processes practiced by Gary Alan Fine (2003). Fine (2003) distinguishes *peopled ethnography* from the two more traditional forms of ethnographic research, *personal ethnography* and *postulated ethnography*.

*Personal ethnography* provides a pure narrative description, while *peopled ethnography* strives for a more theoretically informed analysis and offers a set of contentions with which the reader might disagree.

*Postulated ethnography* uses vignettes to exemplify or instantiate a researcher’s theoretical claims. In *peopled ethnography* the researcher’s theoretical claims emerge from richly detailed observations.

In a peopled ethnography the text is neither descriptive narrative nor conceptual theory; rather, the understanding of the setting and its theoretical implications are grounded in a set of detailed vignettes, based on field notes, interview extracts, and the texts that group members produce. The detailed account, coupled with the ability of the reader to generalize from the setting, is at the heart of this methodological perspective (Fine, 2003, p.41).

The form of ethnography employed in my research is *peopled* in that my ultimate goal is to understand the workings of small cultural groups which can only be realized through people in interaction. It is not the people *per se* who are the focus of the research, but the people who speak and act as representatives of their groups, allowing for the serial observations and commentary that are crucial to our understanding of group processes.
Student Ethnographers

Although they never used the term “peopled ethnography” Cole and his colleagues have a long history of combining multiple, detailed, ethnographic reports with emerging social theories to further our understanding of social phenomena. In these efforts, the most significant source of data has been field notes written by undergraduate students who were participating in practicum programs (Cole and the Distributed Literacy Consortium, 2006). It was a small step to extend this practice and ask participants in our simulations to keep a daily record of their experiences.

I had several good reasons for doing this. I felt situating the participants as ethnographers, who were working on an actual research project in which their participation had real consequences, would encourage a deep level of personal commitment to the investigation, and a significant investment in their own learning. I wanted to foster what John Shotter (2005) calls an emotional and embodied “withness” to our students’ experiences, as opposed to the conventional “aboutness” that being merely an observer engenders. Participant observation requires ethnographers to be involved in social acts, and importantly, to perform both social acts and researchers’ roles, even though they are not yet competent. From a participatory science perspective, it is through these interpersonal engagements that understandings, both shared and intrapersonal, develop. I also hoped that knowing they would be writing daily reports on their activities in the class would heighten the participants’ attention to
the details of the interactions, thereby enriching both their experiences in the simulation and the reports they wrote about those experiences.

Assuming an ethnographer’s perspective provided a way for students to define and evaluate their own roles in the simulated cultures. This positioning allowed them to step into another culture to the extent that they would be able to see themselves through the other’s eyes.

Marshall Kitchens, professor of Rhetoric at Oakland University in Michigan, notes the inherent tension in negotiating social boundaries that pivots on the distinction between insiders and outsiders, familiars and exotics. He contends that students, in order to develop a better understanding of culture, must be able see their own strangeness through the eyes of others.

They have to take on this role of alien or “Other” as a way of seeing the familiar as strange. At the same time, they need their insider status in order to understand the exotic as familiar. They have to see both difference and sameness and establish a very careful combination of both insider and outsider…. Without a balanced and informed perspective, the result is either a naïve celebration of one’s own culture from the inside, or a shallow critique of the “Other” from the outside, both failing to achieve a sympathetic and rich understanding of culture” (Kitchens, 2006, p.1).

The students were asked to take special interest in the moments of discomfort or discord, and to share what they learned from these experiences as they participated in the simulation. In this regard the student field notes became powerful tools for thinking and reflecting. Not only did they offer a recording of the daily experiences, understandings, and interpretations of an ethnographer “in the field,” but writing field notes allowed students to organize experiences, understandings, and interpretations into
coherent narratives. Cole’s Fifth Dimension Projects have repeatedly shown that participants acting as ethnographers think through their experiences, interpret newly gathered information in terms of a larger context, and organize knowledge in a communicative way (Cole and the Distributed Literacy Consortium, 2000). I believed that becoming ethnographers and writing ethnographic field notes would inspire the participants to think more deeply about the simulation, relate the events to their larger lives, and reveal more about what they were thinking, than would traditional participation, report writing, and debriefing interviews. Situating the students as both “natives” and ethnographers also provided two levels of data, the student field notes and the field notes of the researchers, allowing for a triangulated analysis that would not be possible otherwise.

**Integrating the Simulation into the Course Curriculum**

It was important to design a research framework that would allow for the transparent genesis of small group cultures, and at the same time integrate the social questions and theories that had prompted and informed this research into the class curriculum. I wanted to structure the research in such a way that as the simulation unfolded, as situations and questions arose, the class would read and discuss relevant theories, testing them against our immediate experiences.

I began by breaking down the BaFa’ BaFa’ game and rebuilding it to fit the needs of the project. This process is explained in detail in the daily lesson plans which are included in the chapter endnotes. I then divided the ten-week quarter into three
periods which I called the simulation, the unpacking, and the editing phases of the experiment. During the simulation phase, I planned for the students to spend two class meetings learning and practicing the ways of their cultures and six meetings engaged in cross-cultural events before taking part in a final within-culture celebration day. The unpacking phase included two class meetings, each devoted to revealing the “secret insiders’ information” of one of the cultures. In the final editing phase we would spend the remainder of the quarter reading classic and contemporary literature and applying it to our experiences in the simulation; in effect we would be editing the narrative that we had created together, discussing and negotiating the events from our various perspectives, coming to some agreement (or not) about their meaning.

In previous classes my students had been enthralled by Giuseppe Montovani’s (2000) book, *Exploring Borders*, in which he weaves together bits and pieces of history, classic fiction, and his own life events to illuminate theories of culture and cross-cultural experience. I introduced it as a foundational text, to be read in short segments as the simulation developed. In addition, many of the authors whose work informed this research were included in the course reading list. (See Appendix A for the course syllabus, Appendix B for the field note writing guide, Appendix C and Appendix D for the midterm reflection and final research paper guides, and Appendix E for the daily lesson plans.)
Introduction of Cultural Legends

I was thinking about cultural genesis as a multi-vocal narrative process, and since narratives must be historically situated, I knew I needed to provide some type of historical foundation from which they could develop. In this case, since the goal was to have the two groups develop different cultural narratives; two histories needed to be established. This goal was accomplished by introducing a different historical legend to each of the cultures. These legends were selected to resonate with the cultural norms laid out in the BaFa’ BaFa’ game. For the communal Alpha culture the folk tale “Stone Soup” was chosen, and in the individualistic Beta culture the Old Testament “Parable of the Talents” was used⁴. It was my intention that the two legends would serve as different cultural frames of reference through which the students would approach the tasks and situations they would encounter in the simulation.

Affective Determination

It was also important to create different atmospheres for each of the cultures. I needed two different developmental contexts that would establish moods and evoke feelings harmonious with the ethics and perspectives inherent in the legends and the BaFa’ BaFa’ norms. As you will read later, the room where the Alpha culture met was rearranged and embellished to be as homey and inviting as possible, while the Beta room was made to resemble an austere and efficient business meeting place. Refreshments, nametags, presentation materials, and procedures were all chosen with these themes in mind.

⁴ Both legends are included in their entirety in the April 3rd Diary entry in Section II.
A Meso-genetic Strategy for Documentation and Analysis

The participatory, Romantic science research plan adhered to in this project incorporates the meso-genetic strategy of data collection proposed by Michael Cole (1995b). This approach provides a way for the researcher to account for changing influences over the developmental history of an activity such as the cultural simulations I used.

In my case, it is helpful to think of “mesogenetic” with respect to two of the key models I used. Firstly, in Rose and Felton one has a cultural process that is drastically pared down and foreshortened. People come together for a few hours, and because the stimuli used and requirements (to come up with common labels for meaningless two-dimensional figures) are so minimal, one can observe the growth, migration, and transformation of mini-cultural conventions, schemas in Bartlett’s terms, culbits to Rose and Felton. But this analytic gain is accompanied by a substantive loss. The stimuli are so minimal, the time so short, and the uses to which the culbit/conventions can be put so indifferent, that the emotion, conflict, and caring that are so much of actual cultural formation have been stripped away; yet from my perspective, cognition and emotion must be studied as intimately connected and inter-animating.

Secondly, we know from the testimonies about BaFa BaFa simulations that they appear to evoke a good simulation of culture formation and contact that connects with the everyday experience of the participants in a significant way. The difficulty is that the richness of BaFa BaFa combined with ITS short time span mean that the
phenomena of (relatively complex) culture formation go by in a flash. All we have left is retrospection, and it is widely understood that we delude ourselves when we interpret development, at the level of the individual (Freud, 1924) or History (Carr, 1961) only from the perspective of the present.

The use of a meso-genetic approach, in this case, means that we slow down the BaFa BaFa process, providing sufficient time for its potential richness to develop, and allow it to go on over several sessions, each of which is carefully documented (including the “pre” phase of planning for the simulation in the first place). It then becomes possible to reconstruct the process of cultural genesis, in the manner of Romantic science as outlined by Goethe, with me, the analyst, living and then reliving the process with the other participants.

This mode of proceeding allows me, in effect, to “look at history from both ends” (Cole, 1995b). By starting with my design plans and then providing documentation, including documentation of how I was interpreting the events in the sequence in which they transpired. This procedure allows for initial, interim analysis with intimations of the future at time N, then another at time N+1, and so on. Each of these analyses is differently framed, based on the information available up to that time. At the time of the “final analysis,” when the end result is known (when we, the participant/analysts discussed what had occurred during the simulation), the narrative will include all of the successive intervals of interpretation with all of the many voices that enter into them.
Data Collection

The student participants in the simulation are the primary sources of data for this dissertation. Their contributions, in the form of daily field notes, midterm reflections, final research papers, email correspondence, and various photos and video clips, have informed all parts of the chapters that follow. One student, Brian, missed the first week of class and so was not assigned to a culture. He alternated between the two groups as an observer and wrote his field notes and reflection papers in that capacity. I have also drawn heavily from the daily field notes written by Rachel and me throughout the project, and the extensive face-to-face and email correspondence among the research team (Mike Cole, Rachel and me) that began during the conception of the research and continues as I write today.

Separate email addresses were established for the two cultures. The students and facilitators submitted their daily notes, as well as photographs and any other course-related correspondence to these computer accounts. After an initial reading, the notes were given a preliminary coding before being copied several times over and sorted into subject files for closer scrutiny. For example, in one file the notes were divided by student and organized temporally, allowing me to follow each student’s journey though the entire experiment. Other files contained notes all pertaining to one striking incident (e.g. a theft, or an information leak), and still others contained notes dealing with a specific theme or subject (such as the invention and subsequent fate of culbits). Still other files held notes sorted by day and group, allowing me to move out and establish the larger context in which some of the scenes were played out.
Data Analysis

In what constituted the first level of interpretation, the students were asked to pause for a while after completing their daily field notes to contemplate the day’s activities, and then to write a short reflection on their observations, explaining what they were thinking at the time, and offering any insights or commentary that might enrich our understanding of their experiences in the simulation.

The second level of interpretation was accomplished during the first two class meetings after the simulation period of the class was complete, when the two cultures reconvened as one group of analysts to “unpack” the earlier events. One class meeting was devoted to revealing and discussing the inner workings of each culture.

A third level of interpretation took place during the final four weeks of the quarter, when the students read literature relevant to cultural genesis and further interpreted their experiences in light of the new theories they were acquiring.

Finally, four of the undergraduate participants, two from each of the cultures, returned the following quarter to work with me on data analysis. Along with me, this team of participatory analysts read the notes several times over, looking for trends and themes in the data.

In reporting on my results, I have attempted to follow what John Watkins (1963) refers to as “confessional” style, which he describes as: “allowing the reader to re-think your own thoughts in their natural order” rather than “…to bully him into accepting a conclusion by parading a series of propositions which he must accept or
which lead to it” (p. 667). In other words, the words of the students along with my own observations have been arranged to unfold as a story, allowing for considerable leeway in the readers’ interpretations, allowing the reader, in Goethe’s words, to discover in their own way what has already been discovered.

_I would be greatly tempted, if I were ten years younger,_

_to make a journey to India –_

_not for the purpose of discovering anything new,_

_but to observe in my own way what has already been discovered._

Goethe, in a letter to his friend Karl Knebel (Steiner, 2000)
WE AND THEY
(Stanza One)
Rudyard Kipling

Father and mother, and me,
Sister and Auntie say
All the people like us are We,
And everyone else is They,
And They live over the sea,
While We live over the way,
But – would you believe it? – They look upon We
As only a sort of They!

From *Debits and Credits*, 1923
Introduction to the Simulation Diary

Part II is the story of our cultural simulation as it unfolded over a period of six weeks. The original syllabus called for a five-week simulation, to be followed by five weeks of a more traditional seminar-style course where the simulation was to be the central topic of discussion. However, as you will read in the pages that follow, the simulated cultures quickly became what my colleague Ivan Rosero likes to call “living artifacts”. They escaped the boundaries I had created for them and carried us into uncharted territory, requiring the implementation of a new and more flexible course agenda.

As promised earlier, my account of the simulation is reported here in narrative style, describing the events as they unfolded over the ten-week quarter. As much as possible I have attempted to limit the theoretical discussion to the way I was thinking at the time, and save further analysis and retrospective commentary until Part III, in hopes that the reader might experience the sense of discovery that those of us in the simulation enjoyed as the simulation progressed.

My goal in composing this diary is to faithfully represent the perspectives of as many of the participants as possible. In doing so, I have quoted often and extensively from the students’ field notes and reflection papers, as well as from those of my co-facilitator, Rachel Pfister. This approach results in some confusion around the names used to describe the two cultures in our simulation, and the persons who comprised the two cultural groups. In the original BaFa’ BaFa’ game, the two cultures are named Alpha and Beta, terms that we found counterintuitive from the get go, as Alpha, a word
that often implies aggressiveness or dominance, is used to designate the more passive of the two cultures. Conversely, Beta, in the original terminology, refers to the more competitive of the two cultural groups.

We expected this to be a temporary problem, because the groups were to rename themselves during their first meeting, but somehow the Alpha and Beta names persisted alongside the groups’ chosen names, especially in the field notes where they continued to surface throughout the term. To further confuse matters, new names for the citizens of the two cultures emerged and were used sometimes, by some, but not all, of the participants.

In wrestling with this problem of reference, I see that the use of these names provides an excellent example of what Rose and Felton would call the emergence of cultural habits, or “culbits”. The term “Stoner”, for example, immediately took hold and was used often to describe the self-named Stone Soup (Alpha) citizens. The corresponding term, “Trader” (describing members of the self-named Fair Trade/Beta culture) was used only occasionally (except by me in this dissertation). I’ve tried to choose phrasing throughout that reduces the confusion, but I have no doubt that uncertainties remain. The chart on the following page is intended as a ready reference, should readers find themselves unsure at any time about who is doing what to whom.

I have also applied the convention of using different print fonts to designate quotes from members of the two different cultures.

*This Comic Sans Italic font is used when quoting the field notes, reflections and in-class comments from members of the Alpha group, the more communal of the two cultures.*
This Comic Sans font is used when quoting the field notes, reflections and in-class comments from members of the Beta, or individually competitive culture.

Quotes from the research team and all other authors are printed in Times New Roman Italics.

(A brief recap of the simulation in its entirety is included as Appendix F.)
Table 2.1:
Reference Chart of Commonly Used Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alpha</strong></th>
<th>The original name assigned in the BaFa BaFa game to the cultural group adhering to a communal lifestyle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>United Stoners’ Soup</strong></td>
<td>The name, and its commonly used variations, chosen by the Alpha group on the first day of the simulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stone Soup</strong></td>
<td>Names used interchangeably for members of the communal Alpha group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USS Clan</strong></td>
<td>The chosen by the four USS Clan families on the first day of the simulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stoner(s)</strong></td>
<td>Names used interchangeably for members of the communal Alpha group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clan member(s)</strong></td>
<td>Names used interchangeably for members of the communal Alpha group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alpha(s), Alphan(s)</strong></td>
<td>The chosen by the four USS Clan families on the first day of the simulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anchor</strong></td>
<td>The original name assigned in the BaFa’ BaFa’ game to the cultural group adhering to an ethic of competition and personal best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections</strong></td>
<td>The name chosen by the Beta group on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maple</strong></td>
<td>Names used interchangeably for members of the individualist/competitive group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tree</strong></td>
<td>The names chosen by the four Cartel trading teams on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beta</strong></td>
<td>The original name assigned in the BaFa’ BaFa’ game to the cultural group adhering to an ethic of competition and personal best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Fair Trade Cartel</strong></td>
<td>The name chosen by the Beta group on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trader(s)</strong></td>
<td>Names used interchangeably for members of the individualist/competitive group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cartel Member(s)</strong></td>
<td>Names used interchangeably for members of the individualist/competitive group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beta(s), Betan(s)</strong></td>
<td>The names chosen by the four Cartel trading teams on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bella Trading Company</strong></td>
<td>The names chosen by the four Cartel trading teams on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country Incorporated</strong></td>
<td>The names chosen by the four Cartel trading teams on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J2HAD Investment Group</strong></td>
<td>The names chosen by the four Cartel trading teams on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saphire Limited</strong></td>
<td>The names chosen by the four Cartel trading teams on the first day of the simulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hosts</strong></td>
<td>Host Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Host Culture</strong></td>
<td>Refers to either culture when they remain in their home territory and serve as hosts to visitors from the other culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitors</strong></td>
<td>Travelers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travelers</strong></td>
<td>Vacationers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacationers</strong></td>
<td>Refers to the individual families or trading teams when they leave their home turf and visit the other culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Michael Cole</strong></td>
<td>Professor of the class, advisor and committee chair for both Deborah and Rachel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deborah Downing Wilson</strong></td>
<td>Facilitator of the Beta Culture, PhD candidate, designed and carried out this experiment as her dissertation work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rachel Cody Pfister</strong></td>
<td>Facilitator of the Alpha Culture, TA for the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Research Team</strong></td>
<td>Michael Cole, Deborah Downing &amp; Rachel Pfister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
April 1st: The Introduction

The research was conducted as part of COHI 130 Cross-Cultural Communication, an upper-division elective course in the Communication Department at UCSD. It was posted on the class schedule as usual, with no mention of the simulation. The class was capped at forty students and filled up within hours of being posted.

On the first day of the quarter students were told they would be participating in a project that was experimental on many interacting levels. Not only would their activities in the class be the subject of our investigation, but they too were to be situated as researchers, embedded ethnographers writing field notes from within a simulated culture that they were going to create, and from within the communicative and psychological processes that we were all seeking to understand. We asked the students to suspend their disbelief for a while and jump into the project whole-heartedly, even though some of the class activities would seem strange, silly even, and their value would not be immediately discernable.

The students were randomly assigned to one of two groups, with a single caveat; should anyone have an acquaintance in the class they should arrange to be in the same group with them. This was to guard against information leaks between the groups once the simulation was underway, but none of the students in the group knew each other from previous classes. The class was then given instructions for writing and submitting ethnographic field notes, the location of their next class meeting, and
dismissed. Oddly, it took a while for many of them to get up and leave. For a few minutes more than half of the students just sat at their desks, looking at us expectantly – as if they believed there must be more to follow. The first batch of field notes, based on this brief introduction, revealed that the students were simply baffled, too confused to even formulate questions. Surprisingly, no one dropped the class. If nothing else, we had tweaked their curiosity.

**Highlights from day-one field notes:**

*I did not know what I was getting myself into when I signed up for this class. The title of this course, "Cross-Cultural Communication", seemed fairly interesting in that I had originally thought this course would be to study groups of people and compare how people of different cultures interacted and was integrated together. However, I did not expect the subjects being studied would be us! I am excited, yet skeptical at the same time because I do not know how it is going to work out. (Mikelle, 4/1)*

*This class took me totally by surprise! I walked into what I thought wouldbe a more traditional learning environment where books would be ourprimary source of material; however I am very refreshed by the hands onapproach that will be guiding our experience. We will become immersed andbe the culture that we will be studying. ... I am definitely looking forward to this new and unconventional approach, but I am still leery about how completely different this is to what I have been used to during my 14 years of schooling.(David, 4/1)*

*I have to admit that the acting childish and playing games does concern me a little. It seems like it would be weird acting like this especially in front of other students that I don’t really know. I am not sure how such rudimentary child games or systems will be able to provide any revolutionary data or results, but I am willing to follow the rules of the game and try to help out with providing the results we are seeking. I am curious to see the data post-experiment and see what kinds of cultural differences and traits are being studied as I currently have no idea. (Eric, 4/1)*
This is exciting! I just don’t know what this will exactly look like so it seems still wrapped up in mystery. This mystery is a change in pace because with every other class there is a type of formula as midterms, tests, lectures meet my expectations. My expectations this time around are to be stretched and challenged. I want to learn more about culture acquisition and have it be truly meaningful. This class shatters all of my typical experiences, and thus I think that it has the potential to be so rewarding in the new lessons to be gained. I can’t wait! (Melani, 4/1)
April 3rd: Enculturation Begins

Frederic Bartlett (1932) wrote that the acquisition of socially constructed knowledge is always grounded in an initial affective experience, and that this first impression results in an aligning attitude or perspective that is difficult, if not impossible, to erase. With this idea in mind, I carefully constructed the settings for our participants’ first cultural encounters. It was important that this initial exposure to the simulated cultures would generate enough interest and excitement to warrant an emotional investment from each of the students. It was also important that the affective tones, or moods, of the two cultures were different enough, and salient enough, to launch the two cultures off on divergent paths.

Students showed up for the second session to discover a quite different scene, or to be more specific, two quite different scenes - depending on the group to which they had been randomly assigned. The groups met initially in two mid-size conference-style classrooms on adjacent floors of the same building. They were both across the hall from a stairwell connecting the two floors.

The Alpha Tribe was greeted warmly by “Mother Rachel”, who served toasted raisin bread and apple juice. The conference room furniture had been rearranged to create a casual and homey atmosphere, and “Good Vibrations” by the Beach Boys was playing softly in the background. Rachel circulated around the room, offering the students butter for their toast and second servings of juice, and encouraging them to mingle and get to know each other.
The Beta Group entered a “business meeting” conducted by Mrs. Wilson, the “banker”. Beta participants were treated with professional courtesy, issued name tags, and seated around a large conference table. Self-service water, coffee and donuts were arranged on a side counter. The students served themselves, found their seats and waited quietly for the meeting to begin.

**Inventing Historical Narratives**

As discussed in the introductory chapter, I was thinking about cultural genesis as collaborative authorship; I envisioned the Alphas and Betas as the narrators of two related and interactive stories. It was my intention to provide each group with a bare-bones “seed story” in order to watch how (and if) the two groups might go about fleshing it out. Two classic stories were selected, each one exemplifying a set of values that I hoped would serve as ethical anchors for the two developing cultural groups. While I wanted the stories to provide historical seeds, I did not want them to overly prescribe or constrain the trajectory of the groups’ emerging narratives. For that reason the tales were pared down to one page and the students were exposed to them only one time, on this first day of the simulation.

Once everyone in the Alpha Tribe had been greeted and fed, they were asked to be seated in a circle where they listened to an oral rendition of the following parable:
Stone Soup

Long ago a kindly stranger was walking through the land of Alpha when he came upon a small village. As he entered, the villagers moved toward their homes locking doors and windows. The stranger smiled and asked, "why are you all so frightened? I am a simple traveler, looking for a safe place to stay for the night and a warm meal."

"There's not a bite to eat in the whole province," he was told. Hunger has made thieves of honest men. Better keep moving on."

"Oh, I have everything I need," the stranger said. "In fact, I was thinking of making some stone soup to share with all of you." With a flourish the little man pulled a cauldron from his cloak, filled it with water, and began to build a fire under it. Then, with great ceremony, he drew an ordinary-looking stone from a silken bag and dropped it into the water. By now, hearing the rumor of food, most of the villagers had come out of their homes or were watching from their windows. As the stranger sniffed the "broth" and licked his lips in anticipation, hunger began to overcome the townspeople's fear. "Ahh," the stranger said to himself rather loudly, "I do like a tasty stone soup. Of course, stone soup with cabbage -- that's hard to beat."

Soon a child from the village approached hesitantly, holding a small cabbage he'd retrieved from its hiding place, and added it to the pot. "Wonderful!" cried the stranger. "You know, I once had stone soup with cabbage and a bit of salt beef as well, and it was fit for a king." The village butcher managed to find some salt beef . . . and so it went, through potatoes, onions, carrots, and mushrooms, until there was indeed a delicious meal for everyone in the village to share.
The following morning as the traveler was packing to leave the village, the elders appeared and offered free lodging for as long as the stranger would stay in exchange for use of the “magic” stone. But the old man just laughed at their foolishness, “How could you not know? I am just an old man with a river rock. The magic is in you.”

The Stone Soup story was chosen to exemplify the communal spirit that I was trying to instill in the Alpha group. The classic story was introduced as the “clan legend” and was embellished slightly after the reading; the villagers were identified as the ancient ancestors of the Alpha Tribe; mother Rachel was their direct descendant, and the students were instructed to think of themselves as the new generation of villagers.

The Beta Group narrative was presented in print form on the back of a “banking brochure”. The Beta students were given a few minutes to read the passage to themselves, and allowed to ask questions. The passage, shown below, was based loosely on the Old Testament “Parable of the Talents”, and chosen because it stressed honesty, accountability, fair competition, and personal achievement, the tenets upon which the Beta banking and trading systems were to be grounded.
The Parable of the Three Investors

The Beta trading culture acquired its name from an important event that occurred over a century ago when the community's leader, a highly effective and respected banker was growing old and feeble. As there was no clear choice about who should take his place, it was decided that the three most promising candidates should be brought forward and tested.

Each candidate was given an equal sum of money and sent out to do with it as he or she saw best. The first Trader spent the money building a fine new bank of the most imposing style and with a steel vault where all Betans could safely store their money. The second candidate had the money stitched into a specially designed garment and kept it safely attached to his body both day and night. The third, whose name was Beta, rose early each morning and took the money to the market place. She patiently and diligently learned the rules and the language of business, and, through careful but aggressive trading, made a large profit.

At the end of one year the three candidates were called back to give an accounting of the money they had been entrusted with. On hearing the three stories, Beta was judged to have contributed the most to the community and was named the next banker. It is her seal that decorates Beta currency and trading cards to this day.

In order to insure that the students “got the message” from each of the parables, and to establish from the outset the practice of integrating the simulation events with the participants’ larger life narrative, the homework assignment for the day was to write
a one-page story, either actual or fabricated, drawn from the students’ own experiences that captured the spirit of their group. While it was not true of all the stories, more than two thirds of those from the Alpha Tribe told of events where people had come together to achieve a common goal that no one person could have accomplished alone. Similarly, sixteen out of twenty of the stories written by the members of the Beta Group were accounts of individual successes against overwhelming odds.

Alpha participant, Bailey, submitted this true story about being rescued by a group of helpful citizens when with her mother’s car broke down on a rainy night.

*When I was six my three younger brothers and me were in the back seat when my mother’s car broke down one night when we were driving home. My grandmother who cannot walk very well and speaks only Spanish was in the front seat. It was pouring down rain and which ever way we decided to go it would be about a three mile walk to get help, and the twins were too little and would need to be carried. This was before everyone had cell phones and I don’t know who my mom would have called anyway because we had moved to San Diego only a few months before and did not know anyone yet. My mom could not leave us alone in the car but she was also worried about whether or not she could keep us all together and safe if we tried to walk home in the dark stormy night. A man in a red pick-up truck stopped to see if he could help us but my mother was afraid of him and lied and told him she was fine. When he drove away she started to cry and that is when I got scared. We all sat in the car for a while and my brothers were crying too and I think my grandma was praying and then my mom herded us out onto the side of the road and we all started to walk home. We only got a little ways away from the car when that same man in the red pick-up pulled up behind us. This time he had another car with him that was driven by his wife. The man had understood my mother’s situation and her fear and had brought his wife along so that my mom would not be afraid. They wanted to take us all to our home but we could not all fit in the wife’s little car and my mom would not hear of splitting us up so we all got back in our car and the man drove away again. This time he came back with his neighbor who had a van, and his son (who I think knew something about cars). He had also brought a can filled with gas which he poured into our tank but still the car didn’t start. It was getting really late and we were all so tired and hungry so my mother reluctantly let us go with the wife and the neighbor lady to*
Wendy’s for some dinner, but she stayed with our car. I think it helped that the neighbor lady spoke a little Spanish and could communicate a bit with our grandma. The man and his son must have figured out what was wrong with the car because they all showed up at Wendy’s before we were even finished eating. I have kind of forgotten all about that night, but my mom still talks about it sometimes, so I’m not sure if I remember the night or just her stories about it. When I heard the Stone Soup story yesterday I started to think about the fact that our bad situation that night was too complicated for one person to solve but it could only be solved if everyone did something. The man with the stone was kind of like the man in the red truck. He got a bunch of people to come together to help us. I think I will always remember that now and try to pitch in when I see people in need of assistance even if someone else is already trying to help out because sometimes we all need to be in this life together (Bailey, SS, 4/3).

Harry’s submission also tells a true family story, but Harry’s slant on the events credits the happy outcome to his great-grandfather’s “persistent nature”, which, of course, is an admirable Beta characteristic.

I would like to share a story about my great-grandfather. When he was young man he owned a salt company. He harvested his own salt and distributed it to local buyers in his home town called Mokpo—a small seaport village in South Korea. One day great-grandfather took a gamble; he took his batch of salt on a ship with his workers. He headed to Incheon city—a larger seaport village in South Korea where salts were gathered and sent to the capitol city, Seoul. By the time he arrived in Incheon port it was night time and everyone else had already unloaded their salts and sold them off to the buyers. When great-grandfather tried to unload his salt the workers would not comply; apparently there was a large snake lurking around the port and every time the workers tried to unload, the snake would try and attack them. The workers were too scared to leave the boat. As if things weren’t bad enough, it started to rain. He had to be careful of the rain because the rain would dissolve the salt. My great-grandfather did not want to go back to Mokpo. He stayed awake day and night protecting his cargo from the water and the wind. He was determined to sell his salt in Incheon. The rain continued for three days straight and all of the merchant’s boats except my great-grandfather’s left the port. The snake was still there as well, slithering about in the rain. On the fourth day, when the sky cleared, the workers could see the snake, but it wasn’t moving. When they went to get a better
look, they found out that what they saw was not a snake but a rope. The workers could not believe their eyes. However, misfortune turned out to be good fortune for great-grandfather. All the salt that had been unloaded previously had been damaged by the three days of rain. Only my great-grandfather’s salt was safe on his boat. The price of salt skyrocketed that day, more than four times the usual price. That day he made a large fortune thanks to the “snake” and the rain, and his persistent nature most of all (Harry, FTC, 4/3).

The students’ stories showed that they had, to varying degrees, understood the messages imparted by their group’s legend, and that they were able to generalize these messages to events in their own lives. I hoped that these “seed stories” would also provide fragments of history which the groups could embellish, and from which the budding cultures might emerge.

The next task was to impart a little bit of confidential insider cultural information – not too much. The idea was to introduce a few unique ways of interacting that could be readily learned by each group, but that could not be easily deciphered and duplicated by outsiders. I took the lead from the original BaFa’ BaFa’ game where the ingroup activities of the two cultures were structured along different lines. One culture (the Alpha clan) engaged in rigidly regulated social interactions while the “work” of the clan (the card game) was simple and collaborative. The members of the other culture (the Beta cartel) were free to interact socially as they wanted, but their card game was complex and competitive. I was careful to keep descriptions and instructions to a minimum, providing space for differential interpretation, elaboration, and evolution of the behaviors as the simulation progressed.
Alpha Clan Becomes United Stoner’s Soup

Alphans learned that their society was a benevolent matriarchy where warmth, affection and tolerance were valued above all else. Alphans were instructed to stand close, touch often, and show genuine concern for each other’s welfare. They were never, under any circumstances, to be impatient, unkind, angry or aggressive. Alpha etiquette required clan members to greet each other fondly, and then move immediately into detailed inquiries and discussions about the health, achievements and wisdom of their grandparents and other ancestors. Polite Alphans pay full attention to each other in conversation. Newcomers wishing to join a conversation in progress, should listen quietly for a while to be sure that they can contribute appropriately, and then wait to be invited before speaking.

A Matriarch and Treasured Ones

Without fanfare, Rachel put her hand on the shoulder of one of the girls in the class and introduced her to the group as the Alpha leader. Rachel explained that, as the matriarch, this person’s power was absolute. She was to be deferred to in all things and under all circumstances. There was no cause for alarm, however, an Alpha matriarch never abused her privilege. For the most part she participated as any other clan member, and always put the well-being of the clan before her own needs. The matriarch was then charged with the responsibility of naming the clan. After recovering from her initial surprise, and following some discussion with the group at
large, the new matriarch announced “USS” would be their new symbol, an acronym for “United Stoners Soup”\(^5\).

The clan of twenty was then divided into four “families”, and given a few minutes to get to know each other, to decide on family names, and to come up with a family crest. An important part of the “getting to know you” activity was the sharing of information (actual or embellished) about each other’s grandmothers. While this was going on, Rachel circled the room and arbitrarily selected one member from each family to be its “treasured one”\(^6\). This individual, who was identified by a long necklace of shiny red beads, was to be carefully protected by other family members. Treasured ones were allowed to freely approach other treasured ones, but should always wait to be approached by all others. When someone outside an immediate family wanted to interact with a treasured one, they should ask a family member if the time was right to do so. This was merely a formality, as permission was always to be granted, but an important formality nonetheless. Should someone speak to a treasured one without first receiving permission, the treasured one was instructed not to respond, but to simply smile at the rude intrusion and walk away.

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\(^5\) The USS acronym never caught on. Within minutes of the naming, one student quipped, “Yeah, we’re all a bunch of stoners!” and from that moment on the group referred to themselves as the “Stoners”.

\(^6\) This is an adaptation from the original BaFa’ BaFa’ game where the treatment of women was highly prescribed in one of the simulated cultures in order to open up conversations about cultural differences in mixed-sex interactions. Here I replaced the role of women with “treasured ones”. My goal was different as well. The intention was to normalize ways of interacting within the group that would be difficult for members of the outgroup to decipher.
Beta Becomes the Fair Trade Cartel

One floor below, the Beta business meeting was in full swing. Students learned that, as members of the Beta culture, their worth was determined during the 15 minutes that they spent each day on the trading floor. Nothing mattered outside their ability to be effective Traders. A successful Betan must be honest, consistent, persistent, and able to drive a hard bargain. Students would also discover that time management was an important element of Beta success, as the more transactions that could be accomplished during a single trading session, the more opportunities a Betan would have for increasing his or her wealth, as well as the wealth of the cartel.

Participants were divided into four five-person trading houses. Each house was issued its own account ledgers to keep track of business dealings. Members were given a few minutes for formal introductions and instructed to come up with names for their individual trading houses. One at a time, the four houses (self-named, Sapphire Exchange, Country Incorporated, J2AHD, and Bella Trading Company) were summoned to the banker’s office where they opened corporate accounts.

The group learned that trading success was to be measured on three levels, each individual’s monetary worth, the combined assets of the members of each trading house, and the overall wealth of the larger cartel. At the end of each trading session the banker would tally all of the day’s transactions and display the accumulated totals on

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Sapphire Exchange chose their name because three of them had September birthdays and sapphire is the September birthstone. The other members went along. The name Country Inc. arose because during an ice-breaking activity it was discovered that all of this group’s members loved country music. J2HAD are the first initials of each of the group members’ names. (two members names began with J, thus the J2.) The cartel began by calling them “Jays-had”, switching to “Jayhad”, and then finally “Jeehad”. No connection was made to the similar word in Arabic. Bella Trading Company was voted by the group to be the best of those they came up with. No explanation was given.
progressive line graphs, demonstrating the relative success of the individuals and the trading houses, and the increasing wealth of the group. At the end of the fiscal accounting period (the end of the simulation) rewards would be distributed to the highest achieving individual, and to all members of the highest achieving trading house.

Each house was asked to submit a proposal for naming the larger cartel. The suggestions that came in were, “The United Bank of Beta”, “The Beta Exchange”, “The Cole Group” (after professor Cole) and “The Fair Trade Cartel”. The banker listed the options on a whiteboard and called for a discussion and a vote. Each camp held its own for a while, resulting in a four-way tie. But when someone pointed out that the word “bank” was incorrect in the name of the cartel, the first proposal was eliminated from the competition, and “The Fair Trade Cartel” emerged as the favorite.

**BaFa’ BaFa’ – The Trading Language**

The rules for interacting inside the Stoners’ culture were designed to be difficult for outsiders to decipher; the language used during the Fair Trade trading game was created for the same purpose. The Traders learned that all business transactions must be accomplished using a special set of words. This system sounded complex when heard for the first time, but actually, it was quite simple when understood. There were only thirteen permitted words, six for colors and seven for numbers. (See the

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8 No mention was ever made of any connection to “fair trade” policies.
9 We listened to the audio recording that accompanies the original BaFa BaFa game.
10 When asking for a card, the first thing to do was to designate the color of card you were asking for. Colors were communicated by using the first letter of the English color word (R for red, B for blue, Y for Yellow, and so on) followed by any vowel sound. So when asking for a red card, a player would begin his query with “Ra”, “Re”, “Ri”, “Ro”, or “Ru”.

methods section of this dissertation for a complete explanation of the trading language used by the Fair Trade Cartel.) This limited vocabulary would insure that all conversation would be confined to the task at hand, precluding the opportunity for personal discussions. Participants were told that it was considered very rude and distracting for Traders to speak any other language while trading was in progress. The trading language also included a few gestures. “Yes”, for example, was gestured by touching the chin quickly to the chest. To say ‘no’ both elbows were raised sharply with the hands left to dangle loosely down.

Following the introduction the students were given a few minutes to practice within their trading teams. After a few awkward attempts most of us picked up producing the language quickly, but understanding each other was a different skill all together, and took a little longer to master. I assured the group that they would have ample time to become fluent in BaFa’ BaFa’ before its use would be required in the game.

**Creating a Rhythm for Each Community**

We were fortunate that the simulation was embedded in university life, where regular meeting times were naturally scheduled and paced to provide a foreseeable level of involvement which was tangible enough to sustain the vitality of the group and allow relationships to develop, yet not so frantic that it overwhelmed the potential

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11 Numbers were communicated using the first and last letters of the player’s own name followed by vowel sound, repeated to create the number of syllables equal to the number of the card that was being requested. My initials are D W, so the number four would be communicated by saying “DaWa DaWa”. The listener ignores the sounds themselves, needing only to count the number of syllables. If I were to request a red five I would approach another player and say “Ro, DaWa DaWa Da”.
group members. We also established a daily schedule of classroom events, allowing a
natural rhythm to develop for cultural activities. The first part of each period was
spent on class business (a one-question quiz to insure that the students accomplished
the readings, a short discussion session about those readings, and preview of the day’s
activities). Next we opened the floor for questions about the simulation. This was the
only time during the class that the rules of the game could be openly discussed. During
the simulation itself, the participants would have to learn the ways of their group, and
soon those of the other group, like we do in everyday life – by observation, trial, and
error. The students were then given time to “do culture”, to practice being members of
their emerging groups. In the future this time would also include visits between the two
cultures. The last few minutes of each class was spent talking about the events of the
day, and planning for the next class meeting.

Living the Stoners’ Lifestyle

Bob Marley singing “don’t worry ‘bout a thing” pretty much sums up the
rhythm of the Stoners’ culture. On this first day of the simulation, they learned that
theirs was a wealthy tribe. Resources and money were so abundant that neither worry
nor work would play a visible role in daily life. A large pot of gold pieces was
displayed prominently in the center of the room. Stone Soup citizens were told that they
could take what they needed from it, but to be sure and put back whatever was left at
the end of the day. The hoarding of money, or any display of attachment to, or
particular interest in money, was considered extremely rude.
The Stoners’ days were to be spent enjoying each other’s company. The room which United Stoners’ Soup called home was stocked with a variety of craft supplies, like rough woven cloth, needles and thread, yarn, markers, glue and such, that the players could use as they wished. Stoners could eat and drink, play their card game, listen to music, sing and dance, or engage in craft projects, but they should never forget to value camaraderie most of all. Laughing, talking, touching, sharing and caring were at once the shared inheritance, the prime enterprise, and the product of the Stone Soup culture.

The Work of Stone Soup Culture

Stoners were taught a simple card game that used only the aces and face cards from standard decks. Much like the hand game of “rock-paper-scissors”\textsuperscript{12}, different card suits trumped others; winning was a matter of luck rather than skill. While there were winners in each hand, no real value was placed on these conquests, and no scores were kept. Money could change hands, but this, too, was of little importance. The amounts paid and received were arbitrary, and when a player ran out of money others would push some of theirs into his or her pile. The game was a pastime, designed to facilitate friendly social interaction – nothing more.

\textsuperscript{12} In this classic children’s game players count aloud to three, each time raising one hand in a fist and swinging it down on the count. On the third count the players change their hands into one of three gestures, rock, represented by a clenched fist, scissors, represented by the index and middle fingers extended and separated, or paper, represented by an open hand. The objective is to extend a hand gesture which defeats that of the opponent. Wins and losses are resolved by the following rules: A rock breaks scissors: Scissors cut paper: Paper covers rock. If both players choose the same gesture, the game is tied and the hand is repeated.
Achieving Fair Trade Cartel Membership

While the Stoners were making nice, Cartel members were trying to gain the competitive edge necessary to be successful on the trading floor. Each trading house was issued five stacks of trading cards to be distributed among its members. The cards came in five colors and were each printed with a seemingly random grid of 150 numbers. The members were then given a grave warning: the trading language and the rules of trade that were about to be orally shared with them were closely held secrets that conferred a huge advantage on the trading floor. Any leakage of this insider information would greatly jeopardize the success of the group, and limit the players’ earning potential. It’s important to note that no penalties or procedures for enforcing the rules were introduced, leaving the players to create these as the simulation progressed.

The Traders learned that their goal was to create sets of trading cards that could be redeemed at the bank for $100/set. The completed sets were to contain six cards of a single color, having consecutive numbers, one through six. The cards were designed so that each was printed across the front with a 10X15 matrix of single-digit numbers. Insiders knew that the only meaningful numbers on the cards were those in the four corners of the matrix. Those four numbers on a given card could be any number from one through six, but all of the corners on any given card would display the same number. Outsiders would be unlikely to distinguish differences among cards of a single color, and therefore unable to assemble sets of cards that could be turned in for cash.
The original stacks of twenty cards that each player received were purposely scrambled to contain excessive amounts of some colors and numbers, and few or none of others. Trading involved striking deals with other players that would be beneficial to both, or that would help both players assemble complete card sets. What the Cartel members were not told was that, in the decks that were distributed among the group, certain necessary cards were extremely scarce. In the following days they would discover that the visiting foreigners were quite rich in these valuable resources.

At this point, with class time coming to an end, both the Stone Soup and the Fair Trade Cartel were told, each in their own country, that they were now equipped with all of the materials and information needed to fully participate in life within their simulated communities. They were told to show up at the next class meeting prepared to behave as citizens of United Stoners’ Soup, or as Fair Trade Cartel members-in-good-standing, and dismissed with an admonition to refrain from interacting with those from the opposite culture outside of class.

**Highlights from Day Two Field Notes**

The research team eagerly awaited the students’ field notes. For the most part they contained the kinds of observations and reflections that we were expecting. It was clear that the students had a good understanding of the project, and it was just as clear that they thought of it as, first and foremost, a university class. Members of the Stone Soup culture explicitly discussed their efforts to “bond” with others in their group, but
their comments were all directly related to the course material so far, and showed no evidence of emotional involvement with the clan. Melani’s notes below were typical.

Initially it was hard to get into this simulation. The family seemed a bit nervous as we all felt quite corny. There was a lot of laughter seeing as how we have had no experience with this before. I felt a bit like a fool. As we learned that we could all have fun with the activities, we eventually went wild with our ideas. We wanted to assert our role as healers! We wanted to call on the rain gods! It seemed like a fun travel back to kindergarten in exercising our imagination. The family was a great way for me to break the ice. But I am still unsure about how this is going to work out further. We heard a legend, but how are we really going to take this to becoming a part of our culture? We are inventing it, but when is the ownership going to kick in? When are we really going to be the Stone Soup and not just play make believe? These are the questions I am wrestling with. This is fun and stimulating though, and I am interested to see where this will lead. I personally liked the family naming and the clan naming. I thought that this will help in making the culture and our family come alive and be united. I like thinking of our grandmothers as well because it gives us a legitimate history and adds authenticity to the past. This helps in not making this a culture we come up with on the spot, but a culture that has roots other than the present (Melani, SS, 4/3).

The field notes from the Fair Trade Cartel actually revealed more emotional involvement, but not with the group as much as with the competition. Students were intent on winning the game – for themselves. Eric’s notes are a great example.

I’m definitely thinking I can hold on to my 4.0 GPA in this class. At first I was thinking about dropping the class because the introduction sounded like there would be a lot of dense readings and analytical writing and that is really not my strongest area, but now that I see that we will be doing competitive financial trading I know I am going to kick some serious butt. I’ve taken more business classes than most people in this school so I think I will have an advantage. I just hope that my group doesn’t let me down. Penrhyn and Dave seem like they will get into it, but I don’t know about the two girls. I hope we can fire them up. The language thing sounds a little dumb, but I can see that it would be to our advantage to make the trading details hard for outsiders to understand (Eric, FTC).
Overall the students’ comments from this day led me to believe that all was going well. The Cartel members seemed to be getting into a competitive spirit a lot faster than I had imagined. I was a little concerned about a couple of very quiet girls in the Cartel group, as was Rachel about two girls in the Stone Soup clan. We didn’t want them to be completely overwhelmed by the more outgoing students. I was also uncomfortable with the tone of some of the field notes written by members of the “Country, Inc.” house. My notes from this day include the following:

_They [Country Inc.] chose their name because of their common love for country music, and I hate to stereotype, but there seems to be a good-old-boy slant to their comments already. One of the boys went so far as to write, “I think Country Inc. is the best group because we have the most white people, and white people are more outgoing than other races. This should give us an edge. We are a bunch of cowboys and we’re gonna kick some butt!” Oh, Dear.. I sure didn’t predict this. Surprises so soon in the experiment…”_

As you will read in the following pages, this particular problem did not materialize. Others did.
April 8\textsuperscript{th}: Different Mindsets

Tajfel and Turner’s classic studies of group cohesion\textsuperscript{iii} show that the mere act of categorizing individuals as group members is usually enough to lead them to display group affinity and in-group favoritism. Sherif (1966) had also reported signs of ingroup bias before the introduction of outgroups, but after reading our students’ field notes, it was not clear whether or not the majority of the students were sufficiently emotionally involved with their cultural group to show ingroup favoritism. As Rachel, the Stone Soup facilitator, arrived on campus for the next class meeting, an incident outside the building where the simulations were conducted calmed those fears, but ushered in others; as she walked past a cluster of Fair Trade Cartel members Rachel was surprised by the Traders’ mild, but clearly antagonistic taunts; "oooo..here comes the leader of the Alphas" and "Betas are best!" I was happy to see the group solidarity, even if the behavior was a little unsettling.

On this second day of the simulation my chief concern was with the students’ self-identification as members of one culture or another, but I was also hoping to see evidence that the participants saw themselves as capable of altering and expanding the introductory artifacts they had been exposed to in response to the demands of the situations they would encounter. I wanted the students move a step further and demonstrate attitudes of propriety, or ownership, over their different cultures.
Stone Soup Struggles with No-shows, Tardiness, Boredom and Lack of Purpose

Despite our insistence on punctuality, and the students’ understanding that there would be a quiz on the assigned reading at 8:00 am, seven students were still missing from Stone Soup when the simulation activities began at 8:15. Five students would show up before the class was over, but two just did not bother to attend. For the “Sun” family this was particularly problematic, as only two of their members were in attendance when it was time to start the cultural exchange at 8:30. The tardiness created another concern as well. The first few minutes of class had been designated as the only time that the cultural rules could be explicitly discussed. For the rest of class period the students would need to learn their cultures the way we do naturally – through trial and error while engaging with others. This meant that absent and tardy students might fail to enculturate. That is, they might miss out on some of the information necessary to participate fully in their culture, and might never become fully contributing members of Stone Soup, which in turn might seriously jeopardize the progress of their immediate groups, and maybe even the entire simulation. My field notes from this day end with the question: “how can we, in a culture that is intended to be relaxed and anything but time-conscious, instill a desire in the students to be on time for a class that meets at eight o’clock in the morning?”

Field notes from Stone Soup citizens offered some clues. Several of the tardy students reported they were confused about exactly what their culture should be accomplishing, and expressed a need for more direction. Their insecurity in class had led them to stand back and watch while those who they felt “got it” took more central
roles in the day’s activities. These student’s reactions were countered by those students who complained that they had been stuck doing the heavy lifting when it came to keeping the activities afloat, and that the others were making little effort to contribute.

Rachel and I decided to introduce the “citizenship cards” included in the original BaFa’ BaFa’ game, which provided a way for group members to “mark” each other following their interactions. Beginning in the next session, each citizen would carry a card with them, presenting it for comments before leaving one conversational group and moving on to another. When one participant found another lacking in some important Stone Soup attribute, or breaking from Stone Soup tradition, they would mark the offender’s card with a series of numbers. If the person had performed adequately, and within the cultural norms, their card would be marked with a series of letters. Our hope was that this practice might stimulate a little greater involvement, which might in turn encourage the laggers to show up on time for class.¹³

The Fair Trade Cartel: Present, Punctual, Engaged, Ambitious

On the same day that Rachel was dealing with late and no-show Stoners, I arrived at 7:45 a.m. to find an animated group waiting outside the door of the conference room, eager to begin the simulation. As soon as the door was unlocked the Traders rushed in and began re-arranging the furniture to create a “trading floor”. Each of the small trading groups clustered in a different corner of the room, taking donuts from the central table and quickly returning to their corners without conversing with

¹³ This practice served to increase involvement in the activities until the cultural exchange began, but never really took hold. The use of the cards quickly dwindled off and they were forgotten by week three of the simulation.
those outside of their immediate group. One student hurried in at 8:03. He was winded and apologized profusely because his bus had been late and he had sprinted across campus to get there as soon as possible. Everyone else in the Fair Trade Cartel had arrived on time.

When I walked in the room today, everyone was already moving chairs and tables around trying to get it set up. They seemed like they could not wait for class to start. The general attitude of the group was very enthusiastic and was preparing for a great day. It was nice and sunny outside so that definitely could have contributed to the good energy in the classroom. Some students were sitting with their groups trying to prepare for the quiz while others were talking and joking around with the professor before class (Nelson, FTC).

In their enthusiasm to begin the trading session, the Traders hustled me through the classroom tasks and the literature discussion which were the first items on our agenda for the day. Once the opening bell\(^\text{14}\) was rung everyone sprang from their seats and the trading began. I was more than a little surprised at how unselfconscious the students seemed to be about using the rather silly language and body gestures that proper trading required. Robin’s field notes offer an insider’s view of the trading event.

\(^\text{14}\) We purchased a small silver counter bell that the banker rang to mark the beginning and end of the exchange sessions. I rang the bell three times and announced “the trading floor is now open/closed”.
partner waved her hand for me to repeat the card. I said it once more, and she answered with her elbows up and flailing her arms. After, she held her card up and named the card that she wanted. I had that card, and I moved my chin towards my chest area to say, “Yes! I will trade you for that card.” Mike Cole had come into our class and had forgotten some of the rules and the Beta trading language. I was standing right next to him when he got his set of cards so I explained it all to him. He actually had an "Oo Mi Ha Mi Ha Mi" which is rare so I traded a, "Wa Mi Co Mi" for the one I wanted. He really didn't care about making his hand, he just wanted to help me out and make my hand. In my mind that was a very important trade.

Trading seemed like it was taking a long time. I wanted to minimize the time for each trade because I knew that it was important to get as many trades in as possible in order to make money. I could not think of any way to do this that would not break the rules, but Harry figured out a way of trading faster by holding his cards up and going through the stack of trading cards quickly and then answering in Beta language.

I was having a difficult time catching the other Traders' attention. I did not want to be rude and just walk up to them; I wanted to have a signal saying, “Hey! Want to trade with me?” I used the sign for repeating the card as a way to capture the Trader’s attention. Also, since we could not say “thank you” or “nice doing business with you” after trades, I felt that transactions were not complete. During the trading period, I have to admit that I exclaimed, “I wish I could say ‘Thank you’ or something!” Arnold also agreed with this. By the end of class, we all agreed that a handshake was sufficient in completing transactions.

Throughout the trading session, you could hear others exclaiming how Beta language was confusing as times. Some Traders even counted on their hands (a Beta No-No). Luckily, it was a practice session. I heard a lot of English being spoken, perhaps to clarify on the rules of the Beta language, but I was engrossed in my own trades that I was not paying much attention to what was being said. The cards that I saw most people trading were green. Everyone had stacks of green cards in their hand. I also was trading for green cards, especially Green 5, but no one either had it or if they did they did not want to trade for it. Trading ended and we put our trading cards back in the envelopes and were told that we would get new cards for Thursday and that Thursday would be the start of the actual trading sessions (Robin, FTC).
Time Takes on Different Meanings

At first I had no idea what to think about the immediate appearance of a polar difference between the two cultures in their attitudes and behaviors around class attendance and punctuality. As I mentioned earlier, more than a third of the members of the Stone Soup clan were either late or absent for this second meeting of their group, while only one member of the Fair Trade Cartel was (3 minutes) tardy. In addition, those Stoners arriving late, sauntered in quite unconcerned, while the tardy Trader was openly distraught at being delayed.

The research team felt that the laid back and undemanding nature of the Stoners’ culture contributed to the tardiness problem. This notion was supported by the punctuality and perfect attendance by members of the Fair Trade Cartel meetings that were taking place downstairs. We took the lead from Sasha Barab and J.A. Plucker (2002) “Smart People or Smart Contexts?” to think about the ways our thinking and behaviors emerge and are maintained in social context. They suggest we think in terms of a contextualized self that, through exposure, becomes sensitive to the structures and norms of the groups or organizations to which it belongs. Using this model, context is as much about social relationships as it is about location and material artifacts. In Cole’s words, context is "that which weaves together", emphasizing the co-constitution of the phenomena of interest; in the current case, the ways that ideologies, artifacts, institutions, and individuals coordinate such that a particular pattern of activity emerges (Cole, 1996, p. 135-137). Context, so defined, becomes an integral part of our cognitive processes. In the language of the Gary Alan Fine and Frederic Bartlett work discussed
earlier in this paper, a group’s idioculture and its individual’s previously acquired schemas come together in what Baron and Plucker call the individual-environment transaction (p. 165), in a contextualized individual who internalizes these influences and produces specialized responses.

We had asked the students to be on time, but we had also established a laid back atmosphere for the Stone Soup clan, and this, according to the students’ previously acquired schemas, implied that time schedules were to be casually interpreted. Conversely, the Fair Trade culture had all the makings of a rigidly scheduled trading floor, where a lost moment could be costly. Previous schemas told the Traders that in this situation time schedules should be strictly adhered to. While the Traders and the Stoners had received exactly the same instruction on the course syllabus (It read, “Please come to class on time. There will be a quiz during the first five minutes of each class.”), they had internalized it differently. What I had originally thought of as “the tardiness problem” turned out to be our first real evidence that the two groups were already thinking differently.

Families Emerge in the Stone Soup Culture

Participants in both cultures were expressing a growing sense of belonging, or an increased level of comfort during group activities. Rachel had noticed one of the Stoners referring to other females in her group as her “sisters”. Rachel thought this was an isolated case, but as the morning progressed she realized that the practice was common among all of the families. That evening two clan members made reference to
“sisters” in their field notes, “When Rachel started to take a picture of our group I noticed that Melani was not with us, so I told Rachel to wait until our sister could be in it too.” (Gina, SS) and, “My sisters and I were making bracelets by coloring and folding the Beta money.” (Johanna, SS) No one was observed referring to the male members of their family as “brothers”.

Curiously (because it was unsolicited), a number of clan had members arrived with artifacts which they wished to contribute to the group. Some were small totems, a polished stone, a statue with two faces, and a clay whistle in the shape of a bird, for example, which they suggested were emblematic of clan characteristics. Others brought CDs or iPods with music that they thought would help establish an appropriate mood. One student choreographed a dance to Michael Jackson’s “Beat It”. Melani comments on this portion of the day’s program:

Now we are learning the work of our clan (the game) and creating our history with artifacts. At first all of these things didn’t seem natural at all, but it is getting easier. Learning to play this card game didn’t seem like it would be that different from any other card game, but slowly it became a way to open the door for communication within the families. Asking about grandmothers and laughing over the deeply fabricated stories became a diversion and a form of connection. I didn’t understand why the game had to be so simple. It just seemed like a game that would grow old really quickly, but because it involved other individuals it became more fun to talk. As it turns out, the game’s simplicity made way for us to slightly expand on the rules. I was initially unsure as to whether or not a Michael Jackson dance was acceptable for our culture. Did pop music and music from the here and now count as a Stone Soup cultural artifact? Did moves from the hip hop genre even contribute towards explaining our Stone Soup culture better? All I know is that it was deeply enjoyable and that it served to break the ice between the whole clan (Melani, SS).

The students worked at being Stoner-style polite, which meant following the Stone Soup rules about how to treat each other, and in particular, about how to interact
with their “treasured ones”. They played their card game, and, true to the spirit of their ancestors, winning was not as important as being kind to their opponents. Likewise, no special value was placed on the clan fortune, which was spilled out on a central table for all to use as they saw fit. The money was never hoarded by one person, but offered freely without regard for one’s personal wealth.

The students in both groups had been instructed to use this day of the simulation as an opportunity to practice and expand on the skill sets necessary to function as fully engaged members of their respective “cultures”, but for the Stoners the behaviors they were performing had no tangible consequences. Most of the students had reported having fun, and a few commented that they were starting to feel like they were creating something together, but others wrote they had trouble staying interested in a game that had no winners or losers. One Stoner reported, “I tried to remember that the purpose of the game was to spend quality time with the others in our family, and I guess it worked well in that regard, but to be honest, the game became a little boring. I was much happier when we moved on to designing our family emblem. I felt like we were actually creating a finished product.” The hope was that these activities would take on life and become meaningful once they were found to be useful or necessary in addressing the situations that would arise when the groups came together. Rachel and I worried that some of the Stone Soup participants were not sufficiently enculturated. We were counting heavily on the upcoming visits between the two groups to draw these students into new “cross-cultural” activities that would warrant their sustained attention.
April 10th: The First Cross-cultural Encounter

Everyone eagerly anticipated this next step – the first encounter between the two cultures. Up until this time, because no outgroups had been introduced, we did not expect, nor did we see, evidence of intense ingroup loyalties. I was counting on the exchange of visitors to change all this. I was fairly confident that the goofy language and trading system of the Fair Trade Cartel would be difficult for outsiders to decipher. I hoped it would both alienate and intrigue the Stone Soup visitors. In other words, I believed that the Stoners would have an easy time identifying the Traders as “others” and constructing an “us and them” dichotomy.

I was less certain about the Stone Soup practices. The behaviors that had been specifically designed to be opaque to outsiders were exactly the ones that the Stoners had not taken much interest in, and so these had not become regular parts of the group interactions. For example, the rules surrounding the treatment of the “treasured ones” had been largely ignored. In an effort to correct this, Rachel met with these special citizens at the beginning of class and reminded them of their importance within the group. She also used the first few minutes of class, before the Fair Trade visitors arrived, to reinstruct the entire Stone Soup Clan about the proper care and treatment of its treasured members. The students appeared to get the message, but she was not sure they could maintain these behaviors once the Traders arrived.

At the Cartel headquarters the Traders arrived to find their banker ready with a large metal cash box. She gave each player an envelope that contained an initial stake
($200 in play money) with which to begin the day’s trading. The introduction of money boosted the tempo in a class that was already briskly paced. Suddenly the speed with which a trade could be accomplished became a key factor. As completed sets of cards were compiled students would run, literally, to the banker’s desk and clamor to turn them in for cash. The introduction of money into the game visibly upped the players’ emotional ante as well. The politeness of earlier days all but vanished. Trading that had been animated and conscientious, now became frenzied.

About half-way through the class period, envoys of five students from each of the groups were sent to “observe daily life” in the foreigner’s culture. These first groups of visitors were sent as “forward scouts” on a reconnaissance mission. Hosts and visitors alike were advised to have no interactions at all with the “others”. The visiting envoys were instructed to pay careful attention to their hosts’ behaviors in order to advise future visitors on how they might successfully negotiate their upcoming border crossings, but on this day no direct contact was allowed.

Rachel was surprised at how comfortable the Stoners appeared to be in the presence of the visitors. She had been worried that they would feel silly or awkward performing the Stone Soup culture for outsiders, but they behaved as if telling stories about imaginary grandmothers, playing mindless card games with play money, and creating jewelry from scraps of cloth were natural pastimes for university students. The Stoners who left the clan and traveled to Fair Trade territory, however, were not as content. When they returned they reported feeling “like total outsiders” and “without a clue” as to what was going on in the Fair Trade Cartel. One student felt “completely
“ostracized” by the Traders, and another thought the Traders seemed “cold and distracted.” Jaime and Travis tell it like this:

The simulation today really threw me for a loop. I thought I would be naturally open-minded and welcoming to the idea of a new culture, no matter how different they were. But this group’s language made you feel instantly ostracized. It was confusing because our culture was all about the inclusion of the other. I could tell it would take us a lot longer than a few minutes to understand the ins and outs of Beta. I know when you first enter a culture other than your own, you’re supposed to sit back and learn as you go, but all I wanted to do was ask questions because the simulated environment was so foreign. When we left Beta, we were all saying, “our culture is awesome, especially compared to theirs!” There it was: the ethnocentrism I never thought I would have during this experiment. It is true though, from what I have seen in the initial observations, I prefer living in Stone Soup for sure. But who knows, maybe Beta gets to play games and share stories too. Maybe we just saw the way they make money to survive. Maybe they dance to Michael Jackson after the money making game is over too! Either way one thing is for sure: those dollar bill souvenirs they gave us sure made sweet jewelry (Jaime, SS, 4/10).

After our dance, Rachel sent my family over to Beta Culture (to observe only and report back to the clan). Armed with my digital camera, and Bailey’s digital recorder\(^{15}\), we all went downstairs to observe. The Beta members were speaking different languages and switching partners constantly. They seemed to be discontent whenever they had no money, using what seemed to be arbitrary hand signals. They had cards to write on as well, but it was the currency they valued more than the interaction and friendship of their partner! The way they divided up the money into amounts and stacks also gave us the notion that it was more valued in this culture than ours. The gold piece currency in Stone Soup flows freely and without hoarding unlike here in Beta. The room was hot and stuffy and the people seemed a bit cold and distracted (even though we were to be just observers, no one even noticed we were there). We took pictures and watched for about 10 or 15 minutes when Deb thanked us for coming and shooed us all along, but not before giving us a parting gift of a stack of paper $1$ bills. Glad to get out of the little stuffy box room, we ventured upstairs back to our clan. When we got back, our group was

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\(^{15}\) Use of digital cameras and recorders were not discussed prior to the visit. While we were happy to have the additional documentation, we had not anticipated the students use of these during the visits and so were surprised to see mention of them in Joey’s notes.
saying bye and taking the Beta observers picture! It was very interesting
to see how they were treated by our clan in opposition to how we were
treated by their group. It felt good to be back, and we reported all that
we had seen and observed (Travis, SS, 4/10).

Fair Trade visitors to the Stone Soup Clan had quite different things to say. They (the Country Inc. group) reported they had the Stoners "all figured out!", that the Stoners were "simple", "immature" and "primitive". Christine suggested that the “our” (white business-style) nametags were much more professional than the hand-crafted hemp identification necklaces that the Stoners wore. When pressed for more details, two of the travelers mused at their equating the Stoners’ communal spirit and absence of competition with a certain backwardness and lack of education. They admitted to the faulty logic of this conclusion, but held to their impressions anyway. The following is from Maddox’s notes:

Now it was time to spy. Everybody but Christine took the elevator; she
took the stairs. When we walked into the room there were four tables
set up and there were five people sitting around three of them, the
fourth must have been the group that was spying on us at the moment. I
walked around for a bit getting a general overview of the room. One of
the groups had a laptop on their table and another had a whistle shaped
like a cat. They were all playing with cards; it seemed to be a single deck
of regular playing cards. They were speaking English but talking about
their grandparents and family, it was odd. The game they were playing
seemed simple: the head (dealer) of the game would call out one card or
two cards then personally flip over one or two cards. The dealer could
look at their hand and pick the cards or just randomly pick them, then
everyone else at the table would throw however many cards the deal had
said down on the table, except they could not look at their cards. If the
dealer had a black and a red suited card they would have to give one gold
coin to everyone else that had a black and a red. But they would collect
one coin from every person that didn’t have a black and a red. The
numbers didn’t play a role as far as I could tell. They players were talking
about family and what kind of soup they were making. We think “soup”
must be a code word, but we’re not sure for what. One of the tables blew
the whistle and then that table split up and joined the other two tables,
increasing the size to seven and eight. The table I was watching started
to play Good Vibrations by the Beach Boys because "it would be more fun
to play and listen to music." One of the players had a nametag on, it said
Pheobe and hung around her neck by a hemp like material, I couldn't really get that close of a look. Each table had one person that wore a red necklace with a pepper on it. Our group had figured that it meant that this person was the leader. We took some pictures and Nelson stole one of their gold coins. I watched a little longer making sure that we figured out the rules of the game and I'm pretty sure we had it right, because it just was not that difficult. Overall their culture seemed pretty ordinary and boring compared to ours. As we were leaving their teacher took a group picture of us, then at 9:00 we left (Maddox, FT, 4/10).

The impressions reported by the visiting participants lent support to the field notes of those who acted as hosts. Stone Soup hosts reported being "sad" or frustrated about not being able to interact with the Trading visitors, "because we wanted to make them feel welcome". Interestingly, Rachel noted that after the visiting Stone Soup family returned from their vacation with the Fair Trade, they seemed unsure about how to mingle again with their own clan. The returning students sat around a corner table while the other families convened at the front of the class. Two of the returning students eventually moved to be with the larger group and took part in a necklace-making activity, but the rest of them remained separate and isolated at their own table. Rachel comments. "How interesting that such a short trip (less than 15 minutes) could have such a profound effect - upsetting the relationships they had developed with the rest of the class."

Bernice’s notes reflect her efforts to adhere to the rules of the game, while gathering and organizing as much information as possible in order to better understand the "logic" of each of the cultures.

*We were instructed not to tell of our rules since the observers from the Beta culture couldn't just be told our guidelines for interacting. They*
needed to learn them from observing only. This proved difficult as one of our sisters had missed the introduction and needed to be updated just while the Beta observers entered. Luckily, the Beta culture did not overhear our brief conversation. We started the games asking about each others' grandmothers. Our group of visitors came back to report the ways of the Beta culture. They compared the interactions to that of a casino. They spoke about how they played something similar to "Go Fish" except that people would walk away and say a gibberish word if it wasn't right. Deborah was said to be like the cashier handing out all the money. This culture thrived on the making and handling of money. Hearing about the beta culture gave me a wake up call and forced me to hypothesize what they would be like. We all thought that they would most likely be different from us, but the differences seemed like night and day. I wasn't sure if we could apply their values to our culture. I also am uncertain as to what we are supposed to do with this interaction. Are we to hear about it and then move on with our own agendas, or are we supposed to integrate their love of money into our peaceful clan? This seemed a bit fuzzy, but I am excited to hear more about their rules of logic. Their different code words seem difficult relative to our own. They come across as more complex in their game than our four card draw. I wonder if it is just because we are on the outside looking in, in that their language and customs only seem more advance to us because we don't understand them. Could the barrier of our limited understanding be the reason for this more complicated interaction or I wonder if they are in fact more complicated? I guess this will have to wait until another day (Bernice, SS, 4/10).

I found it significant that while the Stoners wrote extensively of their efforts to understand and get along with the Traders, many of the Fair Trade Cartel members did not mention the Stone Soup visitors at all, and if they did, it was to say that "we ignored them" or that they had just "gotten in the way of our trades". At this early stage of the game, the Stoners were struggling to understand their neighbors and trying to find ways to interact successfully with them. In contrast, the Traders notes revealed very little interest in the Stoners at all. Instead their notes focused on how perfect their trading language skills, and develop strategies that would allow them to triumph in the Fair Trade game.
A Thief Among Us

When the Country Inc. group returned from their visit to the Clan, Bruno showed off a gold coin that he had surreptitiously pocketed during his stay. While his immediate group seemed supportive of the theft, the larger cartel was at first silent, and then disapproving. The general consensus was that stealing was simply not compatible with the underlying ethics of the Fair Trade Cartel. Because the class period was coming to an end, the subject did not get the airing it deserved and the class decided to address the incident and how to deal with the offender at our next meeting.

Becoming “Us”

Henri Tajfel (1982) offered three necessary components for achieving self identification with a particular group. The first is an awareness of membership. The second is the sense that membership is related to some value connotations. The third is an emotional investment in these awareness and evaluations. As might be predicted from Tajfel’s many studies showing just how easily we can be led to construct ingroup attitudes, and from Sherif’s account of the Robber’s Cave boys use of derogatory outgroup statements even before meeting members of the outgroup, the Stoners and Traders alike demonstrated affinities for their own cultures before they had any real exposure to the others. Importantly, by the students own accounts, these affinities included both value connotations and emotional investments. After her third day in class Elliotte from Fair Trade writes,

It seems that each day the room has become more of a place of comfort and has a feeling of unity. Each day I feel a little closer to my group
members on a level of friendships and interaction. They are no longer just other people in my class whom I sit next to all quarter and never interact or speak with. But rather I feel I share a bond with them every Tuesday and Thursday for an hour and a half. I know that when the clock hits 8, I am injected into a group and in some respects I have a goal to fulfill as well, as others in the room do too. We are in this together (Elliotte, FTC, 4/10).

On the same day, Alexis from Stone Soup tells of similar feelings:

*Being a member of Alpha culture I have definitely come to love it. Alpha culture is about caring for one another. We are not concerned about money. I definitely love the fact that we respect and value each other more than money. Our society may seem idealistic, but I love that our time together is relaxing* (Alexis, SS, 4/10).

Earlier I discussed Hogg’s (1992) suggestion that we define group cohesion in terms of the members’ attraction, not to the others in the group, but to the idea of the group itself. In other words, members are attracted to other members of the group because they are members. What they are like as individuals is a secondary consideration. Festinger et al. (1950) and Latane (1996) showed that this process begins as a matter of proximity and dynamic social influence. While spending time together and sharing ideas in the context of the simulation the students came to appreciate each other because they were part of the same culture. In addition, as we would expect from Tajfel’s work showing that we begin to see members of our own group as being like ourselves, the Stoners and the Traders commented regularly that their own group members thought like they did. This often took the form of “I’m definitely in the right culture for my personality…” and then the writer would go on to explain how everyone on their group was on the same wavelength about one issue or another. The students also began, as did Tajfel and Turner’s participants, to think alike
about members of the outgroup. Writing about her first encounter with the Traders, Bernice from Stone Soup offers the following:

*I refused to talk with them, feeling a bit intimidated and confused. I was hoping they would try to make me feel like I could belong there but their aggression and egoistic behavior made me want to back off. Feeling a bit uncomfortable, I tried to find the rest of my family. I was relieved when I saw Brandt. We talked for a while trying to figure out what their game was all about* (Bernice, SS, 4/10).

Brandt’s notes from the same encounter show that he and Bernice were orienting in similar ways towards the outgroup:

*I was disoriented because I could not figure out their game and I was so used to being able to speak English and laugh and not have any pressure. Their need to win was more important than any desire to understand each other’s culture. They were so focused and aggressive that I became nervous and frustrated. I was so confused because I thought they would try to help us understand, but they ignored us and I felt relief when the visit was over. When we returned I was so glad to be back home so I could share with my clan what had happened. I felt much more relaxed and safe. A great part of the experience was that my family stuck together because we were all alike and in the same boat. We also tried to figure everything out by collaborating and bringing our ideas together. We all agreed that we had lucked out getting into the Alpha culture* (Brandt, SS, 4/10).

Sherif (1966) and Brown (2000) suggest it isn’t the so much the group we belong to that affects our judgments about ourselves and others, as it’s where that group is, what’s happening around it, and how we must respond to the situations we find ourselves in based on group membership. At this point in the simulation the students still had very limited ingroup/outgroup experience. The Fair Trade group seemed unperturbed by the Stoners, but the Stone Soup family who had traveled to Fair Trade territory was clearly distressed. (Could this be culture shock?) It was my hope
that as more opportunities for interaction arose, the field notes would offer more insights into the students’ developing attitudes about the two groups and about their own roles in the simulation.
April 15th: Us and Them: Stealing Becomes Exemplary Reconnaissance Work

In Fair Trade territory emotions were running high. The research team had been caught off guard when Trader Bruno stole a gold coin from the Stoners during his observation-only visit during the previous session. The Stoners who witnessed the crime had remained silent until Bruno and his team left the premises. Even then, the Stoners had been reticent about reporting the incident – not wanting to get anyone in trouble. Contrast this with Bruno’s jubilant account of the event:

I think that our society will definitely have the upper hand. I was a spy for the first group. It was so easy to figure out things of the other culture. I even got to steal another dollar from them (doubloon?). They were very immature compared to our culture. They spoke English, and I don’t think they are very into the project. I will be able to crack them within two weeks. (Bruno, FTC, 4/10).

I was thankful that Bruno had returned to Fair Trade territory with the coin during the last five minutes of class, because I was not obliged to deal with the issue before thinking it through with my colleagues. Luckily we had two days to read the students’ field notes about the events of the day, and to formulate a plan for going forward.

From the Gary Alan Fine and Sherif works discussed earlier, we had expected certain infractions to occur. Actually, we hoped they would occur so that we could witness the construction and maintenance of group rules. We had spoken before the simulation began about leaving the students to do their own policing and penalizing within their groups, but had not planned for any cross-cultural crimes. Rachel and I
agreed that the theft afforded an unexpected opportunity for us to observe any differences in the ways the two groups addressed a sticky moral issue. We decided that each of us would open the subject for discussion at the start of our next class. For Rachel and the Stone Soup this proved to be a non-event. The Stone Soup members were unified in expressing feelings of pity for the thief. "If money was that important to him, well, let him have it. We have lots more where that came from". They immediately moved on to more important things, like creating jewelry from Cartel paper money.

In the Cartel meeting, introducing the subject of the theft immediately shifted the atmosphere from a state of high energy to one of high anxiety. Luckily a number of the Traders had mentioned in their field notes that they were uncomfortable with Bruno’s actions, finding them incompatible with the Cartel’s ethic of honesty and fair trade. Many were calling for sanctions against stealing, and also against cheating, which they described in their notes as secretly trading outside the designated trading period and using English on the trading floor. So I began by reading excerpts from some of the students’ field notes, trying to provide a balanced overview of their comments, and then I opened up the discussion to the group at large. There was a flurry of conversation before members of the highly competitive Bella team took charge. They suggested that there were three separate issues on the table for the Cartel’s consideration. 1. How should the Cartel deal with a thief? 2. How should the Cartel deal with a cheater? 3. What should be done with the Stone Soup money that Bruno had stolen?
Bruno’s team (Country Incorporated) immediately “had his back”. Christine appointed herself Bruno’s counsel, and circled the Country Inc. wagons. The defense team began by expressing their disbelief that anyone could see Bruno’s act as a crime. Taking the coin was not stealing, they argued, but a legitimate part of the information-seeking mission that Bruno had been a part of. They pointed out that the Cartel had given the Stoners who visited us some of our currency to take back with them. Bruno brought this point home by producing the stolen coin and turning it over to the banker, suggesting that it be used for “charity”. One of his teammates quickly amended Bruno’s offer to, “We want it to go on display to show other people what Stoners’ money looks like.” Bruno sums up his defense:

“It seemed just like it would be an ordinary day in the Beta culture. I then was shocked to find the teacher writing on the board “Penalty for Cheating and Stealing?” The main topic for discussion was my stealing of the coin that I got from the table when I was doing spy work in the Stone Soup territory. As far as the cheating, I had heard some normal English, but not to much. I mean, it’s expected that in a new learning environment like this, people will talk the way they are used to. Personally, I was kind of surprised to hear that I had been put on “trial” for helping out our culture in stealing the coin. I did not understand what the problem was for doing very good recon work, and doing everything in my power to help out our culture. I would understand if I were to be put on trial for doing something to my own benefit, but the stealing of the coin was done in selflessness, and not for monetary gain. That is why I was surprised that it was even an issue, and for me to be questioned in front of our culture (Bruno, FTC, 4/15).

Those outside Bruno’s team were not immediately convinced. There was a difference between the Stoners going home with money that had been offered to them and what Bruno had done. Surreptitiously concealing currency that belonged to someone else, and then taking it without their permission…that sure sounded like
stealing. Two members of the Bella team suggested that we turn Bruno over to the Stone Soup people and let them deal with his infraction as they saw fit. They were, after all, the injured party and the crime had taken place on their grounds. The idea got a little traction at first, but then Harry, also from Bella, objected, "Turning Bruno over to them will just mess it all up for the rest of us. It will turn into a big stinky international incident. They'll never trust us and we have to trade with them next week."

The motive for this argument seems clear - Harry’s team was still awaiting their turn to visit (and earn money) and he did not want anything to interfere before this could happen. His sentiments were met with words of support and nods of agreement. That was when I told the Cartel that there had been Stone Soup witnesses to the theft, and that the Stone Soup members were unsure themselves about how to handle the infraction. Silence…. followed by moans from all corners of the room.

In the end it was decided that the issue should be dealt with strictly inside the Fair Trade Cartel. The act was judged to be a theft, and to be contrary to the Fair Trade code of conduct. Bruno’s case, however, was ruled to have mitigating circumstances, and, while the group could not condone his actions, no penalty was imposed. The coin was accepted by the banker and put on display.

I had a defense team, which held their own. I ended up not getting in trouble in our culture for stealing the coin. The reason for this was because I was simply doing my job, learning as much about the other culture as I could (Bruno, FTC, 4/15).

The discussion was about whether or not the person who stole a coin from the Stone Soup during their observation should be penalized. His group (his personal defense team) argued that he should not be punished because he did not know that he would get in trouble for taking a coin. They argued that he and his group should not be penalized because it was
an innocent mistake. He took the coin to show the rest of us what the Stone Soup money looked like. The class eventually let him off the hook for stealing because it was innocent as he just wanted to show us what their money looked like and he did not know how much the coins were even worth. However, Jade brought up a good point that since he did steal from the Stone Soup, the Stone Soup should decide his punishment. Deborah even announced that the Stone Soup knew the entire time that he had taken a coin from them. Another aspect to the crime of stealing the Stone Soup coin that was discussed was whether the coin should be given back to the Stone Soup or if we should keep the coin as a souvenir or for money. We decided that since the coin was already in our possession and we had given them money on their first visit to observe us, it was only right for us to keep the coin as a souvenir and not use it for an exchange in currency (Robin, FTC, 4/15).

Sherif (1966) noted that when his groups of boys in the Robber’s Cave experiment were brought together under conditions of duress or competition, social structures inside the camps formed and stabilized. This process included the emergence of a leader in each group. As the Fair Trade Cartel dealt with their thief, I noticed that in each of the four small trading groups one person took the lead in presenting and defending their group’s position on the issue at hand. Christine, Eric, Harry and Landon asserted themselves as the chief spokespeople for their trading houses. In this role they often overrode or silenced the voices of their colleagues. Saphire members Jade and Robin, for example, felt strongly that Stone Soup should have the right to put Bruno on trial since the crime had taken place in Stoner’s territory, but once Harry had made up his mind that this was not in his best interests, he shut them down each time they tried to speak. We discovered later that these “leadership” roles persisted throughout the simulation and even into the classroom sessions when the simulation was over.
Fair Trade Cartel Deals with Cheaters

Once the theft had been dealt with, the subject of other forms of cheating was introduced. Certain Traders (no one wanted to give names) were suspected making deals outside the official trading sessions. Others were accused of speaking English or using unapproved gestures during trades. Everyone agreed that the rules were necessary and that some sort of penalty was necessary to insure that they were followed. The problem was that Beta language had no vocabulary with which to accuse another of not playing fair, and English was not allowed on the exchange floor. Below is Penrhyn’s account of the discussion:

I would say the most pronounced feelings expressed by the students today were regarding the penalty of cheating. Everyone was affected because it applied to everyone, especially one member in the group "County". This is because he was the cause of the first discussion (he stole a coin which is a form of cheating). I suggested that we should just take a card away from anyone caught cheating (I was later caught cheating for speaking English). We came to a vote, 5 students were for the card penalty, 5 were for the jail penalty, and 5 were for the fine penalty, and five were just for a warning. I never felt a higher level of group indifference (figuratively speaking). Some people were deeply concerned about the level of transparency of our culture, as reflected by their emphasis on sticking to the prescribed language and gestured during trading, imposition of penalties, and elaborating on what constitutes illegitimacy (I got the message loud and clear, as I was a violator of such policies). Other people just wanted all of the trading to be fair and square. (I am guilty here too because I got so caught up in winning that the rules did not seem very important to me.) (Penrhyn, FTC, 4/15).

Harry had mixed feelings. He was probably the most aggressive trader in our midst and clearly wanted the proceedings to be regulated enough to allow the
exchanges to go smoothly, but he had also been observed doing a little “creative interpretation” of the rules. These new and stricter guidelines would definitely cramp his style. As he made various comments and suggestions (e.g. to allow trading within the small houses immediately before and after the official Cartel trading times) the other members of his group (Bella Trading) deferred to his wishes. Members of the other houses, however, were not intimidated by him, and in the end his plans were overruled. Just as Sherif had observed, leaders emerged, but their power was kept in check by the group at large.

In essence our Culture wants to go back to basics, only be allowed to use words, and signs/body language taught by the Beta audio recording. The system is based on the honor system. I do not know how well this will go, nor if anyone lost any cards. Because of the stricter reliance on the Beta language our group could not implement the ‘group trading’ idea we had on last class--to me very disappointing. Like it or not being stricter on the rules does give everyone an equal footing. I like that stricter following of the rules gives our Culture its essence back, but on the other hand this does not seem to leave room for creativity and individual uniqueness. Hopefully the Cartel as a whole can come up with more creative ways to express ourselves and expand the language (Harry, FTC, 4/15).

Exploitation and Frustration

The cheating discussion was put on hold as we were expecting Stone Soup visitors to join in on the day’s trading session, and we still had an important task to complete before they arrived. A large metal cashbox was retrieved from its hiding place under the table. With some ceremony the banker opened the box and gave each Trader an envelope with new trading cards and a stake of $200 with which to commence trading. As I’ll discuss in more detail later, the introduction of money into the Fair Trade activities greatly increased the Traders’ commitment to the game. This
was immediately evident in the new poised-to-pounce attitude they assumed before the exchange session. The Traders’ excitement was interrupted by the arrival of visitors from Stone Soup. Their appearance also prompted a hasty departure of the Fair Trade group designated to travel this day. The traveling Traders did not want to miss out on a single minute of their only opportunity to exploit the foreigners.

Once again groups of visitors were exchanged, but unlike the previous day, these visitors were encouraged to take part in the activities of their host culture. Upon arrival each visitor was given a bag containing local currency and playing cards. No instructions were offered about how to use these artifacts, but the visitors were free to interact with their hosts as best they could.

While playing the Fair Trade card game last week it had become clear that certain necessary trading cards were extremely rare and competition for them was heating up. Now, when the Stone Soup visitors made their first tentative efforts at trading, it was discovered that they were in possession of a large number of the coveted scarce playing cards. The eager Traders soon besieged the Stone Soup visitors, who were highly intimidated and clustered together in one corner of the room. The Stoners were aware that some of the cards they had been given were considerably more desirable than others, but they had no way to decipher the characters printed on the cards in order to discover which were hot and which were not. Nor did they understand the spoken codes used during trading which might reveal such information.

Occasionally a Stone Soup visitor would venture into the fray and try to strike up a conversation with a Cartel Trader, "How is your grandmother?" In response, the
trader, who was not allowed to speak English, would bark something back in trading language, like, "YO! DaWa DaWa!" (I want a yellow four!). When the Stone Soup visitor, who had no clue about what was being said, did not immediately respond, the Trader would try to peek at the Stoner’s cards. More often than not this would prompt the Stone Soup member to clutch her cards to her chest so as not to reveal her hand. At this point the Cartel Trader, very aware that time was money in this game, would hurry off to look for cards in someone else’s hand, and the frustrated Stoner would return to her group, more confused than ever.

Back in Stone Soup territory the students were much more animated than they had been on previous days. More Stoners had arrived on time, early even, and had eagerly entered into the simulation, but they were starting to complain about how unpleasant it was to interact with the rude Traders. Both the Stone Soup hosts and the Stone Soup visitors, like Mona whose notes are below, were beginning to worry that they were being exploited.

The banker gave us some little packets, and there were many mini cards of different colors. Some Beta people came up to me, but I was the treasured one, so at first I did not talk to them. A guy wanted to exchange his cards to me, and he was saying something barbarian like “yaya... yiyi...” I could not remember exactly what I heard. Brandt had told us that the green and red are the most valuable ones, so I did not exchange those. Aaron wanted to test out if he was right, and tried to exchange a red card for a blue one. Then the Beta guy just blatantly looked at Aaron’s cards and grabbed the card he wanted and gave Aaron one that was probably useless. They are totally taking advantage of us because we don’t know the rules of their game (Mona, SS, 4/15).

In their frenzy to make profitable exchanges the Traders had forsaken all efforts to be thoughtful or polite. What was more surprising, was that they were owning up to
their bad behavior, making no excuses or apologies. Virginia’s notes do a great job of capturing the Traders’ take on the trading and the frenzied nature of the exchange sessions.

I was repeatedly asked by the foreign man with an ear to ear smile, "How’s your Grandma?" I would politely just stare back and say, "Ra An Mo An Mo?" And he would just stare back with a questionable gaze. So I turned around and "BINGO!" I thought to myself, another foreigner stood straight a head of me with an entire bag full of nothing but red cards. Without saying goodbye to the annoyingly friendly guy, I charged at her and shouted excitedly, "Ra an Mo an Mo?!?" She tilted her head from side to side trying to comprehend what I was saying. So I repeated my question and eventually she grabbed an entire handful of cards from her bag. I was practically shouting in my head "There you go, now show me your cards...!! I know you have a red four somewhere in that pile!" As she held up each card I would do the gesture for no then ask her again. It did not take her long to realize the gesture I was making was no. Finally, she came across a red four! My eyes widened and the corner of my lips curled up almost instantly into a smile. I quickly held up a yellow four and snatched the red one. Without trying to counter my offer she took the card and I was off to trade in my cards for cash. Once I received my crisp new $100 and evaluated my new set of cards, I choose to accumulate the blues since I already had plenty. So, I decided to try my luck again with the members of the Alpha culture, my strategy was they would be easier to trade with since their main goals are to observe the Betan society. My thought process was they would be more into watching and learning from my actions rather than trying to trade with me. Unfortunately this trade did not go as smoothly. I was down to my last blue card when I noticed the timid foreigner in the corner, and I immediately spotted the card I desperately needed in her fragile hands. So as I approached her and asked, "Ba An Mo AN?" She literally backed up against the wall as if I had threatened her. Maybe she interrupted my excited tone as aggressive. Peculiar right? (Virginia, FTC, 4/15).

In contrast, Amara’s reflection below demonstrates the complex understanding and appreciation that many of the Stoner Soup members developed for their own card game, as well as the frustration they were experiencing at not being able to share the finer points of the game with the visiting Traders.
The card game in Stone Soup is probably the subtlest instrument involved in the development of our culture. It's subtle because the strategy of the game is a reversal of the goal of a usual card game. The goal is to engage rather than to win. The dialogue that surrounds the game, the stories we create about our grandmothers, are the true function of the game. The game's simplicity set up a situation in which members are pushed to join in collective dialogue and not necessarily because it is already an accepted tradition for Alphas to tell stories, which perhaps influences the topic of conversation, but the limited attention that is necessary to draw some cards, compare them to the leader’s, and pass in coins, creates a void in cognitive expenditure that is easily filled by entertaining conversation. A real understanding of the game is the result of our interaction with the other culture and the communication snags we are having in trying to communicate the values of our culture to them without directly giving them the secret rules. On many occasions they bluntly ask how to play our game. And because the foreigners speak English while visiting us we have to adopt other ways to guide their behavior towards appropriate participation in the group and the game itself. For instance when they ask whether or not they are winning the game or if the number of the card is significant or not, my family just suddenly becomes silent. The Traders' inappropriate behavior seems to taint the conversation. Furthermore, because our matriarch always wins anyway, most of the questions about the details of the games are frivolous. Even if they are told all the rules, they will never understand the "why". This is displayed by their fascination with the currency we use while playing. They either stare at the coins, greedily accept the ones we offered, or scoop them off our tables into their bags when they are leaving. This is not to say that the foreigners do not often participate respectfully. The amount of chatter and laughter that takes place during visiting hours conveys that they could participate well within our culture, but again I think that at the end of visit the visitors don’t understand that this participation itself is the point of the activity (Amara, SS, 4/15).

Outgroup Aggression Part One: Stoner’s Mutilate Fair Trade Currency to Create Jewelry

In the wake of their visit to Fair Trade territory, the Stoners discussed what should be done with the Beta money that the traveling Stoners had returned with. It

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16 Both episodes of out-group aggression are discussed in more detail in the Grandma chapter.
really had no value within the Stone Soup Clan, other than its novelty, and, of course, its meaning as a gift from the foreigners. Everyone agreed that it did not seem right to set it aside. Somehow, it should be displayed, as one does with a cherished gift, to show the Traders that their offering was appreciated. Melani suggested that it be used to make jewelry – and so it was. The dollar bills were colored with markers, folded into rings, twisted in tied into bracelets and necklaces, and shaped as feathers in headdresses. At first Rachel and I took these activities at face value – a thoughtful gesture on the part of the Stoners that was in keeping with their ethic of valuing kindness over money. Once the field notes started coming in, however, we realized this was a not-so-subtle form of aggression. Melanis’ notes articulate the Stoners’ thinking perfectly:

The souvenir of this experience was a wad of one dollar bills which were said to be the least valuable in the Beta culture. Rachel then inquired as to what we should do with this currency. Knowing that it would probably and most definitely anger the Beta culture if we tampered with their money, I suggested we do something wild with it besides leaving them untouched. Someone mentioned using these bills as gifts to give back to the Betas, essentially giving it back destroyed to show them how little their money meant to us. This gift process then translated to a decoration party of folding and coloring the bills. In our table we did origami. Actually after seeing what one guy did with his money, all of us at the table asked for a dollar ring. He became the maker of money rings! Afterwards we colored the rings with our family colors. Other families made earrings through even making use of the string on our identifiers. The less our creations looked like Beta money, the happier we all became. There was a lot of down time to relax and fold. (Melani,SS,4/15).

17 Later in the dissertation money and the role it played in the simulation is discussed in more depth.
Outgroup Aggression Part Two: Traders Deliberately Abuse the Word “Grandma”

When the Stone Soup visitors left the Cartel, and the group of traveling Traders returned home, the discussion turned to the foreigners’ culture. Everyone agreed that the use of the words “grandma” and “soup” must be part of some secret Stoners’ language or code – much like the nonsense words used in the Beta trading language. Abruptly one Trader yelled out, “I’ve got it!” Let’s use ‘grandma’ to announce that someone has broken the rules. Whatever ‘grandma’ means to them, it most likely is not ‘you’re a cheater’. That will really confuse them!” And so it was decided; when Traders wanted to accuse someone of breaking the rules, they would point at them and yell “GRANDMA!” Soon an accompanying practice was established; if the accused did not agree that they had broken a rule, they would counter by barking, “GRANDPA!” Any witnesses could support one or the other, and if the accusation was upheld, the cheater would forfeit one card to the accuser and pay $50 to the banker.18 The habit of chastising each other with the word “grandma” immediately took hold and played an important role in Fair Trade interactions for the remainder of the simulation.

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18 The Traders’ appropriation of the word “grandma” is discussed in more depth later in the dissertation.
April 17th: Leaks and Lies

The Stone Soup members were growing increasingly frustrated with their inability to crack either the Beta language code or the rules of the Cartel’s card game. Thus the first order of business for this day was to try and compile all of the information that had been gathered about the Trading Cartel and to see if some sense could be made of it. The Stoners had decided that the goofy arm gesture – the one where the arms were extended to the side and then the left to dangle from the elbows – must mean “no”. They also knew that the goal of the trading game was to acquire stacks of cards of a uniform color that could be turned in to the banker for cash. But when the visiting Stone Soup members approached the banker with such a stack, the banker would look through the cards carefully and then hand them back saying, “I’m sorry. This set is not complete.” It was suggested that the numbers on the cards might be important, and the travelers who were packing up for their visit to the Cartel were instructed to pay closer attention to them during their visit.

In Fair Trade Territory the Cartel members did nothing to make the Stone Soup people’s task any easier, nor did they make any effort to make their visitors feel welcome. The two excerpts below describe the same interaction, giving us some feel for what the Stone Soup people were up against. The first is from Cartel member, Eric, who offers a fractured account, decipherable only by those familiar with the Cartel’s rules of engagement. The second is from a visiting Stone Soup member who was trying to trade with Eric.
The simulation began as the strangers entered the room and simultaneously the bell was ringing that says "the trading session is open." I conducted trades as before, but feeling more confident of what to do and how to do it. The Betan language no longer felt unnatural (even with the addition of the words "grandma" + "grandpa"). I knew a blue 5 was rare, so I did not bother taking my nearly completed set out of the envelope. (Only to later realize that I needed them to communicate that I wanted blue with the strangers.) Before this interaction however, I recalled having horrible luck getting yellow or orange cards, no one wanted to trade. I approach the strangers and tried to communicate blue while holding up an orange card. The Stone Soup girl held out an orange card and I waved my arms while slightly nodding my head from side to side while repeating, Ba! Ba! for blue. I later realized this was a violation, and despite another member yelling out "grandma!" to which I instinctively responded "grandpa!" nothing bad happened to me. I later caught myself nodding my head the same way, and another Beta member yelled "grandma!" so this time I held out my cards and she chose a blue one from my hand (I later realized she accused me of a different crime, but we had no real way of discussing this misunderstanding.) I approached another stranger once more, this time she said "how was your grandma!" I instinctively yelled "grandpa!" Jennifer who was right next to me, yelled "grandpa!" coming to my defense, I smiled at her. The whole grandma grandpa thing seemed to have a life of its own. Then the bell rang, signaling an end to the trading session (Eric, FTC, 4/17).

Upon arriving at the Beta culture's abode, I think we were "buzzed" in after knocking or at else some kind of bell was rung announcing our arrival. Immediately, we were greeted by what seemed to be a banker, which I infer because she was dispensing paper money to her comrades based on some quantity of colored cards. All of us in the Sun family were unnerved and tried to stick together. They had their own language they used during their game which was difficult to decipher, but I gathered that they had a basic greeting, different names for colors, and a declinatory gesture. If you didn't have something or didn't wish to play, you made a gesture with your arms in a right angular formation. Some guy kept pushing an orange card in my face and yelling bah bah. I thought he wanted my orange card, but he wanted to give me his orange card in exchange for something, but I could not figure out which card he wanted. We were met with some contempt when we asked the Betas how there grandmothers were. One of them exclaimed in response, "Grandfather!" None of us made any money, but we were given a parting gift of some low-valued cash (Brandt, SS, 4/17).
An Unintentional Betrayal of Clan Secrets

Upstairs the Stone Soup people were making a special effort to make the Traders feel welcome, asking about their grandmothers and generally making nice. The Fair Trade visitors, however, were intent on playing the Stoner’s card game, and on winning as much of the Stone Soup money as possible, and so they rushed through these niceties. Once the Stone Soup card games were underway the Stoners gave their money away freely and seemingly at random. While the Traders were ecstatic at this accumulation of wealth, the practice did little to help them understand the rules of the game.

Landon, a member of the Sapphire Trading Company, sat down to play the Stone Soup card game with the Sun Family. Landon began a friendly but relentless campaign to uncover as much insider knowledge about the Stone Soup as she could. Stone Soup member, Melissa (a chronically late student who we now know had missed some of the crucial introductory comments) happily answered all of Landon’s questions – and even offered some additional unsolicited information. Nearby Stoners, overhearing snippets of the conversation, tried to interfere, but not before irreparable damage was done. Below are Melissa’s field notes on this event:

> Basically I have to write this part first because I have to say first off-I feel sooooooo bad about what happened in class, I didn't realize what had happened until after class when I got the email sent out to everyone about how we are in grave danger. It made it seem so serious-I knew that I had said a few things that I shouldn't have looking back-but it was due to a "miscommunication". Before the Stone Soup meeting started we were passing the name tags and plastic bags around and I had a bunch of them right where I was sitting so people were asking me for them. I found out later from a group member that it was around that time that Rachel had mentioned that we were supposed to interact with the Beta culture
members, but I didn’t hear the part about not telling them any details about our culture. They did not know how to play our game so I explained the rules to them. I thought I remembered hearing that the treasured ones were not allowed to talk unless we gave them permission, so somewhere in the conversation with one of the Beta members I told her who our treasured one is and that she was now allowed to speak with him. She then inquired about why we did this. I replied that they are special to us, and that we protect them. The two girls at the table looked uncomfortable, but looking back that was probably the point, but I made every effort to make them feel welcome. I then asked them about their culture and said that I had heard about money and that it means a lot in their culture, and she proceeded to tell me that in their culture that being rich was something to be greatly desired, and she wanted to know if that was the same for us. I told her that it was considered rude for us to be too into money and that there was no need anyway because there was enough for everyone. She then mentioned that she heard our Stone Soup asking about Grandmothers and wondered what that was about. I didn’t see any harm in telling her that when we greet each other we ask how our Grandmother is doing as a sign of respect. She asked if there was anything else important about our grandmothers and I told her no. We just had a great respect for our ancestors. I also told the girls that the face card was used by our culture to show to someone who is not following the rules because they seemed puzzled by it. Looking back on the whole day I now realize that by trying to help sort of “initiate” them into the culture, I actually hindered our own family and Stone Soup. Because I take the class seriously, and because the class environment really felt like a family—the worst thing in the world happened—I actually felt sad as if I had let my family down. ...I am really, really sorry: (......... “

(Melissa, SS, 4/17).

Landon, the Fair Trade visitor who drew all of the Stone Soup secrets from Melissa, tells her side of the story:

When we walked in Rachel handed us a plastic bag with gold coins in it and 5 playing cards. We then split up and went to different tables to play the Stoners’ culture’s game, or trading with them. The table that I sat at welcomed me and asked me how my grandma was when I first sat down. They were all very friendly and very welcoming to us. They asked us how we liked our vacation so far, which I assumed was just asking us how it was to visit their culture’s territory. I noticed that they all were wearing our money as jewelry and obviously didn’t value it the way we did. Before we started playing with them I asked them if they would explain how to
play and a girl told me that one person would start by flipping over one of their cards and then everyone at the table would flip over their top card as well. People that had the same color card as the person who started they would give us a coin and if we had a different color we would pay them a coin. While we were playing they asked me about Beta culture and if we spoke English or not. I told them no we spoke Beta and asked them about their culture as well.

They told me that they don’t value money at all but they value each other. They said that their grandmas were very important and that the person who wore a red beaded necklace, called the treasured one, was also very important. At the end of trading when we were about to leave I only had one coin but when I asked the table that I was sitting at if I could have some coins they ended up giving me about 16 coins like it was nothing. They also gave me some of our own money back as well. After we left Stoner culture we went back down to our room and told the Betans what we had seen (Landon, FTC, 4/17).

A Highly Intentional Deception: Traders Craft a Bogus Story to Deceive Their Own People

Field notes from the other students in both cultures told the same story. Virtually all of the “secret” Stone Soup information had been leaked to the Cartel. My first reaction was dismay. The entire simulation was grounded in the premise that each of the cultures would be opaque to the other, and that was no longer the situation. An emergency meeting was called. We were anxious to try and recuperate the simulation – and the research project! Later that evening I received our first clue that the situation might be even more complicated than it now appeared. It came in the form of an email from one of the members of Sapphire team (who had visited the Stone Soup on this day). JuLi wrote,
Dear Mrs. Wilson,
You told us in the first week that if we had something private to say in our field notes we should send them to a different email address. I would like for you to keep my notes of this day private. Can you please tell me where to send them?
Thank you,
JuLi

JuLi had been at the same table with Melissa (Stone Soup) and Landon (Fair Trade) and had witnessed the drama that had played out between them. She was also with Landon and the other members of the Sapphire team in the stairwell (just after their visit to the Stone Soup, en route between the two camps) when Landon excitedly shared her newly acquired knowledge with her group. As it became clear to them just how extensive the leak had been, the Sapphire group huddled on the landing between floors and cooked up a plan. They reasoned that if they held back parts of the information they had gathered, and distorted some of the bits that they did report, the result would be a distinct advantage for their group in all future cross-culture interactions. JuLi was writing to me now (and later came to office hours) to confess that she and June (the two shyest members of the Sapphire team) had not been brave enough to oppose the others on the stairs, especially since the plan had won immediate approval from the two male members of their group. Instead JuLi and June had remained silent (and miserable) while Sapphire delivered their doctored account of the visit to the Cartel.

As we headed back to our classroom, we were talking about how easy it was to get so many coins, and then, one of our group members asked, "Wait, should we tell them that they can just ask for coins?" Then, after a brief discussion, another member took it further to say that we should tell them it was a taboo to ask for coins. Because I had the least amount,
he pointed at me and said, "Let’s say she (JuLi) asked for coins, and the Stoners got really offended, and because the rest of us didn’t ask, we got rewarded with lots of coins while she didn’t get any." And there came the conspiracy within the same culture.

When we came back in the classroom, other members of Beta culture asked about our experience. Landon explained most of the rules of the game, and she did a great job describing and explaining the details of the game, but she did not say anything about the treasured ones or about grandmothers. Eric stepped in to briefly mention that it was a taboo to ask for coins directly. However, it wasn’t stressed enough, and one of the members of the group that was scheduled to visit Beta group on Thursday said that he would just ask for coins. Landon looked back at us, but didn’t say anything. None of us did. I didn’t want to lie, so I was mostly quiet for the whole time, except briefly clarifying the rules of the game.

It was very interesting, and also very sad, to see how we depended on the first group’s description of Beta culture, and how now we censor, as a group, the information and try to manipulate the other groups’ behavior to win this competition among our own culture. I saw the possibility of that there can be a difference between real cultural difference and the cultural difference created by the information carrier/interpreter with conflicting intentions (JuLi, FTC).

Mike, Rachel and I met the following morning. We contemplated devising new games and rules for the Stone Soup Clan, but were afraid this might erase some of the work the group had already accomplished. If nothing else, the imposition of new rules at this point would certainly damage the Clan’s moral, and slow their momentum. After considerable hand-wringing we reminded ourselves that we were here to observe the development of communication processes and relationships among and between the groups. The form these took would certainly be altered if the simulation, as we had imagined it, was to crumble before our eyes, but communications and relationships would surely develop nonetheless. We decided to turn the situation over to the
students, take break from the inter-cultural activities in order to give them time to regroup, and see what developed.
April 22\textsuperscript{nd}: The Breach: A “Hurricane” Sends Stone Soup to Higher Ground

The next time the Fair Trade visitors (The Bella Trading Group) entered Stone Soup territory, there were none of the usual greetings, no home-baked goodies and no cheerful music playing. Instead they found the room empty - except for Professor Mike who was sitting all alone in the corner with his laptop computer. He appeared to be just as baffled as the students were. No, he had not seen anyone from the Stone Soup this morning. He pointed out a hand drawn picture (a tropical island scene) taped to the front door. Professor Mike mused for a few minutes with the Trading group about what the drawing might signify and what might have happened to the Stone Soup, “no clue really”, and then retreated to his office.

The Bella group hung around the empty room for a while, hoping the Stone Soup would show up. Nothing. Finally, the disappointed traders ate the oranges that they had brought to share and returned home to find the other members of the Fair Trade just as confused. The trading session had opened as usual, and the traders were ready and waiting for today’s Stone Soup visitors, and, more importantly, for their exceedingly valuable trading cards. But the expected visitors had not arrived - which meant the Fair Trade profits for the day would be meager at best.

In another building on campus the Stoners were in conclave. "The day we went to higher ground to escape the hurricane" (Mikelle) was one of introspection for the Stone Soup Clan. Each Stoner had received an email from Rachel the day before that read:
It is with great sadness that I write to all of you. We are in very grave danger. Our clan’s secrets, rules, traditions, and games have become known to Outsiders. This has laid bare our culture, our grandmothers, and our heritage, and left us extremely vulnerable. Our clan meetings will be changing. We will need to find ways to protect ourselves (Rachel, 4/20).

This had been followed by a change of venue notice, telling the Stoners not to approach their old classroom, but to show up for class at a new room in a different building on campus. (No special communication of any kind had been sent to the Fair Trade cartel.) In the heated online conversation that had ensued among the Stoners, one of the Stone Soup families decided to create a sign and leave it for the Traders, who they knew would be visiting. Melani writes, “Having no written language, we left a drawing showing a hurricane ravaged island and our people traveling to higher ground”.

As soon as the Stoners were assembled in their secret meeting place, everyone in Melissa’s family took some heat from the other Stone Soup families about the leak. They had, after all, sat and listened while she spilled all the secrets. Why had they not intervened? In the end the requisite reprimands were brief and surprisingly kind. It was quickly decided that some of the Stone Soup practices should be changed and made more difficult to decipher. But which ones? To a person, the group insisted that the overall Stone Soup worldview, with its emphasis on community, hospitality and kindness, must be maintained. The rest of the class period was spent devising new games and new ways of communicating that were true to the Stone Soup’s values, were

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19 The Stoners were never told that they had no written language, and in fact they did keep a “book of knowledge” where many of the entries were in English. But their communication with the Fair Trade Cartel had always been oral, and on this occasion, they insisted that the sign they left for the visiting Traders should be pictorial.
less transparent, and could be implemented in time for the next meeting. Several new card games were introduced, stricter rules governing the “treasured ones” were instated, the Stone Soup’s treasure was “buried”, and a new form of coinage took its place.

One of the Alpha procedural artifacts that was a part of the original BaFa’ BaFa’ game was the use of Face cards (Kings, Queens and Jacks) to reprimand a player for ignoring the Stone Soup rules. Should a player break one of the Clan rules, the offend party was to stop speaking, hold up a face card for a few seconds, and then turn her back and walk away. The practice had been introduced in week one of the simulation, but had never really caught on within the Stone Soup. Now they chose to reinstate the use of face cards starting with the next cultural exchange. The thinking was that this might add another layer of complexity to the Stone Soup’s image.

Through all of this adversity the Stone Soup was strangely animated – happy even – in a way that they had not been before. Rachel noted that they appeared to be “bonding” and to have become a “more cohesive group”. Field notes from the students support her observations. Below is Aaron’s retrospective on the day’s events:

_We found out one of our friends had shared the secrets of our Stone Soup with members of the Beta culture during their visit. I was not sure what many others felt about the situation, but I know that I was slightly perturbed that such a blatant boundary could be so carelessly crossed. However, being friends and a resourceful clan, we were able to meander around any real potential problems. During a “hurricane” that hit our territory, we met in another safe room where we could discuss possible solutions while remaining faithful to the simulation. Some examples of solutions were changing our card game by using the face card as a means of entry (along with its other use as a disciplinary tool) and changing the coinage which we would win in the game with replicas of U.S. coins. Our theory was that the Betas would be confused and wish to know what different values the coins had. Of course, not valuing money, we_
would simply reply that they were gifts. This was indicative of the key differences between our two cultures (Aaron, SS, 10/22).

We were surprised to see that this day’s field notes revealed a uniform and consistent understanding among the Stoners of what the Stone Soup culture was about, and what it meant to be a member.

We then launched into a discussion about how we wanted to respond to the fact that the Traders knew how our culture worked. We decided that whatever we did we still needed to keep up our values of being kind to others. That was the one thing that we could not compromise on (Sailer, SS, 4/22).

Brandt comments on how congruent the many self-descriptive qualities appeared to be, each one resonating with the others; the Clan’s kindness and lack of focus on money, for example, worked perfectly with its ethic of tolerance and generosity. Aaron concurs:

All the qualities that we would use to describe our culture, all of them, were compatible with one another, for instance unity, sharing, understanding, kindness, love, friendship, and of course our traditions. Everyone engaged the discussion pretty well and all had good ideas. I also think that this got us to act and think more as a group which could only result in further cooperation and identification with each other. I think this simulation has certainly proven itself to be a very organic and fluid endeavor in a very short time, which itself is exciting (Aaron, SS, 4/22).

The only real problem was that the core qualities defining the group (e.g. openness and absence of aggression) were the same ones that laid it open to exploitation. This contradiction was not internal to the Clan, but sprang from their interaction with the Cartel, and proved to be the Catch-22 that stalled many of the Clan’s efforts to move forward. Any attempts to defend the Clan lifestyle from
outsiders, hiding money and mystifying rituals, for example, would alter that very lifestyle by violating the Clan’s codes of generosity and openness. During the conclave the group attempted to resolve this on a case-by-case basis, adjusting the rules as possible scenarios came up for discussion. Most of the Stoners agreed that the repeated tweaking of the Stone Soup rules would eventually undermine some of the Clan’s most cherished traditions, but no one had a better suggestion. Amara’s notes were typical.

*I knew exactly what the Alpha’s are supposed to exemplify. We are peaceful, respectful to other cultures, protective of our own members, and we value our members’ wellbeing over material objects. I was surprised when we began to share that I had neglected to mention other important aspects and even vital aspects of our culture such as storytelling, card games, ancestry, creativity, affection, and fun. I listened when others shared. Much of what they said was similar to what I thought. I was relieved the clan was thinking similarly to me. This meeting was distinctly different from the previous simulations. Usually the rules are stated and then the simulation begins. In this meeting however, we as members in the simulation were not only discussing the rules but discussing how the rules could be altered. I really enjoyed the change of the environment and the participation in creating new rules, but I think I should have been more proactive for certain opinions during the meeting. However, at the time I felt that being too argumentative would not have been in accordance to the clan’s ways. The large importance of these changes to the culture has become clearer after reflection on the meeting. Our problem during the simulation seems to be lack of understanding how to interact with the Beta’s without explaining our rules. This is difficult because we are a very social culture that tells stories. So I think the confusion lies in determining line between a story and an explanation of our ways (Amara, SS,4/22).*

The field notes also reflected a new sense of unity or camaraderie among the Stone Soup members. This was particularly interesting as, as you will read shortly, the atmosphere in the Fair Trade Cartel was growing edgy and accusatory.

*All of our answers were similar—kindness, open mindedness, high integrity, Grandmother and history, touch, happy and fun, treasured ones, sharing, no secrets from each other, etc. This hurricane definitely*
brought us unity. This is the first time where almost everyone contributed to the clan meeting. However, because we had so many different ideas, it was rather difficult to decide on what strategy to use for games, and for vacations. Although we had various different ideas, and had difficulty deciding on one particular solution to our problem, we felt stronger than ever. We had a common goal in mind—share our values, yet protect ourselves from the Beta culture at the same time. The hurricane reflected what drama and performance can bring to a culture, both the positives and the negatives. We felt invaded, unprotected when our secrets leaked out to the Traders, but we didn’t simply sit there, complain, or cry, we transformed our sadness into strength. Although the hurricane hit us unexpected, we were able to work through our problems, and solve the difficulties as a group, we were able to take advantage of both the positives and the negatives of the hurricane drama to change the view of Alpha culture, hopefully for the better (Ling, SS, 4/22).

Fair Trade Cartel field notes on “the day the Alpha Tribe went missing” (Penrhyn) show that they were approaching the breach in a totally different way. No one in the Fair Trade group asked, “who are we?” or, “what core values define us?” Instead the conversations were about what specific acts individual Traders may have committed to provoke such a drastic response from the Clan, and what could be done to rectify the situation…so that the Trading could resume as soon as possible.

Before long, accusations and personal confessions dominated the conversation. “She made a really cool bracelet for you out of $5 bills, but instead of wearing it, you took it apart right in front of her and put it in your money envelope.” “I think I was really rude to the girl I was trading with last week.” “I took two cards from him when I really only paid for one.” It was widely assumed that the Fair Trade had offended the Stone Soup with the blatant negative use of the word “grandma” and overly-aggressive trading, but there was also an undercurrent of irritation. “I think it was not right for them to leave without giving us any warning.” “They can’t just do this to us, can they?” The notes
below are from Brian, an undergraduate who was observing the Fair Trade discussion on this day. He was not affiliated with either of the cultures as he had missed the first two weeks of class due to illness. Having arrived too late to take part in either of the cultures, Prof Mike enlisted Brian as an “unbiased observer”, moving between the two groups, making observations and writing field notes from an outsider’s perspective.

There was not very much interaction between me and members of the Fair Trade culture. I do not know what caused them to disregard me, it might have been that I had no money, no cards, and could not speak their language.

The team that was supposed to vacation in Stone Soup country, came back much earlier than expected. They found a 8” x 11.5” picture with mountains and trees in the background, and people in canoes coming up to shore. They assumed that the Stone Soup clan had left their own country to go to another.

They tried to figure out what events might have led the Stoner family to leave their country when they knew visitors were going to be showing up. A couple of people (Traders) pointed out that the Stone Soup family probably thought the Traders were rude.

So what did they decide makes Fair Trade culture rude: They do not really welcome the Stone Soup families when they come in to visit. They give the members of the Stoner family cards to trade, but because of language barriers, the Traders usually exploit this and take their cards. Because time is money, Fair Trade members cannot sit around and chat, or else they are losing money, and that means everything to them.

Another key point that they thought about was their mockery of the word “grandma”. The Fair Trade clan’s language is phonetic, so “grandma” does sound like they are actually saying a word in their language. But since the Traders have turned the word “grandma” into a negative word, and Stoners love talking about their grandmas’, this conflict of meaning has created some tension between the two families.
One Trader, being frustrated coming back from a disappointing vacation cried, “Let’s go to war!” Another said to build a better relationship with them so that they can keep receiving gifts from them. At this time, a part of me wanted to say, “Are you guys really going to do this from the bottom of your heart?” and the other side said, “Are you doing this to gain more material wealth”. I feel like their effort will tip the scale to see where this one goes.

It was also interesting to hear comments on adapting some new language and even practices into their culture. They thought that the “welcoming” part should be most important because it sets the tone. It is not in the Fair Trade culture to show warmth and affection, but in order to keep this relationship strong, they are willing to throw in a couple of hugs to welcome the visitors next time around.

In a Darwinian way, I see the Fair Trade culture evolving. They went from trying to maximize their profits, either by exploiting the Stone Soup members when they visited Fair Trade country, or by asking for as much money as possible when they went abroad. But now they are thinking more in terms of optimizing their cash flow, taking more time than usual to greet them during the welcoming, and by not hording as much money when they go abroad so that they do not seem selfish. They are adjusting to fulfill their needs.” (Juaquin, outside observer, 4/22)

Both of the cultures were evolving, but not in a Darwinian way as Juaquin suggested. They were evolving, as culture normally does, in a deliberate Lamarkian fashion. Owing to the structure of the class, the two cultures were obliged to adapt in concert with the other. Because the simulation was part of university class, going their separate ways was not an option, and neither group suggested it. The Stone Soup clan chose to move forward as a more unified, self-conscious and cautious group. While it appeared that the Fair Trade cartel would try to make nice and rein in some of their ambition, the group was far from reaching an agreement. Some Traders were calling for war.
According to Kurt Lewin (1948) groups become coherent because the members understand that some element of their fate depends on the fate of the group as a whole, and crucially, that each member’s activities have implications for the welfare of the other group members. Both of these factors were forced to the front when Melissa leaked Stone Soup’s secrets. Suddenly the Stoners were acutely aware of just how closely linked their fates were, and of how vulnerable they all were to one person’s weakness. I found it counterintuitive, despite Lewin’s prediction, that the leak served to unify the Stone Soup Clan, and particularly surprising that the event seemed to fracture the Fair Trade Cartel. Anderson’s (1975) research had shown successful groups to be more coherent than those whose efforts are thwarted, but the opposite seemed to be true in our simulation.

The cultures in our simulation did, however, conform to the pattern established by the Robber’s Cave boys. The Sherif’s (1953) reported that the group who appeared to have the upper hand in any given competition was more apt to loot or deface the other camp’s property and more apt to engage in slurs and insults against the “losing” boys. The present simulation was not designed to result in a winning or losing culture, but at this point there did seem to be some perception among the players that the Cartel had assumed a threatening attitude toward Stone Soup, and the Traders were expressing more open mockery and derision toward the Stoners than the Stoners were toward them. The research team was both curious and worried about the impact this might have on the developing relationships within and among the two cultures.
In retrospect, the breach in the simulation proved to be a blessing in at least three ways. First, the two groups, under duress, rallied their forces, reinforced ingroup/outgroup boundaries and strengthened internal alliances – all in a very visible way that greatly enriched the research project. Second, untethering the simulation from the BaFa Bafa game procedures allowed for more natural, or less prescribed interactions, both inside and between the two cultures. Finally, in the regrouping period that followed the leak, the students in both groups (to varying degrees) spontaneously entered into a sort of “metacultural” phase - an interlude where they explicitly addressed questions about what it meant to be a part of their cultural group, what it might be like to be a part of the other culture, and how the other culture might be perceiving them. At the time, however, these benefits went unrecognized, and Rachel, Mike and I held our collective breath, not knowing what surprises the next meeting might hold.
April 24th: The Reunion

On the first day back after the breach in procedures, the Stone Soup clan members arrived with renewed spirit. They had spent the interim days scheming and planning and were now ready to face the Fair Trade cartel as a more cohesive and prepared collective. This is not to say they weren’t apprehensive, as Aaron’s notes indicate:

> What really mystified me, though, was how uncomfortable my family and I felt at the prospect of meeting the other culture again, as well as how much we seemed to band together in a sort of defense mechanism. This was also a climactic event to me because it seemed to reveal how much of a group identity we had established over a short period of time. In fact, about five or six Stoners were in the same class directly after our Stone Soup meeting. I had never previously had any desire to walk to class with anyone else at all, but we found ourselves talking and laughing on the way to the next class. This was an interesting phenomena of group dynamics to me, especially in a community where my peers normally separate themselves with iPods and cell phones.” (Aaron, SS, 4/24).

The Cartel was fractured and weakened. Many of them wanted to find ways to appease the foreigners (if the Clan showed up, that is - no one was sure). But others, mainly those who had lost out on trading opportunities, felt the need to redouble their efforts to earn as much money as possible in the days that remained.

The Clan did show up, and the trading happened, but everything was a little out of sync and unsettled. There were distinct shifts in the demeanors of both groups. Clan members were wary and protective. Traders were tentative and, maybe, a little more observant and thoughtful.
At the end of the day Christine, one of the Cartel’s more aggressive traders, laughingly admitted that for the first time she had actually slowed down enough to look the visiting Stoners in the face. She said she had never even thought of them as people before, but as carriers of the cards she needed to complete her sets. Her field notes, below, reveal some frustration on her part, but also some efforts to understand the actions of the Stoners she was trading with, a first for Christine.

I noticed that trading with Alpha today was more difficult then before. I think it’s because the group today was actively trying to figure out the game and thought they had an idea of how the game works. This made it difficult for me because they would offer me other cards even though I could see the card I needed in their hand. If I asked again for it, they would motion “no” and get me to go away. If I waited and asked again they would still say no because they thought they didn’t have it. The visitors that came today were looking at the bolts on the cards. This was very interesting to me because I had never noticed that different cards had different amount of bolts on them before. For example I was asking for a yellow 3 and one of the Stoners told the other “she’s looking for a card with 5 bolts”. In the past they just tried to do whatever we wanted them to do, but now they were very determined and were looking at the cards in a completely different way and therefore there was no way we could communicate with each other. It was difficult and frustrating to trade with them. I’m not sure if they thought they knew what I wanted, although they had no clue and I couldn’t tell them in English, or if they were deliberately trying to play dumb to try and get more information from me. After today’s meeting I think that the thing that is standing in our way to excel as a culture isn’t only the language anymore but the way we trade with Alpha. We haven’t been able to find a common ground where we understand each other. I think this isn’t happening because we are all afraid that they will figure out our game and trade within themselves to drain our bank. We can’t let them know the game, but if we don’t, it makes it harder for us to get what we want from them (Christine, FTC, 4/24).

Melani from Stone Soup writes about the same event. Her notes show that the Traders had indeed softened their approach, but that the Stoners were not as naïve or trusting as they had been in the past.
Today the hurricane had passed. As we took our quizzes, a piece of paper circulated around the classroom. It said "We missed you Stoners" or something to this effect. I thought it was a joke because this crayon illustration showed people holding hands. My group exited feeling a bit leery. Were the Traders going to receive us harshly "yelling grandpa" and abrassively play the game with us? Or were they going to show more consideration after our hurricane dislocation? My family traveled to the foreign land of the Traders. We entered into the room and our presence wasn't at all felt. I even said "We're here!" and no one really looked up. One person noticed, but then resumed to their exchange. We looked at the swapping of various cards and colors. It seemed all very foreign, the chanting of random terms that I knew nothing of their significance.

In order to fully immerse ourselves in the Beta culture, the maple family wanted to play this game. No one invited us into this game, but we remembered that Deborah served as the cashier. We went up to her, and gave her our copper and silver coinage. Deborah seemed delighted but perplexed all at once. She took our gift, and gave us stacks of cards individually. In order to have an even amount of each color, all five of us traded amongst ourselves to have evenness of the green, orange, yellow, white, and orange colored cards. We tried to protect our "treasured" one and our "treasured" ones keeper made sure she was safe. With this, I felt a freedom to explore and engage the Traders. This time the Traders actually spoke English. I said "hello" expecting nothing in return, and I surprised to be met with a "hi." I pushed my luck further, asking about his grandmother, and he responded with that his grandmother is doing great. We dived into the game. He made a signal saying a certain word I didn't understand. After a few interactions, I began to realize that "wa" meant white, "ra" meant red, "ga" meant green, and so forth. The words after the color identification probably signal the number of bolts or apples on the card. This Beta tried to have me understand the card he was asking about. He pointed to one of my red cards that had one bolt as he signaled an exchange for one of his green cards with one bolt. I had made a successful exchange! This was the only exchange I was able to make for the whole visit.

I continued to be caught off guard by their friendliness. They genuinely attempted to help me in my comprehension of the game. I didn't quite understand the premise of the exchange because a card that matched the bolts on another color card didn't make for a successful exchange. They waved their arms at their sides, and then left. No one chanted "grandpa" or seemed hostile towards me when I inquired about their grandmother. This was a relief! However, one Beta seemed very intent on his trading. He got really into the game, and he deeply sighed when a
match could not be made. I guessed he was probably really close to winning or something of the sort. After learning a bit more about the game, the maple family looked at the desks where the Traders stored their possessions. Envelopes marked with the writing “Bella trading co” and “Sapphire investment group” were on different tables. This led all of us to gather that the game was a trading game. The cards did not probably have a universal value but the value was subjective to a specific company. Here no kinship and family units broke up their table groups, but rather the association of money-making aims.

Deborah rang the bell for all of us to finish trading. We went up to her, and I gave her a handful of green cards. The last group said that these were worth the most. She told me no exchange could be made. I tried again gathering cards from my fellow maples. I put together five white cards all with one bolt, but again Deborah could not make a trade. I have yet to discover what this means. Although I feel closer to deciphering their language, there is still so much mystery that serves as a barrier between the Stoners and Traders. However, this distance is becoming less overwhelming. We said goodbye to the Traders, and all of them wished us a friendly farewell. They were courteous and sociable! What a drastic transformation! (Melani, SS, 4/24).

Since the breach, the Country Inc. trading team had been aggressively lobbying for an additional trading day. They had been the first group to travel into Stone Soup territory. This had been an observational mission in which they were not permitted to interact with the locals. The team was angry because this meant they were the only ones having no opportunity to trade in foreign currency, a circumstance that put them way behind in earnings. Country Inc. put their case to the rest of the Cartel, who understood their plight, and in the spirit of Fair Trade, it was unanimously decided that we should carry on for one more day.
April 29th: Struggling with the Right and Wrong of it All

On day nine, when the cultures exchanged visitors for the last time, the Stone Soup clan was visibly more relaxed than they had been since the exodus, and the Traders were again putting on their nicest faces, but this day’s field notes revealed that both groups were still struggling with the right and wrong of it all. In Fair Trade territory trading seemed fairly even-keel and uneventful. That is, the Clan members still struggled to figure out the Beta language and the rules of trade, while the Cartel members rushed to take full advantage of this last opportunity to add to their individual and company fortunes, but the general mood was uncharacteristically light-hearted and congenial. Upstairs in Clan Country the atmosphere was down right festive as a mixed-culture marriage ceremony was taking place!

The Field notes from this day were some of the most extensive of the simulation. Now accustomed to writing every night about the challenges that had emerged during the day’s activities, and having experienced little that day that was contentious, the students took the opportunity to muse about the moral dilemmas they were grappling with in the simulation.

The majority of the Stone Soup members reported feeling like they had developed close bonds with the others in their culture, and they attributed this closeness to the clan mandate to put relationships first, and to the clan activities which provided opportunities to build those relationships.
They were still struggling with the feeling they were unable to protect themselves from exploitation by the Fair Trade Cartel. The old dilemma persisted; the things that the Clan members cherished most about their culture - being open, friendly, and non-competitive - were the very qualities that left them vulnerable to the Cartel’s aggressive trading tactics. Ongoing discussions about how to proceed always produced what clan member Bernice called “a depressed recognition that the culture our group has so carefully cultivated is doomed.” Bernice adds:

It doesn’t help that we really have no way to disagree with each other about what should be done to protect ourselves. No matter what anyone says, our culture demands that we listen politely and be supportive. That’s nice, but sometimes it just doesn’t get us anywhere. We don’t seem to be able to make any difficult group decisions (Bernice, 4/55, 4/29).

Several members of the Stone Soup clan mentioned that they had become noticeably more unified when they recognized they were being exploited by the Cartel. In particular, the day taken off from interaction with the Cartel to regroup was cited as a turning point in Stone Soup solidarity. I particularly like Amara’s comments below where she describes the Stone Soup’s “loving yet suspicious” stance towards the Fair Trade culture:

We had been through a lot of hard times together and now the classroom atmosphere was mostly comfortable throughout the simulation. Most of the activities seemed to flow into each other rather smoothly. There was no awkwardness or nervousness between conversations. By now our culture as a whole seemed to be a collective group rather than a bunch of individual students placed within a classroom. If there were moments of quiet or silence it was not out of not being comfortable within the group but probably general fatigue or simply just busy with a task at hand.

I thought it was funny that we had this loving and yet suspicious attitude toward the other culture, and yet it felt to me at the time to be fairly justified suspicion. I thought the foreigners were to us like our little
siblings; we love them but sometimes they don’t always act appropriately and need to be monitored. I always felt slightly exhausted after visiting them, and good to be back in my own culture where I knew that I would be welcomed and treated with kindness and respect. I think they noticed it too, because they seemed like different people outside their room. When they came to visit us they were really very nice. We really owe the other culture in some ways. Without them we would not know ourselves so well, because we would not have taken the time to stop and think about what was important to us and what wasn’t, about what things we wanted to keep and what we could change in order to make ourselves less transparent (Amara, 4/SS, 4/29).

In her midterm reflection Melani tells us that, as a group, the foreigners were intimidating and strange, but as she got to know them individually, she discovered common ground and became more comfortable in their company. Below she discusses her efforts to define her own culture through getting better acquainted with the other.

While hearing about the way of the Cartel (while maintaining our friendly and unaffected attitude towards money) I contemplated the humor of having an opposite culture completely contradictory to our social codes. This irony became a lived reality as we encountered a people who squirmed at the thought of being asked about their grandmother. They treated us as children in such a condescending fashion, and my own UCSD mentality wanted to fight back. A struggle to hold true to the Clan peacefulness proved almost too much for me in the beginning. Witnessing their desperation to win our games and even steal our money, my anger eventually turned to pangs of sympathy as I began to realize how much I appreciated my own culture. The exposure to the Cartel strengthened my own idea of what it meant to be a part of the Stone Soup Clan (Melani, SS,midterm).

Members of the Fair Trade Cartel were grappling with very different issues. Just as the Stone Soup had been forced retreat for a period of introspection, the Cartel began to take a closer look at their own role in the interactions. Where they had previously given straightforward one-sided overviews of their encounters with the foreigners, they were now delving deeper, trying to unpack their own motives and those
of the Stone Soup players, and to predict the possible interpretations of the things they said and did. Cartel member, Rainn, who until this point in the simulation had written only the briefest and most superficial field notes, begins this day’s account by trying to understand what motivated her team mates to avoid the doughnuts, and continues to scrutinize the rest of the morning’s events at that same level of detail.

Today, people did not eat many doughnuts. I love doughnuts, and wanted to eat more, but I hesitated to be greedy, especially because many people did not touch the doughnuts. I was wondering if the classmates really did not want to eat doughnuts, or they just pretended and tried not to be greedy, like me. My stereotyped-American-people like to eat, and they eat if they want to eat. Also they do not care about others or what others think, not like Asian people do, so if they want to eat, they eat as much as they want.

There should not be much hesitation in their mind. I know not all Americans are like this and I do not mean to mention this is good or bad, but it is true that one of the American cultural attribute is individualism...Thinking about this for a several minutes, I was surprised how I have stereotyped people in this way. This is bad. But I am still confused. Were they not hungry? Were they pretending? I could not find a good reason for why many doughnuts were left. Why was it? During today’s trading, I attempted to interact with as many as Clan cultural members as possible, because from the last week’s experience, I knew they have so many valuable cards and it is easier to get the card I want from them than from other Cartel cultural members. Since Clan culture do not understand our trading system and do not care about money as much as we do, they are good trading ‘partners’ for us. We were almost exploiting them, without feeling guilty.

I found one Clan girl hiding behind the other Clan girl’s back, so I tried to talk to her. Surprisingly, she just showed this weird Joker card—she brought it from her class!— and went away from me without saying anything. I lost my words and stood there for a couple of seconds with a shock. I was surprise of her attitude; besides, even for a short second while I stood there, I felt uncomfortable and little bit angry. In our perspective, Clan culture is friendly, talkative, and happy. They are “supposed” to be like that. I might already have stereotyped them; I was

\[20\] Rainn is Japanese.
angry because they did not act as I expected, and I thought I was disrespected. Since I knew this whole thing was just a simulation game, and I knew exactly why she did that, I mean, I do not understand the purpose but I knew what she has done is based on some Clan cultural rules, I was not really angry. And then I wonder, "If I did not understand her attitude, do I try to understand her? If I cannot understand her, how do I feel about it?" Although I knew about the game, I did get a shock. I laughed after that, because I realize there should be some kind of reasonable meaning in her behavior, but if, I believe my stereotype and judged from my perspective, am I able to laugh at my situation and her attitude? I don't think so. In the reality, especially as a foreigner in the United States, I often feel disregarded.

Today was the last trading day, so most people kept trading even after the bell was rang. It was very interesting that people are so into this trading game. We are not children, but we still play like them...or do we just hate to lose? Finally we went back to the group table and started to arrange their cards. We were not only calculating money but also doing something else...we were measuring ourselves according to our culture's rules.

As I was arranging and trying to find the card I needed, I saw June was just sitting on her chair, Daniel was counting his money, Penrhyn was collecting all the cards, and Jennifer was asking for the card. Each character became so obvious, and I realized that we were constructing small society in the each group. The atmosphere in our group is totally different from other groups; especially, we act like as if we have the roles. We were not given the roles like in the Clan culture, but we were making them by ourselves. I was surprised about the fact, and I was surprised of not realizing of this situation until today, the last day of the trading.

It is hard to judge right or wrong. I sometimes feel there is no right or wrong in the global ideology. You might say I should not be disregarded by some "American attitudes," but how can you tell the person did that attitude on purpose, or without conscious? It is difficult. Even though he or she has not consciously done that attitude, 'not knowing what he does' is also bad. I mean, we hurt someone without notice, but the fact we hurt the person remains. So, what should we do? At the beginning, I said I like interacting with people because I do not feel lonely. But interacting with people also makes me lonely. We never overcome our own boarders or barriers that we all have, because I am me, you are you; we each are just an individual. I might wander away from the subject, a discussion about the cultural simulation. But I wonder, not being able to understand
yourself well, how can I understand others, and others from different culture? (Rainn, FTC, 4/29)

In their field notes, several Fair Trade members reported they were growing increasingly uncomfortable with how aggressively their team members were exploiting the Stone Soup clan. Some even confessed that they themselves had behaved in ways they were ashamed of in order to earn as much money as possible in their trades. But just as many reported a growing disdain for the Clan – seeing them as “…spoiled, because they don’t need to work for their money. Everything is just handed to them.”

I was looking forward to the next phase of the project where the students would move from being embedded ethnographers to being ethnographers who were now analyzing their collected data. I fully expected that once they discussed the two cultures together the students would develop a new respect and tolerance for each other. I could not have been more wrong.
PART III: REFLECTIONS

WE AND THEY
(Stanza Five)
Rudyard Kipling

All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like Us, are We
And every one else is They:
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!) looking on We
As only a sort of They!

From Debits and Credits, 1923
Multilevel Reflections: A Meso-genetic Analytic Approach

My narrative began with Part I of this dissertation where I described my expectations for the research based on the historical evidence available to me. The diary recorded in Part II provides a progressive “eventful” account of the simulation including the participants’ interpretations of the events as they were taking place. In Part III, I report on the four successive phases of retrospective analysis that were accomplished after the simulation phase of the research was completed.

In the first retrospective analysis phase, which I referred to in the methods section as the “unpacking,” members of the two simulated cultures met together in two sessions, each aimed at illuminating the inner workings of one of the groups. In the second analysis phase, referred to in the methods section as the “editing,” participants read and discussed literature relevant to the research, revisiting and evaluating their earlier analyses based on the social theories they were acquiring. In phase three, a team of participant analysts (two members from each of the cultures and I) reviewed all of the data and analyses to discover trends and themes that were not apparent from inside the simulation, but required some distance to appear. I end with phase four, my reflections on our efforts to reveal the process of the micro-genesis of culture as witnessed in the successive events of the history of the Stoners and the Traders.
Reflection Phase One: The Unpacking

The simulation was complete and for the remainder of the quarter the two cultures would convene as a single class. The plan was to spend the first two days “unpacking” the events of the simulation to date. On day one, Fair Trade Cartel members were to offer a short presentation on what they had learned or surmised about the Stone Soup culture over the past five weeks. The Clan members would then give a more comprehensive presentation about “how it really was”. During both presentations members of the class were encouraged to interrupt with questions or comments. The idea was for the integrated group to have an open, and hopefully fun and informative, dialog of discovery about the simulation they had just completed. I planned for the second class meeting to follow exactly the same format, the only difference being that this time the Fair Trade culture would be the topic of conversation.
May 6th: Stone Soup Claims the Moral High Ground

We met in the same large conference room that had been the Stoners’ home for the past five weeks, but today instead of scattered conference tables, the tables and chairs were arranged in a forward-facing U shape with additional seating along the side and back walls. As the students filtered in, the Clan members clustered in the approximate areas of the room that had been occupied by their families during the simulation. This left the chairs along the back and side walls available for the Cartel.

In my mind the simulation phase of the experiment was over and we were now one large group of ethnographers working to understand the Stone Soup and Fair Trade cultures. Both Rachel and I report in our notes feeling uncomfortably aware of an immediate display of “your teacher” “my teacher” behaviors from the students as they were entering the classroom, as well as the corresponding “your students” and “my students” feelings that we were having. The Stone Soup students greeted Rachel and Professor Mike, but ignored me. The Traders ignored Rachel. While it was happening, Rachel and I hardly noticed, but as soon as everyone was seated and we both realized that we had only greeted “our own” students, she and I spoke briefly about what to do. On the spot, we didn’t come up with any ideas about how to move past this, and so for the time being we let “Professor Mike” take center stage as he had a fairly even relationship with the two cultures.

The Clan students sat quietly and appeared wary. They talked later about how intimidating they had found this first session to be. It did not help that a full third of the Clan were absent, while all but one of the Cartel students were in attendance. This,
combined with the way the seating arrangement developed, meant that the Clan families found themselves sitting in small groups, outnumbered and encircled by the Cartel.

A team made up of one member from each of the four Fair Trade cartel trading groups stood at the front of the room and began to share their ideas about the Stone Soup culture. When they came to the subject of the Clan having vacated their homeland for a day, the group posed a number of questions to the audience. “Where did you go? What did you do there? Did we offend you with our disrespectful use of the word “grandma”? Were you angry because we would not teach you how to trade successfully in our territory, or because we blatantly wanted to take money from you when we visited your country?”

Reluctantly the Clan began to offer information about their cultural practices. They read the Stone Soup legend aloud, and talked about their daily activities. They told of the cultural leak, and of orchestrating the “hurricane” so that they would have a chance to regroup, and of their worry that the Traders would steal the Stone Soup fortune. This prompted the question: “But you said the money didn’t mean anything to you. If that was true, then why did you care? Why did you “bury” it and replace it with less valuable coins?”

When the Clan disclosed the rules of their card game the Traders rolled their eyes and groaned about how “stupid and boring” Stone Soup life had been. They then fell back into the old line of questioning: “If winning was not important to you, and you
could see that it was important to us, why didn't you just let us win all the time?...and give us all your money?"

As the Stoners began to speak with a more confident voice they also began to fabricate stories on the spot (we learned later) in response to some of the Cartel’s questions. Travis, who was part of the follow up team of analysts, makes the following observation in one of his reports:

_They were asking questions that we had not really thought about. It was funny now [while Travis and the team were reading the field notes from May 6th] to see Brandt and Mikelle making up answers as if they were true. What was really interesting was that, at the time, when I heard the things they said, I believed them too. I guess it was because they said almost everything we did, even if we made it up in the simulation, was “passed down from our ancestors”. We all got confused about the money and where it came from and where it went and where the new money came from and what the money was really for. I think we must have sounded dumb to them because in the Cartel there was no confusion about money. It was everything. It was their God! (Travis, follow-up report)_

My notes from this day indicate that I was frustrated with our inability to get the students talking. My feeling was that there was so much they wanted to tell each other, but somehow they were having trouble getting the conversation started. The Clan members were particularly reticent, and it did not help that when they did open up, their comments were often greeted with derisive or dismissive responses from the Traders. I was beginning to get the uncomfortable premonition that between the arrogance of the Fair Trade cartel, and the morally superior victims’ stance that the Stoners seemed to be assuming, we would never be able to successfully blend the two groups into a single community of learners. Rachel’s notes from that day did nothing to alleviate this sinking feeling:
One by one Mike had the Traders ask their questions. Some were whether grandma was a code word for something, where we went on the hurricane, why the Stoners didn’t trade better in their land, why we made them dance, why we talked about soup and grandmothers at the start then dropped off, what the red beads were for. ..I looked at my students – surrounded, literally, by the Traders – in the center of the room and asked who would like to go up. I nudged each family to volunteer somebody, and we wound up with Brandt, Aaron, Mama C, Mikelle, Bernice, and Melani. I had nudged Johanna but she didn’t want to go up – and the rest of the Connections family was just trickling in so I didn’t want to send them up clueless.

They looked at me a bit panicky, as if unsure where to even start, so I urged them “just tell them what our culture is, what we value, and then maybe tell them our daily routine.” And they still seemed unsure. “Maybe start with whether we call ourselves Alpha?” This started them rolling. Brandt said he’d like to draw on the board, and Mikelle said “ah but we have the map with us!” And all of them up front brightened, and throughout the room several of the Stoners smiled – in memory? Brandt then showed the flag and Bernice, Mikelle, and Mama C all fiddled with the map to show it.

Brandt explained the clan symbol, emphasizing we are a “clan.” He showed them how it said “USS, which stands for (he seemed embarrassed at this point) United Stoners Soup” and said it came from our soup story, hence all the discussion of soup. He then explained that each family’s symbol was also on the map – and showed each one on the USS Legend. Mikelle jumped in at the castle and said “Mama C lives in a castle!” which got a few smiles and slight chuckles from the room. Then they haltingly started to tell about the values “We value each other, kindness, friendship. We tell stories and are just together and have fun. We value sharing.” Deb had Brandt read the Stone Soup story, which he did almost in a storyteller fashion. They then talked about our feast and how it was the annual celebration of our stone soup.

They told us how the game was about communicating with each other, not the game itself. Money didn’t matter, so it didn’t matter where the coins accumulated, and they would just drop them in the pot at the end of the day anyway, so what did it matter. They said each family did use different strategies for the game, and the face cards were used to show somebody they were not sticking to the values of USS. It was to guide them. Aaron held up the index card and said we accumulated signatures/initials when we played according to values, and numbers if
we strayed. They were careful to point out that even other family or clan members could also get the face card or numbers. They talked a bit about their dancing, that they start the day with it, and although it seemed awkward and “stiff” at first, they really got into it and had fun. Mama C pointed to Mikelle and said “and this one here got really into it on the last day!” Mikelle laughed and the Stoners smiled and giggled throughout the room thinking back on it. My laptop won’t export video to the CRT, but I had a slideshow of their pictures playing during the last part of the discussion.

The hurricane became a huge topic, as the students looked to me for nudging on what to say. I suggested they start with the email I sent around. And Brandt said “Our cultural values, our rules, some of it was leaked. And you guys knew. Like our treasured ones. You guys knew about them” and they jokingly pointed at Landon. They said they went to “higher ground” in the chemistry research building, where we talked about our rules and what we could do differently. There they decided on different ways to play the game and to have a protector of the treasured ones. They also told the Traders they were “Freaked out” and “Scared” by them. One of the Traders – perhaps in confirmation of their suspicion that the Stoners left out of fear – asked, “really, so you were scared?” And Brandt said “Yes! We were totally freaked out, you guys were all up in our faces and yeah we were scared!”

Throughout their explanations, my students happily pointed to people who stole the coin, who asked for everything, who found out about the treasured ones, who wanted the beads, everything. They did it in a very friendly manner, but I saw a few of the Traders seemed a bit embarrassed that they were “outed.” Some even shook their heads or ducked down. Deb also asked the treasured ones to explain their experiences, and they said they felt protected and strong within our clan. But as soon as they went to the Traders nobody respected them. And the face card didn’t work. Allie told us “I probably flashed my face card 30 times and nobody cared.” One of the Traders in the front row nodded his head and said “yeah it doesn’t mean anything to us” quietly.

Another question was where our wealth came from, and Brandt quickly came up with a story that it was passed down from our grandmothers. Mama C added earlier that our wealth was from our values of kindness and friendship and being loving, that’s how we are rich. The Betan who asked responded it was surprising to her because one of the things they kept wondering was how the culture could sustain itself if it gave everything away. Which brings us to the fake coins. The students
explained that they had “buried” their gold after the Traders had asked to take everything with them – everything! The beads, the coins, the paper, everything. So this way, they could give the Traders something to take with them, but it was “everyday” coins that held no meaning. So they weren’t losing their resources or gold in the process, but could still give freely. The Traders, at this point, seemed shocked. They realized they’d been had, in a sense. But it wasn’t even a malicious act on the part of the Stoners, since their motivation was to still “give” and make the Traders happy.

Throughout the whole process, the students were fascinating to watch. The Traders seem to have split personalities – some are very smug? Almost haughty in their body language. Very commanding and sure of themselves. They sat at the front of the room or lounged as if they owned the world. Meanwhile there was another personality of Traders sitting against the back wall, almost seeming timid in what to say. My students, on the other hand, seemed to coalesce upon themselves, seeking comfort in each other and through constant questioning glances at me. They looked almost “uprooted” from their norms, and they sought reassurance from me and from Mama C for those who were not near me. It was interesting to watch. I also noticed the Connections family – save Johanna – sat against the back wall with the Traders due to their late arrival (Rachel, SS, 5/6).

I was disappointed, to say the least, in the way this meeting turned out, and in the behavior of “my” students. I was holding on to what I know now was an unrealistic goal. In my dissertation research prospectus I had written: The conflict resolution phase of this study differs from that in the Sherif & Sherif experiment. It is accomplished by engaging the participants, together as a unified group, in theoretically informed reflections and discussions about the underlying meanings and values of the various actions and cultural items that develop during the simulations. I understood that the success the Sherifs had in reconciling the two teams of boys in the Robber’s Cave experiment was due to extensive interventions involving carefully orchestrated superordinate goals, requiring the boys to work together to achieve goals they could not
achieve on their own. But, I reasoned, we were not little boys, and unlike Sherif’s participants, all of our students were fully complicit in the research. They (we!) all knew this was fake from the beginning. I simply could not see why we shouldn’t be unable to let go of our attachment to our respective “cultures”, step back, and analyze our findings like “proper researchers”. I would try harder to get this message across at the next class meeting.
May 8th: We and They

It was disappointing to see that only ten students from the Stone Soup Clan were present when it was time for class to start (three showed up later). While absence and tardiness had plagued the Clan from the beginning (a fact I attributed to the laid-back nature of the Clan culture) Rachel and I surmised that on this day the problem was different. The last meeting had not been pleasant for the Clan. While the Cartel had not been blatantly offensive or unkind, there had certainly been an undercurrent of aggression and superiority. We were hoping that today, when the Cartel, not the Clan, was under scrutiny, these tables might turn a little. We asked the Clan members to get up and tell us what they had learned about the Fair Trade culture. No one volunteered to speak. Because there were so few Clan members, Rachel asked the entire group to come to the front of the class, but only four reluctantly complied.

The Stoners began by talking about some of the ideas they had come up with to explain the Fair Trade behaviors. It had been obvious to them that money and the trading game were paramount, and that the group was divided into companies, rather than families, but the game itself, and the language spoken during the game had been baffling. In the beginning of the presentation, some of the Clan members would venture guesses about some aspects of the Fair Trade culture. "We think the different colors on the cards might have corresponded to the different companies." Or "We think that the first word you said in the trading conversations was designating the color of the card you wanted." Unfortunately, two of the Cartel members in the back row responded
with snorts of laughter – "No! You are all wrong!" which shut the conversation down immediately.

The Stoners asked a few polite questions about what the Traders did when they were not trading, and why there was a total absence of niceties, like polite greetings or ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. One Clan member said she had seen the name of the Fair Trade legend on the reference page of the course syllabus and had Googled it. "Your legend, the 'Parable of the Talents' came up as a Bible story." Although the Cartel had no idea, this was absolutely correct, but before I could clarify this Harry adamantly shook his head, "No way, It was NOT from the Bible!" and no one argued with him.

It was my impression that the Stoners had many questions they wanted to ask, but the atmosphere was not terribly conducive to the kind of dialog that the Clan had developed, and so they were quiet. This seemed like a good time to show the short video that three members of the Fair Trade cartel had prepared to explain the trading game to outsiders. In the clip two Traders acted out a trading session, while a third provided a voice-over explanation of what they were doing. The Stoners sat quietly through the film. The only "aha moment" for the Clan was when the Fair Trade students explained that the Stoners had been in possession of some very rare and highly valuable trading cards. This explained the feeding frenzy behaviors whenever the Clan members came to trade.

When asked at the end if they had any questions, the Stoners did not. Trader, Penrhyn, took over and began to tell about the Cartel’s use of the words ‘grandma’ and ‘grandpa’ and went on to explain that the Traders had been concerned that this
practice had offended the Stoners, and may have led to the Clan’s disappearing act. Once again, the Stone Soup clan was silent, but other Cartel members were not. “We didn’t really care about your feelings, we just didn’t want you to get angry and stop trading with us. We wanted your cards and your money!”

Uncharacteristically, Prof Mike interjected, “You’re a bunch of moneygrubbers.” I, being way too emotionally involved at this point, responded angrily, “I take offense to that! We are a culture of people who strive for personal best. We have morals and rules and it is not our intention to take advantage of others, only to compete aggressively but fairly!” A small applause arose from the Fair Trade cartel. The Stone Soup clan was silent, and I immediately regretted my outburst. Rather than having the conciliatory effect we were all striving accomplish, my comments had done much to further polarize the two camps.

Rachel was understandably annoyed,

*It makes the split between cultures pretty difficult when the TAs are stepping in reinforcing the “accusations” of one side or the other. I tried not to say much of anything, because when the two groups of students are trying to figure stuff out it gets even more confusing on “what” and “who” is right if the TAs start jumping in. Especially with these ideas of “work ethic” when work was culturally defined and the material rewards (money, signatures) were completely arbitrary (Rachel, SS, 5/8).*

Clan member, Mikelle, broke the silence with the question “What did you do besides trade?” the answer, “We strategized about the game, planned our next moves, and counted our money.” Mikelle was not satisfied with this answer, “But what else do you do, that is not related to the trading game?” It was the Cartel’s turn to be silent.
Then Mikelle asked, “You guys were so different when you came to visit us - so much nicer - polite even - you never seemed to want to go home. Which culture did you like better?” Trader Maddox laughed, “We didn’t want to leave because we wanted to stay and get as much of your money as we could.”

At this point the Stone Soup members shook their heads in disbelief. “So it’s true, the ONLY thing you cared about was money?” This is when the discussion took an unexpected turn. The Fair Trade members began what can only be categorized as a full-fledged attack on the Clan, everyone speaking at once, accusing the Stoners of being lazy, spoiled, and without a work ethic.

Again, Rachel is rightfully concerned,

I didn’t really like this line of conversation since it implied that the Stoners didn’t work for anything, and reinforced a work/behavioral ethic that the Traders seemed to have an underlayer of superiority about. It seemed counterproductive to argue that one works “harder” than the other, whereas I think both sides worked extremely hard for what they valued within their culture - the Traders worked very hard for money, but the Stoners worked extremely hard to build social relationships, history, stories, and even recreate their games. The “work” was quite different in each, but not easier and either, and motivated by the cultural values in both. And the money was equally worthless in Beta society was it was in Alpha, set up by a fictional backstory as to what it was about. Somebody could have opted out of the game entirely and decided not to “work really hard” for it and still reaped the same benefits of their group as others (with the exception of having their name at the top of a list and a Starbucks card). Similarly, an Alpha could have - and we had some who did in a sense - opt out of the cultural values of storytelling, grandmas, non-competitive, etc, - and they’d still receive the same material benefits (Rachel, SS, 5/8).

Thankfully, the class period, and the unpacking week, was coming to an end, but we were nowhere near meeting our goal of bridging the cultural boundaries we had
created. We would not be entering into the next phase of our class as a congenial community of learners. I rather lamely asked who in the class felt that they had been placed in a culture that was totally wrong for their personality. Only one member of each group raised their hand, but one more, from the Stone Soup culture, wrote in his field notes that he might have been happier in the opposite culture.

**Student field notes on the unpacking days**

I am amazed at how everyone participating in the discussion was speaking in the voice of his or her simulated culture. Every time an Alpha opened their mouth, they reflected Alpha values, and every time a Beta spoke, it was with the best interests of Beta culture in mind. I did it too. This was fascinating to me, because we've absorbed the values of our respective cultures through our very skin, and during the somewhat heated discussion, we were each valiantly defending our own cultures. By the end of Thursday's class, I was even more annoyed with the Stoners than I'd been the previous week. I think it's because Beta culture reflects the values I already have: hard work and competition and striving to reach goals. The Alpha culture is the leisure culture, and if I had to sit around all day and play cards and talk to people, I would go insane with boredom. I believe that leisure time should be earned, and in fact I was bored when I visited the Alpha culture, but I didn't let it show because I was being polite. I wasn't surprised at all when they said the card games were essentially pointless - I'd already sensed that, and when they explained the grandmother system, I realized that I'd guessed that too.

There was a girl in a pink shirt from the Alpha culture who was incredibly anti-eta. She thought that our competition for the Starbucks card was silly and that our values were askew, that we shouldn't value money over friendship, etc. She called the Traders greedy several times. I raised my hand and pointedly said that if the Stoners actually had to earn their money to survive, they would feel differently. She countered that the Amish were able to live very simply and didn't need to earn money. I was at the point of asking her if she'd actually like to be Amish, but I held my tongue. It's easy to value friendship and socializing when you don't have to eke out your own living. I very much doubt that she'd actually like to be Amish and thought that her even bringing that up was ridiculous. It's
pretty obvious that I would not like to switch cultures. I don’t think the Alpha culture is remotely sustainable. As wonderful as it sounds to have money in the communal wealth pool from generations past, that just sounds incredibly unrealistic. Money runs out unless it is replenished in some way, and the Stoners take no steps to replenish their funds. Not only that, but they give it away in bundles. If we’d carried on the simulation they would have eventually run out of money. This is not to say that Alpha doesn’t have its fine points. It’s good to relax and unwind and socialize with friends. Traders need more of that, but the Stoners also need to find other ways to pass their time, because as of now their culture sounds rather boring and Communist. They said that individuality is valued and I respect that, but there needs to be competition and the building of an economy in order for their society to be sustained. They all act as if they’re in retirement. I do feel bad that they felt uncomfortable and mistreated when they visited us, and I expressed this regret in class. But I also prefer my culture, because I feel as if the Stoners are just lazy, and as an individual I don’t like laziness, nor do I like the idea of mooching off some communal pool of money instead of earning my own way through life (Alexandra, FTC, 5/8).

*We Stoners are stronger in morals. We treasure each other more which makes us more of a peaceful society, not needing to deal with certain disputes Beta involves itself with such as cheating and stealing and exploiting others to increase their own wealth - which really means nothing because it is not even real money. I personally like an Alpha-like society more, one that’s somewhat “communist” in its dealings with possessions. I like how each individual shines according to their own personal life stories (“How is your grandma?”) rather than through their value as a selfish and thoughtless trader. There is no need for incentives for we are already thriving and therefore no one is being taken advantage and there is no economic disparity that results due to such an aggressive economy. I have a huge heart for the poor, so naturally I’m drawn to any conclusion that is able to elevate the lives of a large population of poor and disadvantaged people.*

*The Traders lacked culture and I felt very sorry. They educated us through their very cold and high tech manner of video and reenactment. They had nothing in terms of family values and the activities I would have expected them to present did not exist. If we could go back to living our separate cultures after this discussion, I think the Traders would eventually have realized that they had been gypped. In another week or so, I could have speculated that their game would have gotten old and then where would they have turned? They would have nothing but their*
own selfish desires to steer them. The interaction between the Stoners and Traders served to show this stark contrast. In my mind the difference between us was always vast, but now that we know them better the gap has grown even farther apart. They are Traders and we are Stoners (Jade, SS, 5/8).

Rachel, Mike, and I met after class to discuss how to proceed. I knew my research project had taken on a life of its own and was running away from me. Somehow, I had believed that I could set an endpoint for the two cultures. It had never occurred to me that our cultural affiliations would continue past the designated simulation period of the experiment. We had entered the analysis phase, and in my well-laid-out plan that meant we should have all assumed the roles of detached observers, looking back in on the simulation experiences, examining and reporting on them in an informed and unbiased fashion. That seems so naïve to me now. But in week six all I could think about was how to get the project under control. We still had four more weeks of class to get through together.
Reflection Phase Two: The Editing

The simulation was complete and we were moving into what I called the “editing” phase of the class. In the terminology established in Chapter One, we were in the process of negotiating (and often contesting) our collective memory of the details of the events as they had unfolded in the simulation. As Michael Bernstein (1994) might have predicted, there was a lot of backshadowing going on, in an effort to hammer out a logical and mutually acceptable version of the plot, and sidestocking as each person crafted a character role for themselves from the possibilities afforded in the emerging plot. Along with all this, group identities that made sense inside the larger narrative were being constructed. What set this occasion apart from other times in our lives when similar practices are undertaken naturally was that we were engaged in the process explicitly, and we were doing it in a theoretically informed manner. I assumed that such a scientific approach would somewhat lessen the palatable emotional charge that had built up over the past six weeks, but this was not to be the case. On the contrary, during this supposedly unified part of the class, the two groups not only maintained the boundaries they had established earlier, but fortified them.

As we entered into the next phase of the class I used the passage below from Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland to share with the students how I was feeling about the research project to date.

*Alice thought she had never seen such a curious croquet-ground in her life; it was all ridges and furrows; the balls were live hedgehogs, the mallets live flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and to stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches. The chief difficulty Alice found was in managing her flamingo: she succeeded in*
getting its body tucked away, comfortably enough, under her arm, with its legs hanging down, but generally, just as she had got its neck nicely straightened out, and was going to give the hedgehog a blow with its head, it would twist itself round and look up in her face, with such a puzzled expression that she could not help bursting out laughing: and when she had got its head down, and was going to begin again, it was very provoking to find that the hedgehog had unrolled itself, and was in the act of crawling away: besides all this, there was generally a ridge or furrow in the way wherever she wanted to send the hedgehog to, and, as the doubled-up soldiers were always getting up and walking off to other parts of the ground, Alice soon came to the conclusion that it was a very difficult game indeed (Carroll, 1865).

I had designed the research using ideas and methods that, in theory, were simple enough; but as the simulation evolved, and the theories came to life, the game became a lot more complicated.

Earlier, in the Methodological Toolkit chapter, I discussed the three stages of Goethe’s scientific method. The first is the *identification of an empirical phenomenon*. In this case the phenomenon is the genesis of culture in small groups of people. Goethe’s second stage is to attempt to *replicate that phenomenon under different conditions from those in which it was originally observed*. This we accomplished through the cultural simulation game. The final research phase is to *identify the pure phenomenon*, or to describe the phenomenon as it emerges in a continuous sequence of events (Zajonc, 1998). It is this third phase that allows the researcher to generalize findings. There are two implications here. The first is that having isolated the phenomenon and experienced its development first hand, we now have a deeper understanding and appreciation of it. The second is that should a similar sequence of events occur allowing the phenomenon of interest to emerge again, we would be “tuned” to perceive it. We were now in this third phase.
Throughout the simulation, we had been reading Guiseppe Mantovani’s (2000) Exploring *Borders: Understanding culture and psychology*. This is a wonderful little book that weaves historical events and social theories into a highly readable narrative about the ways in which culture acts as a framework for organizing our experiences. The strategy for the next four weeks was to revisit the theories and examples that Mantovani offered, to augment them with other classic and contemporary works, and to discuss these in light of our experiences in the simulation. The students were to continue their practice of submitting written reflections after each class, but now, instead of writing field notes, they were to write commentaries integrating the course readings with the simulation events. It is these commentaries, along with Rachel’s and my field notes from these “editing days”, that provide the data for the discussion that follows.

Each day a different group of students would be presenting the various readings to the larger group and coordinating the class discussion. It was my plan to have the students sign up for these presentations, based on which of the topics they found most compelling. On the first editing day I created a sign-up sheet and handed it to a student in the first row to be circulated around the room while I fielded questions about the class format for the remainder of the term and took care of other housekeeping issues. When the sign-up sheet reached the back of the room, I asked the student holding it to read off names so that the group members could find each other and begin making plans for their presentations. As Rachel and I began to circulate, offering advice to the presentation teams, we realized that not only was there absolutely no integration of the
two cultures within these self-selected groups, but for the most part the groups consisted entirely of members of a single Stone Soup family or Fair Trade trading house. While we were bothered by this, and I was angry at myself for not having hand-picked more integrated groups, the students were actually behaving civilly toward each other for a change and we didn’t want to do anything to rock the boat; so we let the group arrangement stand and moved into the next part of the class.

The next part of the class happened to be a recap of the first two chapters of *Exploring Borders*, where Mantovani revisits some of the historical accounts of Columbus’s initial exploitive encounters with Caribbean natives. The students (still sitting with their presentation groups) were given a few minutes to review the Mantovani reading and their notes before I asked for volunteers to tell us what stood out for them; which of Mantovani’s observations did they find particularly applicable to the cross-cultural encounters of the simulation?

“The Stoners were the backwards natives.” “They were clueless.” “They didn’t know how to protect themselves from the Europeans.” It was hard to tell from the Traders’ comments when they were talking about the Caribbean natives and when the Stone Soup culture. They were clearly seeing one reflected in the other. It was interesting that none of the Traders made any mention of seeing themselves in Columbus’ crew (although some did later in their field notes). The Stoners, however, made this connection immediately, and took the Traders’ blindness to it as further evidence of the similarity between the Traders and Columbus’ men. After some
discussion Melani (Stoner) stood up and read this passage from Mantovani, making it clear that the Stoners were proud to bear the “noble savage” label:

*Columbus believed that he understood the language and mind of indigenous populations, from which he was in fact separated by an immeasurable distance. His inexplicable confidence reflects the difficulty Europeans had in communicating with others and in acknowledging their cultural “otherness”. The development of communication requires common ground between interlocutors, ground to which they can refer in order to explore their reciprocal intentions. There was no common ground between Columbus and the Arawak, but Columbus did not worry too much about that;*

(Melani stops here for emphasis and then proceeds slowly in a raised voice.)

*although he did not understand their language, he just knew that the native “kings” wished to donate to him everything they possessed*  
(Mantovani, 2000, pp. 20-21).

The Traders were flabbergasted. “But it was not like that at all! You wanted to give us your money!”

“No. You wanted to take our money, and we had no precedent for that. We had no way to stop you.”

“What do you mean? You could have just said no!”

“No we couldn’t. You don’t understand. There was no way for us to do that.”

The Traders just shook their heads, seemingly incapable of imagining a repertoire of meaning different from their own. Mike, Rachel and I felt we were watching the old “advanced western world meets primitive native society” routine in microcosm, a teaching moment for sure, but we were interrupted by the clock.
I felt the reading had done half of its job; it had provided a vocabulary for the Stoners to express what they had been trying to tell us all along; there simply had been no Stone Soup social practices in place with which to interact with the Traders. The Traders’ next response, “You spoke English, didn't you. Why didn't you just say what you were thinking?” helped us (the Stone Soup and the research team) to see that language was not the issue. The ethos of the Stone Soup culture, which governed the norms of interaction that had developed, prevented the Stoners from holding back their clan treasure from the Traders. The Fair Trade imperative to amass personal fortunes, and the implicit neglect of more aesthetic achievements, precluded the Traders’ recognition of the Stoners’ plight. Given more time, most of the Stoners felt they would have developed better strategies to protect themselves, but this would have entailed significant changes in the worldview that they had come to cherish.

As far as I could tell, neither this new revelation nor Mantovani’s words had moved the Traders from their smug position. Instead they shook their heads in disbelief that the Stoners could be so stupid. They were not able to understand the predicament that the Stoners had found themselves in. As Harry’s comments below suggest, the Traders’ experiences in the simulation hadn’t resonated with the reading in exactly the same way those of the Stone Soup culture had:

> There were things Beta could do which Stoners could not, and vice versa. For example, Stoners could not scheme to make more money because in their culture money has no real meaning, while in Beta culture money is everything. As some Stoner pointed out we were like Columbus trying to dominate a different culture. But Beta also acted out using the cultural map they had, we were not the community oriented Stoners, we were Beta and our goal was to make money. I recollect what I said during the Stoners’ flood. I, half jokingly, said that we should crush them for taking
us too lightly. Maybe my comment was not too off from Beta way of thinking (Harry, 5/15).

For the first time since the beginning of the quarter the Traders were the first to leave the classroom. Several Stoners hung around to talk, following me back to my office and staying through office hours. Earlier in the quarter I had advertised in the class for a few independent study positions in the coming quarter. I was looking for participants in the simulation who were interested in returning to help me organize and analyze the field note database. Before the week was out, six of the Stone Soup group turned in applications. (Only two Traders applied, and this was much later in the quarter.)

The next time the class met, the Sherifs’ Robber’s Cave experiment was presented by the Country Incorporated trading group. Their presentation focused on the inter-group relationships, particularly on the boys’ denigration of the outgroup. The presenters drew a number of analogies between the Robber’s Cave boys and our two simulated cultures, but they glossed over the sections of the literature that looked at the boy’s initial identification with their groups, as well as those sections discussing the development of ingroup relationships and behaviors.

In order to draw these elements into the conversation, Professor Mike displayed one of the Robber’s Cave readings on the large screen in front of the room. One of the first points that popped up was how quickly the Robber’s Cave boys had displayed evidence of ingroup favoritism. Both Stoners and Traders offered examples where their entire groups had developed strong stereotypes about members of the opposite group.
after hearing the brief reports of the first envoys of visitors. Aaron said, "it was pretty surprising how we formed blatant judgments about the others before we even met."

Professor Mike countered with, "and all of those judgments turned out to be true, right?" There was an immediate murmur of agreement across the room, and then a pause, and then a lot of self-conscious laughter. Professor Mike smiled and added, "still not much change from those first impressions?" This was the single most reported event in the field notes that night. Virginia wrote:

Usually I'm the only black student in my class, no matter how big the class is, and the one lesson I feel I have learned from that is not to judge people by first impressions like categorizing them by skin color or nationality or anything else, so I was surprised and embarrassed to see how I had immediately judged all of the Stoners to fit the image that the Country Inc. people painted for us on the first day. When you think about it, they only met a couple of them and not for very long. So what happened was that our entire culture listened for five minutes to Country Inc.'s story about their ten minute visit to the Stoners' territory, and then we built up this big picture of what the Stoners were all about and we treated them based on that for the rest of the simulation. Wow. This is exactly what Mantovani was talking about and we are thinking about how terrible those old civilizations were, but here we are doing exactly the same thing in 2008. That's so depressing (Virginia. FTC, 5/15).

Virginia’s sentiments were echoed in both the Stoners’ and the Traders’ notes, along with musings about how much power first impressions have – even if they are second-hand, and questions about how much “truth” second-hand accounts may or may not contain. Ling makes this profound observation: "...and even if that was really the way the Traders had treated Melani, how could I be sure that they would treat me the same way? And yet I didn't even give them a chance to be nice."
Sherif wrote in detail about the power hierarchies that developed among the Robber’s Cave boys, and we discussed this at length in class; so I was surprised that even though I had noticed during the simulation that one person from each of the trading houses had taken on an obvious leadership role in the Fair Trade activities, none of the Traders made any mention of this in their notes. On this day only two Traders commented explicitly about any type of ingroup relationships that developed. One was JuLi who talked about how male-dominated her group had become (Read more about this in the Korean Cowboy chapter.) and the other was Maddox who wrote, "in Country Inc I am definitely not the leader. Christine takes the notes and sends us texts about the assignments. I hate to admit that Nelson is the best trader. I guess I’m the clown. I just try to have fun and make fun for everyone else."

In contrast, several of the Stoners wrote about the well-defined roles that each member of their families had taken on. Mona writes, "I was not the head of our family or the treasured one, but I had a role to play and I felt at home and needed. On the day I was gone everyone said it was not the same and this made me feel good because I believed them and bad because I had let them down." And Aaron writes, "everyone in the family has a job to do. There is mama C and the treasured one and the one who watches out for the treasured one - that would be me."

Overall, the student reflections were far more introspective than they had been in the past, but the two groups were focusing on different issues. The Fair Trade participants were most interested in the intergroup relationships. They wanted to unpack the areas of conflict between the two cultures, to understand the actions taken
(or not taken) by the Stone Soup Culture, and particularly, to justify their own aggressive position and behaviors during the cross-cultural encounters. The Stone Soup field notes, on the other hand, were all about defining what it meant to be a member of one culture or the other. They spent a lot of time defining the Stone Soup ethic, comparing this with the Fair Trade worldview, and always finding the Traders lacking in important moral values.

In Chapter four of Mantovani’s book, he compares the experiences of Alvar Nunez, the Christian Spanish Conquistador, with those of the Daniel Defoe hero, Robinson Crusoe. Mantovani’s message was that Nunez, shipwrecked off the coast of Florida, naked and having lost everything, acquired a new, transcultural identity, both Indian and Spanish. Robinson Crusoe, on the other hand, having retained the trappings and tools of his original culture, dominates his exotic island. The Stoners, who were presenting this chapter to the class, used Mantovani’s story to explain some of the Fair Trade members’ behavior. They observed that the Traders were "different people" when they visited Stone Soup territory than they were when they stayed at home and the Stoners visited them. The Stoners commented that the Traders in their native environment ignored the Stone Soup people more often than not. When they did interact with the Stoners, the Traders were "all alike", "pushy", "intense" and "thoughtless". Eye contact was rare, and all conversations were limited to details of the card game. When they traveled to Stone Soup country, the Traders suddenly became individuals with personalities of their own. Some remained calculated and aggressive, but most were more relaxed, interested in Stone Soup culture, and even friendly. Given
enough time, the Stoners thought, the Traders might have become transcultural as Nunez did. (And as they believed they would have, had they been given sufficient exposure to the Fair Trade culture.)

Listening to the Stoners’ presentation, I was thinking about the situated nature of idiocultures discussed in Chapter One. Ways of thinking and acting acquired under one set of circumstances are not necessarily reproduced in a different context. My first thought was that the demands of the trading game evoked aggressive behaviors, but aggression would get you nowhere in the Stone Soup game. The setting played a role as well. The nurturing atmosphere of the Stone Soup camp brought out the softer side of everyone, while the on the trading floor the players were rewarded for being alert and reactive.

Rachel and I paid closer attention to the Traders’ interactions with the Stoners during this final editing phase of the project. We looked for those friendly moments that the Stoners had mentioned in their notes, but frankly, when it came to the Traders’ treatment of the Stoners, what we witnessed was better described as tolerance. We did notice many friendly interactions between Traders. It looked to me as though the Traders, in the company of other Traders, liked only Traders. Only when they were isolated from their own kind, and surrounded by foreigners in foreign territory, did they abandon their Trader ways and interact “nicely” with outsiders.

The Traders were reluctant to comment on this, with the exception of Harry who once again was brash and unapologetic, "We didn't want to be one of you. We didn't want to steal from you. We just wanted to trade with you so we could make some
money. Why is that so hard for you to understand?” With that the conversation moved on, but most of the Traders’ field notes mirrored Harry’s sentiments. Jade says, “I don’t see the importance of interacting with the other society altogether. Yes, it is an advantage to us to receive foreign money, but all we need to do is trade with them. We can get by and thrive in our own community without the cooperation of the other society.” The only dissenter was Elliotte; “I felt really bad when the Stoners were trying to give us a chance to get to know them better and we were like, no thanks. I think we should have found a way to be better neighbors or even friends.”

In the days that followed the students read and discussed theories about the genesis and transformation of cultural norms and artifacts, about the establishment and negotiation of cultural boundaries, and about the role of culture in identity and role formation. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the remainder of the term was the extent to which the students took charge. Once it became apparent that the events of the simulation had been inspired by the same authors appearing on the reading list, the students clamored, literally, to share their ideas about how their experiences had, or had not, supported the authors’ hypotheses. At the students’ request we often delayed the class proceedings in order to do close readings of certain passages, after which the students engaged in animated discussions about what the authors had in mind and how these ideas applied to the Stone Soup and Fair Trade cultures.

The students also spontaneously injected comments and insights drawn from their larger life experiences and from other university classes into the discussions. Most of the students had taken classes on visual culture; some had learned about
performance theories. They wove these ideas into their presentations, greatly enriching the class experience for all of us.

They also brought the lessons learned in class to bear on their lives outside the course and outside the university. Stoner Melani, for example, was a human development major who, in another class, was running laboratory experiments designed to reveal young children’s understanding of visual images. After her experiences in the simulation, Melani worried that the children’s performance in the laboratory context could not be generalized to the way they thought in more natural settings. “Some of the stuff in our [Stone Soup] culture means totally differently things out in the real world. Maybe in the kid’s minds, the rabbits that they see on the computer screen in the lab have no connection with real rabbits, or even pictures of rabbits that they see in their everyday lives.”

Nelson (Trader), who was very insecure about his writing skills, and until this point had been quite thrifty with his words, writes:

Peckham’s article states that human beings have different behaviors in different situations set by human beings. This is very true because in the class there were people who acted very differently. An example of this could be seen by the Stoners when they visited us. They had no idea what was going on, they didn’t know the language or the rules. They mostly just stood in the corner with puzzled looks on their faces. This can be seen in a Stoner’s field notes about arriving to our culture. Aaron states: “Some of the Beta’s did their best to show without breaking character which cards they desired from me and I hypothesized that each color could be traded for a corresponding other color and that certain colors had hire values than others. When one of them had a sufficient amount of some color (red, blue, etc.) they would go cash them out for money, as if in a casino.” This field note would actually bring laughs to some Betans if they were to read it. It’s as if the Stoners are from a different planet when they come to visit us, when in fact they are very similar to us. This situation occurred in my life when my new roommate came in to live with
me. It was an ordinary Friday when I received the news that my old roommate would be moving out, and me and my new roommate had to find a replacement. We went online and found a foreign exchange student from Korea, named Dong Houng Kim. He came into the room and could speak very little English. He was very nervous and did not know what to expect. It was because of my COHI 130 class that I felt the same feelings that he felt, coming into a new culture that he knew nothing about. Kim constantly apologized for not being able to speak proper English or understand our culture. I felt these same feelings in this class. I could tell that when he and I were watching American television, that he was a little standoffish and I felt as if he was not even watching it. When the TV show said something funny I would laugh and look over at him. He would only laugh because he knew that it was funny from my laughter. In his mind, he had no idea what was funny. I found him also doing many of the things that I was doing after a while, which is similar to the Stoners when they visited us. At home, I usually get into heated video game contests with my other roommate, and we often yell out swear words. One night, me and my Korean roommate went out to dinner. We went to sushi and my Korean roommate had spilt his soy sauce. He then yelled out, "F#$%." The whole restaurant heard and I was very embarrassed. I then thought of this class. I thought what if "Grandpa or Grandma" was a swear word for our culture, and a Stoner were to hear me swear out loud, not knowing that it was a bad thing to say. If the Stoner were to say it out loud our teacher, or a Betan would have immediately told the Stoner that he/she should not say that word out loud. The same exact situation applied to me when I was in the restaurant. I was not irritated or mad at my roommate because, by taking this class, I knew that he had no idea that what me and my video game partner were yelling out loud was not socially acceptable. It is through cross cultural communication practices that we, as a society, can learn and accept other people's societies (Nelson, FTC, 5/22).
Two Separate Idiocultures, Alive and Well

It would be wrong to give the impression that the class was proceeding without problems. Two contentious threads wove their way through all of the class activities and surfaced as minor spats between the Stoners and the Traders several times each day. These had to do with the Stoners’ perception of the Traders as “money grubbers” and the Traders characterization of the Stoners as “spoiled and lazy”. Neither group could refrain from tossing these grenades into the other camp every now and then, and, of course, no attack could go unanswered. While the two groups were friendly enough to make the meetings bearable, the class remained polarized. I kept seating charts showing that, with the exception of those who wandered in late, the students always sat with their own kind.

In *The Heart of Higher Education* Parker Palmer (2010) offers suggestions for how to change ordinary conversations in the classroom into transformative acts. He says, more often than not, we participate in parallel conversations, where people in conversation with each other never really intersect but run alongside each other for a while before parting, usually leaving both parties unheard and unchanged by the encounter. Palmer suggests that an antidote for this is to engage students in storytelling. Not only do stories hold our attention, but, as Jerome Bruner told us earlier, we insert ourselves into other people’s stories, we become them for the moment, and in doing so learn valuable lessons about others and their motivations. Palmer writes that narratives in the classroom reveal “secrets hidden in plain sight” (p. 139) and allow us to move from “stories to ideas”(p. 141).
There certainly had been a lot of storytelling going on, but I wasn’t sure it had the kind of effect Bruner and Palmer predicted, and if it had, how would I know? Again I read through the students’ field notes from these editing days, looking for instances where they had made any effort at all to “get inside” someone else’s story. In almost every case the students made comments about not wanting to be like members of the other culture. “I’m so glad I was in the Stone Soup culture because I am really a very laid back person.” “I would have been bored to death as a Stoner because I’m a high achiever and like to earn my own way.” These seemed to me to be absolute refusals to enter another’s story. I came across one reflection that voiced what I was feeling, but not exactly what I think Bruner or Palmer might have expected to hear:

*I have traveled to Africa and England and interacted with people from various and diverse walks of life. I had believed that feelings of love and hate, anger and jealousy are human traits that exist as universal themes. Through this experiment I have come to question the context of universal themes, or even if they exist at all. What would cause the Tiv (from Bohannon’s “Shakespeare in the Bush”) to feel hate, anger, jealousy etc. and how do they interpret these feelings? Are notions of regret, happiness and love identified under separate conditions for separate cultures? What kind of research can be done to better understand these factors of the human condition? Is it even possible? I know that we were randomly assigned to our cultures and yet I try to close my eyes and think like a Beta (Trader) but I can’t. I must assume that if I had been assigned to the Beta culture I would find it impossible now to think like an Alpha. How could I ever really know what someone from a different culture is thinking in real life? (Brandt, SS, parenthetical comments added)*

In a third pass through the field notes I found evidence that many of the students had, in fact, been empathizing with others in the simulation, but those others were always members of their own culture. When the discussion in class turned to the
stealing incident, Cathy tries to think like her Trading teammate, Tim: "Tim was trying to explain that his stealing was innocent in intention. I felt everyone misconstrued it as trying to take advantage of the Stoners. It can't be very pleasant to have the whole group label you as a thief when you are basically an honest person." Mikelle, from Stone Soup clearly identifies with Melissa (who had leaked Stoner secrets early in the simulation), "I was surprised that even now everyone tried to interrogate Melissa and were pretty hostile about it. However, if you look at the incident from a different angle, you will realize culture can't be a secret because it is something that everyone has to live out in the way they can, and that is really all she did."

In reading, and rereading, the final reflection papers I came to the uncomfortable conclusion that we had not written a story together at all. Each culture had written stories of their own. The two groups never came to a shared understanding of what it meant to be a member of one culture or another. Nor had they developed a common story about what exactly had happened in the cross-cultural episodes. The Stoners had some very strong and consistent opinions about who they were as a people, and about who the Traders were as well, but these bore little resemblance to the pictures that the Traders painted about the Stoners or about themselves. Furthermore, as each of the culture’s tales about the events of the simulation were heavily dependent on their characterizations of themselves and the others, these narratives looked quite different as well. Amara (Stone Soup) offers the following ideas about the Fair Trade culture:

I felt their culture [Fair Trade] was in a kind of constant unbalance. They were always weighing the cost-benefits of the choices they made not only
in reference to their trading game but also in the way they treated us and their fellow members. They rigorously defended their outlook when some of the Stoners deplored their obsession with the money, especially in referencing how they would use our jewelry gifts as part of their wealth accumulation, and how they were always trying to take as many coins as they could from us. They [Fair Trade] said that we did not understand them because we had "unlimited" wealth whereas they had to earn their money. So according to them the way in which they were organized suited the means to their end, trying to support their lives. I found it funny that they considered our wealth "unlimited." It was unlimited in the sense that we defined wealth: love, compassion, sharing, peace, etc. But they way in which they defined wealth we were not unlimited. We had enough gold coins to sustain us, but we did not wish to attain anymore. They were obsessed with gaining more and more and were never satisfied. The Fair Trade culture was very thin outside of trading. By this I mean that they spent the time only eating food or coming up with strategies for trading in the next session. Whereas we were constantly inventing new traditions and symbols for representing the ideas that we believed in, they focused all their energy into the material game that they played. So instead of focusing their behavior on the ideals of their clan as we did, they seemed trying to find ways in which to get ahead of their own members by staying within an ambiguous boundary called "fairness." I think that the Beta’s have very little understanding that particular rituals can have much abstract meaning. They could relate to our game and our jewelry for instance, but the dances were much less material in form because they only involved human participation, and so probably seemed like a waste of time (time for them meant “money”). One Beta even described the last simulation as the "Apocalypse" which I think pertains to the fact that the prize was the end, and their culture only the means to it. I did like their value of the heroic nature of the individual and the intellectual means of their game but in hindsight my culture, the Stone Soup culture is the one I would remain in (Amara, SS, final reflection).
The tables below show the results of my efforts to code and quantify the
descriptive comments made in the participants’ final reflection papers. The first chart
reveals the way both cultures wrote about the Fair Trade Cartel. The Traders described
themselves as hardworking, competitive, independent, honest, smarter than the Stoners,
and more in tune with the “real world”. The Stoners agreed about the hardworking
part, and added that the Traders were resilient and industrious. Both cultures judged
the Traders to be single-minded when it came to money, a trait that led them to be
greedy and up tight most of the time. Stone Soup added that the Traders were cold and
unwelcoming hosts, without interpersonal skills, and generally lacking in “culture”.
Half of the Stoners expressed sadness or pity for the Traders because they had not
experienced the closeness and sense of family that the Stoners had enjoyed.
Table 3.1:
Descriptive Comments Made by Participants in their Final Reflection Papers about the Fair Trade Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments made by the Stoners</th>
<th>Comments made by the Traders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Comments About the Traders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative Comments About the Traders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are hard working. (17/20)</td>
<td>We are hard working. (20/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are tough, in a good way. (14/20)</td>
<td>We thrive on competition. (20/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They fight for personal best while we just do enough to get by. (10/20)</td>
<td>We understand the way the “real world” works. (17/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14/20)</td>
<td>We are honest. (16/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are hard working. (20/20)</td>
<td>We are independent and self-sufficient. (15/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We thrive on competition. (20/20)</td>
<td>We are resourceful and innovative. (14/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We understand the way the “real world” works. (17/20)</td>
<td>We are smarter than the Stoners. (12/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are honest. (16/20)</td>
<td>We will prevail against all odds. (10/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are independent and self-sufficient. (15/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are resourceful and innovative. (14/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are smarter than the Stoners. (12/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will prevail against all odds. (10/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We love only money. (20/20)</td>
<td>We love money. (20/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are greedy. (20/20)</td>
<td>We can be greedy. (16/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are self-centered. (19/20)</td>
<td>We are stressed out. (10/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are cold &amp; unwelcoming. (19/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are aggressive. (17/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are up tight. (17/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have no interpersonal relationships. (14/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are hurried and frantic. (14/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They have no culture. (12/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We feel bad for them. (10/20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fraction represents the number of reflection papers in which each sentiment was expressed. For example 20 out of 20 Traders described their own culture as “hard working”, and 19 out of 20 Stoners described the Traders as “self-centered”.

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None of the Traders’ notes about the Stoners were as thorough, or as thoughtful, as Amara’s were about the Traders. In fact, many of the Traders’ field notes revealed no effort at all to understand the subtleties of the Stone Soup culture. The following three commentaries, made by Eric, Christine, and Nelson, are typical of those that the Traders submitted about the Stoners.

It was very interesting on the last day to see how the Stoner culture still viewed our business hustle style culture of the Fair Trade Cartel. Overall they still acted like true Stoners. Arnold and I were talking that it still seemed like a split of the Hippie culture vs. Business Wall Street style culture. Though it shouldn’t be, because every person is different, it seemed that the Stoner attitude toward us was one of extreme hurt and confusion, even though this was just a simulation! I found it sort of entertaining how hurt one girl felt and continuously commented on how badly they were ignored upon entering our culture and “taken advantage of” even though they didn’t understand how, or even if they actually were, since they had no understanding or knowledge of the card game. Please! (Eric, FTC).

I think the strength of Alpha is that they have unconditional love for one another and are there to support each other. However, I don’t think that their culture is very sustainable because they don’t work and depend on a source of money. It is highly unlikely that they would survive in real life unless their money came from some unending mythical source. It would definitely be a relaxing environment to live in but not a productive one at all (Christine, FTC).

The Stone Soup culture prides themselves on respecting and caring for others. They are extremely nice and polite. They try to stay away from any type of conflict and just love everyone for who they are. They did not care about individual wealth. They valued their relationships with others more than they valued money. The entire Alpha culture was very overwhelmed and scared of the Beta culture when they came to visit. The Stoners are very selfless, loving, compassionate people that value relationships with others more than personal gain. The strengths of the Stone Soup culture were their strong relationships with others and positive attitudes. Their weaknesses were not standing up for themselves when others tried to take advantage of them and revealing some of their sacred traditions. I believe the Fair Trade culture suits me best because
I am a very competitive person and strive to be successful in life (Nelson, FTC).

Table 3.2:  
*Descriptive Comments Made by Participants in their Final Reflection Papers about the Stone Soup culture*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Comments About the Stoners</th>
<th>Comments made by the Stoners</th>
<th>Comments made by the Traders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are kind. (20/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They are nice but naïve about the ways of the “real world”. (16/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We put family first. (20/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They are peaceful. (14/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do not value money. (20/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They celebrate life. (10/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have fun being together. (20/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Their culture is more complex and/or more comprehensive than ours. (10/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We value our ancestors. (19/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are generous and giving. (19/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are artistic &amp; creative. (15/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are open and honest. (14/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are laid back. (14/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Comments About the Stoners</th>
<th>Comments made by the Stoners</th>
<th>Comments made by the Traders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We don’t express ourselves well. (12/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They think they are better than us because they don’t value money. (16/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have trouble coming to decisions. (12/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They are backward. (15/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don’t stand up for ourselves. (11/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They are boring. (15/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We live in the past. (11/20)</td>
<td></td>
<td>They are lazy. (14/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They are spoiled. (13/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We feel bad for them. (11/20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, the Stoners expressed an entirely different understanding of themselves, than the Traders did of them, and the reverse was also true. Not only do the two cultures draw different conclusions, but they each paint highly negative pictures of the opposite culture, and highly positive pictures of their own. The stories they told about the simulation were just as polarized, and highly consistent within the two groups. The Stoners told a tale of a highly evolved, peace-loving society (themselves, of course) which struggled to maintain its gentle ways against the invasion of a coarse
and greedy and band of Traders. The Traders’ tale, on the other hand, was about an intelligent, civilized, industrious group of entrepreneurs who stumbled across a hapless clan of hippies, kind and gentle, but too backward to value or protect their own resources.

The students’ final reflection papers made it clear that we had in fact created two distinct idiocultures. They revealed a capacity for ingroup bias and for outgroup denigration that reflected the strength of the bonds formed within the groups and the intensity of the between-group relationships that had developed. More importantly, their papers revealed that the students were deeply aware of these accomplishments. They spoke with confidence about the theories we interrogated through our experiences in the simulation, and they wrote with feeling about the changes they had experienced in their attitudes about themselves and each other, about culture and life in general. To close this chapter, I offer two examples of the students’ final reflection papers, one from each of the simulated cultures. These unedited reflections are typical of the forty papers that were written at the end of the class.
In a sentence, ten weeks in this course have taught me that there exists no universal law that tells us who we should be, but only tools to show us how we can be, both as moral individuals and as an operating society. As my eyes were opened to the colorful mix of personalities within our simulated societies as well as through the insightful readings, I can only conclude that the discourse of culture is utterly complex. We can only really discuss elements that setup a framework for analysis, but by no means are these restrictive or wholly definitive to what constitutes a society. These elements are based off of patterns from the past and rationalized by fundamental human needs and tendencies that typically lead to predictable and shared behavior. However, as I stated in my first sentence, it may still be too restrictive to conclude that all humans universally share intrinsic tendencies. It is perhaps because of this exact misperception that there exists war, racism, and COHI 130 (the education of cross-cultural relations, not because 8 AM classes are deadly). The focus question that arose when studying culture was what are the consequences of cross-cultural interactions? In this paper, I will discuss two main consequences I’ve seen strongly manifest itself through our cultural simulations and are supported through research: prejudice and culture-borrowing. Although these two concepts are seemingly dichotomous, both are inevitably co-exist when we cross cultural boundaries.
Prejudice is born when we use our own cultural lens to draw conclusions, justified or not, on another culture. But before we can even understand another’s culture, we must first understand that we live in one. In his book *Exploring Borders*, Giuseppe Mantovani writes that since birth, we were immediately immersed into an already existing social environment (92). Just like how a fish wouldn’t know it lives in water until it is ever removed from it, so it is with us and our own culture—we cannot even be aware of our own culture, let alone our biased cultural lens, until we are forced to take a step back and speculate, which Mantovani helps us do. He writes that we “frame others”, and altogether make sense of our physical, mental and social worlds (8) through our tools of cultural interpretation (10). I especially find this to be true when thinking about how being a Westerner has shaped my perception on “foreign” or non-Western (“Oriental”) frontiers when traveling. I am quick to point out the way how the “Other” is deviant to what is, to me, set as default standard. It is when there is a conflict in interest, when certain aspects of another culture create tension with me when I realize the existence of my own culture.

This concept was clearly illustrated throughout my experience in our classroom simulation. As a Beta citizen, the competitive drive, although may have been acquired from the initial few minutes of practice, is for the most part central to who I am. I walk into the classroom with an expectation to interact with and relate to my fellow citizens on this fundamental basis—it had become our natural state. When we began interacting with the Alpha citizens, their vastly contrasting culture stood out like the elephant in the room. They did not talk in our language or take on what we generally perceived to be an engaging
and exciting attitude. Although they share later that we intimidated them with our ferocious drive, I had honestly felt offended during those trading interactions that they wouldn't try to learn our culture and communicate with us on our level. Reading their field notes later regarding their sentiments towards our culture further offended me—many of them interpreted our lively, competitive spirit as animosity, greed, and selfishness. While I was aware of the economic-centric nature of our society, I considered this a very systemic and standardized means of maintaining a community. It was neither superior nor inferior; it merely was what it was. However Melani Olsson, a devoted Alpha citizen, was so convinced that our society was in fact deficient on various "essential" elements: "The Betas lacked culture and I felt very sorry...they had nothing in terms of family and the activities...I think the Betas would eventually have realized that they had been gypped...they have nothing but their own selfish desires to steer them". As a Beta citizen reading that quote, I'm shocked at how just because we didn't have a strong sense of family and leisurely activities, we are quickly regarded as "lacking" or incomplete as a society. Yet, I read back on my field notes, and I see that I actually criticized the Alpha culture for being lacking as well: "I could sense after awhile the Alpha culture seemed very lacking in its objectives. Besides just being cheery and happy, their games had no purpose, and being nice was just because that's what they decided to do...Betas are strong in that our culture is already alive and thriving...Alphas may lack this on their long days."

After applying what Mantovani says about categorizing others based on our own cultural lens, I realize that by the same token, the Alphas could be offended at how just because they did not have strong "objectives" and "incentives" Betas quickly regard them
as "lacking" or incomplete as a society. Between these two societies, each maintain its unique means of societal sustenance and individual/group morale, be it through intimate community relations or thrilling competition. Must there be a universal law that judges which set of values are more legitimate than the other? Conflicting world religions, international relations, political campaigns, and even personal relationships are daily challenged by this controversy.

Mantovani suggests that there are two possible options when facing cultural conflict: "a shared framework for coexistence and cohabitation, if not of peace; or an endless escalation of intransigence, recrimination and vengeance" (56). While the idealist concept of "cohabitation" is obviously much easier said than done for groups such as the Jews and Muslims both fighting for "divinely-ordained" control over Jerusalem, there are still a few possible ways to pursue this route. One way is to establish a superordinate goal that supersedes the individual, dividing goals of each party, as demonstrated by the famous experience performed by Carolyn W. Sherif. A summer camp was setup with two groups of boys, each with an individually developed bond and culture, the only intergroup interaction being athletic competition. When the boys were forced to cooperate in order to get the water system back to flowing in the camp, this superordinate goal proved to be an effective measure of reducing "intergroup friction" (Sherif). I personally have observed how having superordinate goals also causes a lot of complication. Generally speaking, creating some type of bond with another group usually leads to risking social and economic dependency and vulnerability between each other. For this reason, certain groups and nations focus on maintaining an independence and self-sufficiency. However,
never interacting with others different from you is not only impossible, but serves as a
disadvantage to you by depriving yourself of a broadened, enriched worldview and life
experience. If the COHI 130 simulation were to continue, and Alpha and Betan
interactions were to commence at a higher intensity level, in order to maintain our unique
cultures while achieving a peace between both societies, we could establish superordinate
goals, such as throwing an annual unity celebration full of friendly festivities and games,
requiring cooperation while exercising and accommodating both societies' values and
strengths of competition and family.

In addition to dealing with prejudice and clashing when crossing cultural boundaries,
another phenomenon we experience is culture-borrowing. Mantovani contends that there is
no such thing as cultural purity—"Even countries which decide to avoid all contacts with
foreigners...are not impermeable, but stare fixedly at the very worlds they fear and at
the same time desire to meet." Based on this notion of inter-cultural influences, Edward
Rose and Harry Felton discuss the concept of culbits, the responses when groups practice
borrowing and adopting habits from each other. Gary Alan Fine also discusses culture
creation and culture diffusion through his term idioculture—"A system of knowledge,
belief, behaviors and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which
members can refer and employ as a basis for further interaction" (Small Groups and
Culture Creation). Culture is thus not only reinforced through cross-cultural sharing of
ideas, but also involves being fundamentally built upon it as well. Alpha and Beta culture
were able to catch a glimpse of this idea of culture-borrowing with the little time we had
to mix and mingle. One example is the use of language—when Betans heard Alphans using
the terms “Grandma” and “Grandpa” a lot, we decided to adopt the term for our own. In addition to welcoming borrowed terms into our vocabulary, we also thought about developing certain familiar traditions that would make the Alphans feel more comfortable. Since maintaining a good relationship with them would probably serve to be economically beneficial for us, and the thought of visitors coming in and experiencing our culture was exciting, whether that meant it intrigued them or intimidated them, we discussed whether we should clap and cheer when they entered. When we sent out Betans out to Alphan culture and reviewed the experience of immersing into their society, we picked out what they do that could enrich our own, like possibly. I experience this outside of the classroom as well—my mother, the most incredible Chinese cook in the world, will make dishes with surprising twists that are reminiscent of the Spanish food she had earlier that day. My fashion-guru roommate comes back from traveling abroad from a different country each year with a more and colorful wardrobe. Aside from food and fashion, I've also seen how culture-borrowing has affected my personal values and views—my Indian friend Caroline has taught me much about South Asian views on courtship and marriage which have greatly challenged what I've now realized are very singular Western- constructed views of romance.

Personally, this class has challenged me to question what I feel constitutes an ideal society. I brought into this class idealistic desires shaped by personal values for our Western society to function under the structure demonstrated by the early church of Acts as written in the Christian bible—something like communism-gone-right. This fantasy-like society would consist of a heterogeneous mess of unique individuals
exercising their various talents and gifts for the benefit of the world and as a reflection of its artistic Creator. Nothing anyone owns would be for their own, but all possessions are shared, abundant. But I grew up in the U.S. so what I've learned as the only practical, functioning, realistic, and thriving society is run by greed. It is nearly impossible for me to believe that a society can thrive off of anything short of a competitive, money-driven society. Through these class simulations and possibly an upcoming American revolution suggested by the presidential elections, I've been able to engage in intense reflection regarding what type of world I want to live in now and the world I would want my children's children to live in. For now, I've resolved to be walk in humility, travel, and ask questions. I think the more boundaries we are willing to cross, a fuller picture of what is and what should be will be broadened and refined.

This course helped confirm that the only universal sin lies in talking too much, and not listening enough. I believe once we as humans, regardless of our cultural or societal values, all agree to listen, learn, and love, cross-cultural interactions will look like mutually and ultimately global experiences rather than prejudice, imperialism, war, and genocide.
Ling Wei, Stone Soup

COHI 130 Final Reflection

June 8, 2008

I remember Deb and Rachel telling us that for our final paper, we should reread our midterm and then talk about how we experience some of the activities differently now that we have read so many scholarly articles. However, after going over and re-reading my midterm paper, I’ve realized that my way of viewing the event didn’t change as I expected, instead now I can answer the questions Rachel wrote on the margins of my paper better and clearer. My perspective of the events didn’t change, but my understanding of my actions changed. Whereas before I didn’t give much thought into why I did what I did, and how my actions helped me to grow and progress in the simulation, through reading the articles, I am able to better understand my actions, and the simulation in general.

In my midterm, I focused on my experience on the first day, the hurricane and the culture feast, in this essay I will reexamine some of those experiences, and connect them to the readings to show you my new understanding of my actions. But before I start pouring you information about those experiences, I have to mention something else—the setting and the legends—which I overlooked, and undervalued their importance five weeks ago.

To be honest, I don’t blame myself for undervaluing the importance of the setting. I mean, I’m studying at a university, in an educational atmosphere, where there are desks and chairs in each classroom, so it’s no surprise that I took the setting for granted. You
might argue that the chairs and desks in the Alpha room is different, but I would only say
the university couldn't fit a classroom in a room in the Communications building, thus the
furniture looks different. However, after reading Gary Alan Fine's article "Small Groups
and Culture Creations", I've realized how wrong my thinking was, and how careless and
thoughtless I was to things in the simulation. Fine talked about the importance of a
situational context in his article. Simply reading the article did not do the trick for me;
events didn't link together until the second day, when Professor Cole started explaining
the article to the class.

The location and setting are the foundation for everything. If we had to perform
the simulation in the classroom we were in Warren at the beginning of the quarter, the
simulation would be a complete failure, or would have never happened because—one, we
(the Alphas) would never be far enough from the Betas to develop our own culture (we
might be influenced by the Betas, or vice versa); and two, we (the Alphas as a group) would
never be able to develop such a close knit culture, because in the warren classroom, the
chairs and desks are linked together, and so even if we rearrange the desks into a circle,
it would still seem like a typical classroom environment (especially with those disgusting
yellow lights) rather than a simulation. People tend to talk less in classroom environment,
because in that environment, what we say needs to be correct, whereas in the simulation,
we can say what we want to say (as long as it's appropriate), because our goal is to develop
a new culture, one that reflect and represent who we are. Thus, there is less pressure and
more freedom, which pretty much guarantees better results.
The Alpha room's furniture in the Communications building is especially helpful for us to develop our culture, because inside the room, there are six tables. The tables are easily movable, and on the first day of class, we configured them into four tables (some are large tables which consisted two individual tables). The new setting allowed us to sit with our families, while also acknowledging members of the other families. This way, we were able to develop a more intimate relationship with our family members and know what's going on in the culture at the same time.

The settings also influenced us in our reaction to others. For example, the Beta used a room downstairs where the tables were initially arranged into a rectangular shape in the middle of the room, but because Beta wanted more room for trading, they actually rearranged the room by pushing all the tables to the wall, thus separating and stretching the distance between each company. This arrangement is very interesting to me, because the Betas basically rearranged the room in the exact opposite way as us (the Alphas). Instead of being closer to their peers, they were further away. The arrangements of the rooms contributed and are reflected in the way the two cultures treated people. Elliotte Crouse, a Betan, commented on her view of the two cultures in week six's field notes. “...everyone was only concerned with their own well being, than secondly their group...there was no kind interaction about people getting to know one another or help them with their needs...everyone was selfish in some way or another...now comparing this to that of the Alpha culture they are of the complete opposite. When interacting and observing their culture, they are extremely caring of others. It almost seemed as if they put others first before themselves” (Crouse, Week 6).
It takes more than a setting to construct a culture. In each of the two cultures, we were given a legend to build our narratives on. The Alphas were given “The Stone Soup” while the Betas were given “The Parable of the Talents”. Just like Abbott mentioned in the article “Narrative and Life”, artifacts possessed meanings assist in the construction of narratives. In our Alpha culture, our artifact—the Stone Soup—is a story about a traveler who came across a village which had little food, and decided to help them make “stone soup” through each individual’s contribution. This legend highlights our culture’s belief in cooperation and sharing of wealth. The Beta culture’s artifact—The Parable of the Talents—is about three men who were each given $100,000 and were told to invest it wisely. The person who earns the most money would win and be the leader. In contrast to our beliefs in cooperation and sharing, Beta’s legend highlights the value they place on money, and their competitive nature. What is even more interesting is that the Beta culture is framed exactly the same way as the parable in that the winner of the trading will receive a Starbucks gift card as a reward.

After laying down some foundations which I regarded as unimportant five weeks ago, I can finally move on to discuss and explain to you how the readings help me understand some of the activities I mentioned before, in my midterm, more thoroughly. On my midterm, I wrote and described my confusion on the first few days of the class. I didn’t know who the Alpha grandmother is, all I know is that she left us letters to help us develop as a culture; I didn’t know what the word grandmother represented—am I talking about my own grandma in real life, or my fake grandma for my family (the maples) or am I
suppose to have my own fake grandma even within the family? I was confused and didn't know what to expect. My experience was like what Rose and Felton discussed in their article “American Sociological Review”, where I was thrown into a new society, and was experiencing unusual changes, but was able to use inventions and habits once discussions started. I can't lie to you and tell you that the process of invention, borrowing, and habitual repetition happened immediately, because it takes time, and interaction for me to get use to my new environment, but just like the way I phrase it in my midterm—"as time went on, I was able to slowly climb up the scale of knowledge" (Wei, Midterm exam). Every time we meet as a clan, I was able to learn something new or get more accustomed to what I learned previously, whether it was information about our culture—our values, rules; or information on my family—news about my Grandmother, or even discoveries about the Beta culture—their cultural beliefs, or rules of their game.

Initially, we started using the term "treasured ones" as a habit, because that's the term our grandmother used, and then we progressed and used it as a culbit, because not only our Grandmother used it, but the whole Alpha culture used it, knowing clearly what the word represents-- both the literal and symbolic meaning behind it. Every family has a treasured one, and the "treasured one" is the most protected in the family who isn't allowed to speak to anyone unless the speaker gains permission from one of the family members. So literally, the treasured one is the person in each family who owns the red beads with chili peppers, but figuratively, the treasured one is the baby of the family, and is under the protection of all the family members.
We also mention the word “Grandma” in our conversations a lot in class. It is our tradition (as Alphas) to ask each other how our grandmas are doing, because that’s our way of greeting one another, but our Grandma is also the kind and generous woman who created our culture and our way of life. The Betas, in a different environment, interpreted the word Grandma using a different set of values they obtained from their cultures, and took a complete different take on the word Grandma. To the Betas, “Grandma” is the code word they used to call out cheaters during trading. Although the word was borrowed from the Alphas, because of culture differences-- Betas had code words for everything--they interpreted using the cultural context their familiar with, thus invented a new meaning to the word, and eventually turned it into a culbit in their culture thru extensive usage. When Professor Cole said “Bullshit” in class on May 29th, Deb called out “Grandma” and everyone understood (even the Alphas, because it was a few lectures after the Beta presentation)—the word “Grandma” has become a culbit in our group.

In my midterm, I also mentioned that I believe the hurricane is a blessed incident because it gave us time to reflect on our behavior and on our culture. The hurricane occurred because we felt like we couldn’t successfully protect our culture values, and that we were overly exposed to the Betas, thus we had to change some parts of our culture. Because “culture is not given to an individual” (Conquergood, “Communication as Performance”), it was both easy and difficult to alter some of the rules in the culture. I say easy in that since we’re a group of people, we were able to quickly gather a lot of
ideas, and I also said difficult in that since we have so many people, it was difficult to decide on one particular idea.

The hurricane meeting was the first time where almost every one in the culture contributed their ideas in a clan meeting. Although we had various different ideas, and had difficulty deciding on one particular solution to our problem, we felt stronger than ever. We had a common goal in mind—share our values, yet protect ourselves from the Beta culture at the same time. The hurricane reflected what drama and performance can bring to a culture, both the positives and the negatives, just like Conquergood mentioned in his article. We felt invaded, unprotected when our secrets leaked out to the Betas, but we didn’t simply sit there, complain, or cry, we transformed our sadness into strength.

Rachel reflected on the events leading to the hurricane, and led us in our brainstorm of a better battle plan. With an inspiring leader, and our strong will to protect our identity, we created new ways to play the games, new dances, more stories, and more face cards for the treasured ones, etc. Rachel added four more playing cards to everyone’s deck, and gave the Treasured Ones an extra face card so they can use it to show people when they’re speaking to the Treasured Ones without permission from a family member. We also decided that the leader of the game not only controls the way the game is played, but also the rules to the game. In addition to those privileges, he/she is also in charge of modifying (or warning the person) the behavior of a rude player with a face card and revoke the person’s right to play by handing back their face card. As a group (although more like one person suggested a good idea and everyone agreed to it), we decided to change the signatures from our initials to our family symbols. Rachel brought some new
silver coins, so that if the Betas wanted to take our money, they no longer had to steal, because we are now allowed to give out the silver coins to the Betans without depleting our shared Alphan wealth. Although the hurricane hit us unexpected, we were able to work through our problems, and solve the difficulties as a group, we were able to take advantage of both the positives and the negatives of the hurricane drama to change the view of Alpha culture for the better.

By the end of the simulation, we have characterized the Betas in a way that the Betas did not completely agree with. We concluded that the Betas place heavy values on money, and that they are money grabbers, however, the Betas disagreed on being money grabbers, they declared that they were simply concerned with the personal best. We categorized the word "Alpha" and "Beta" like analogies, like Mantovani mentioned in chapter seven of his book, when we mention "Alpha" or Grandma, the image of a nice and kind hearted culture pop into mind; an when we mention the word "Beta", an aggressive, unfriendly, selfish culture came into mind. To be more precious, when I hear the word "Beta", the image of Betans grabbing our cards from our hands without permission appear in mind. Harry Choi from the Beta culture commented his experience of trading with the Betas as "...taking candy from a baby. Alpha would give any card we asked for; I guess they did not know that they could refuse. They would also take any card we give them" (Choi, Week 5)

Professor Cole once asked us if we had the chance to choose which culture we want to live in, what it would be. most of the Alphas defended the Alpha culture, and most of the Betas still voted for the Beta culture just like how in Sherif’s experiment, the boys
in both groups believed they were better than the other group. One interesting contrast of our experience and Sherif's experiment is that by the end of the experience, Sherif's two groups of boys had sort of immersed into one big group, helping each other, sharing; whereas by the end of our simulation, the Alphas and Betas are still very distinctly different cultures. I believe, that the members of each culture voted for their own culture is partially caused by the fact that we have gotten so accustomed to our environment and way of living that we don't make our decision based on who's the better culture, instead, it's more about which one is the more conformable, more suitable culture. The more suitable culture is often the one we're accustomed to, instead of one that's unfamiliar. For example, if one of the Betas has to stay in Alpha culture, he/she would get bored, while the Alphas who is thrown into Beta culture would have trouble keeping up with the competitive, high paced environment.

In my conclusion paragraph on the midterm, I rated my understanding of both the Alpha and the Beta cultures. I rated my knowledge of USS as a nine point five, and knowledge of the Beta culture as a three. I remember after I wrote the essay, I said to myself, "the Betas are going to present on Thursday, so I'll be able to understand them completely", however, now looking back at what I've said, I've realized that my theories back then were kind of childish, because even if the Betas do present, the knowledge I would gain from the presentations are only the surface material, knowledge that can be learned thru observable, not the inner qualities. To truly understand Beta culture, I would have to embed myself in their culture. Only after a certain period of time sharing the
language, customs, and beliefs of the Betas will be able to rank my understanding of the Betas as a nine point five.
Reflection Phase Three:
Stepping Back to Gain a New Perspective

The quarter was over; the class had ended; the majority of the students had moved on. What remained was a mountain of extremely rich ethnographic data in the form of detailed daily field notes, midterm and final reflection papers, email correspondence, and a collection of video and photographic evidence. Four of the student participants, two from each of the simulated cultures were recruited to help me organize and interpret our findings. We revisited some of the events reported earlier in the simulation diary, this time looking at them through very specific theoretical lenses. In the section below titled “A Passion for Grandmas and Play Money” we follow Rose and Felton (1955) in tracing the borrowing and adaptation of artifacts, and the emergence and transformation of culturally acquired habits. The following section, “White Korean cowboys,” looks at the ways different systems of meaning are brought into play and synchronized as the new cultural groups are formed. Finally, I offer my own reflections on the research project, particularly on the practice of including student ethnographers and on the use of simulations as research and pedagogical tools.
A Passion for Grandmas and Play Money

_Tracing the borrowing and adaptation of artifacts, and the emergence and transformation of cultural habits_

Ed Hutchins (1996) encourages us to imagine ecologies of thinking, where artifact-mediated human cognition interacts with social environments rich in organizing resources. These mind ecosystems exist in perpetual flux, which means that the best way to observe the connections between our history and our future, or between cultural structure and human action, is to mindfully participate in artifact mediated activities. The present simulation brought human actors, in the form of university students, together for just that purpose. They were provided with a toolkit of carefully selected artifacts, which were chosen to mediate the students’ activities inside a prepared social environment, which itself existed inside a larger ecology of organizing resources.

Artifacts, as they are created by humans with a purpose in mind, include in their design norms of action and cognition. Thus the locus of control belongs neither entirely to the user nor to the artifact, but shifts constantly during use; it is the intentions of the user that direct the use of the artifact, just as it is the design of the artifact that directs the actions of the user. The artifact does not diminish the role nor amplify the abilities of its user, instead it changes the nature of the task (Cole & Griffin, 1987). The artifact becomes one of the many elements brought into coordination as we perform daily life.
Schema theories, like those of Bartlett (1932) and Rumelhart (1975) discussed in the orienting chapter, help account for the emotional loading or charge that artifacts may acquire during their development and use. Certain artifacts, like the word “grandma” in our simulation, having been acquired as part of emotionally rich family schemas, are already laden with powerful affective overtones when they are introduced into new cultural groups. Other artifacts, like the BaFa’ BaFa’ paper money, carry little emotional weight until they are brought into play as part of a group’s developing experience-dependent schemas.

The beauty of this line of thinking is that it allows us to focus on those artifacts that the groups spoke passionately about, and on the ways these special artifacts were used and modified, in order to better understand the emerging cultural systems. Here I offer two examples of emotionally charged mediating artifacts that were brought into play in the simulation, the word “grandma” and the fake money used in the games, chosen because both groups consistently expressed strong opinions about them, and because of the novel twists and turns they took during the simulation events in meaning and in application.

**Grandma!**

The work of Rose and Felton (1955) was particularly helpful in thinking about the way the Traders appropriated the word *grandma* from the Stone Soup culture. Just as Rose and Felton’s model predicts, the word was first used habitually in Stone Soup activities where it retained its conventional English meaning, but was employed in very
specific ways to help achieve group cohesion. As you read earlier in the dissertation, *grandma* was later borrowed by the Traders where it quickly took on new meanings as well as *culbit* (a borrowed word that becomes habit within a culture) status.

“How is your grandmother?” was the traditional Stone Soup Clan greeting, to be gotten out of the way before any other business could be attended to. Parting words always included wishes for her continued health and longevity. It was also customary for Stone Soup members to pass the time telling stories to one another. Having just greeted each other with a reference to grandma, it was only natural that she would often become a central character in these stories. The tales usually started out simple, but in an effort to keep things interesting, they became more and more fabulous as the simulation progressed. Thus, in retrospect, it is not surprising that the notion of an eccentric grandmother, one whose escapades were fun to recount and could be counted on to draw appreciative or astonished responses from the audience, readily took hold.

Many of these stories began as factual accounts of the lives of the students’ ancestors which were then lavishly embellished with each retelling. A Korean grandmother who employed herbal remedies to heal her family’s ailments evolved into “a magical medicine woman” who miraculously grew younger each year; but when she regressed to the age of forty, she reversed direction, growing older each year, and lived on until, at the age of one hundred and sixty-six, she told everyone she had had enough and just sat down and died. There was an affluent Chinese grandmother who spent her days playing golf, mahjong and blackjack. After a couple of retellings, she became a dragon-lady tycoon who marketed her secret family recipes for noodles and oxtail
soup and used the proceeds from her new business to fight crime lords in Hong Kong. One grandmother, described as a retired second grade teacher during the first week of class, was a hippie living in a forest commune, singing, dancing and "sending out vibrations of peace to the world" by week four.

The Stone Soup emphasis on grandmothers served to link the classroom cultural experience with the students’ home lives and home cultures in ways that we did not expect. All of the in-class fabricating about grandmothers appeared to be stimulating a lot of real-life reminiscing about them as well, as Bernice’s unsolicited add-on to her field notes suggests.

Being born in a wealthy family, raised by well educated parents, and fortunate to attend college in the US, my grandmother is a very bright, elegant, and sophisticated woman. Since she is the eldest daughter in her family, she has always been a great sister loving and caring for her younger brothers and sisters. She has the soul of unconditional giving and the heart of forgiveness. Her compassion is magnificent. Rarely will she refuse to help others, especially her love ones. She feels she has the obligation to protect her family and the responsibility to take care of all the family matters. My grandmother is very outgoing and family oriented. Every Sunday, she says, is a family day. Everyone in my family gathers together and spends the whole day with each other. Usually, we have lunch in a dim-sum restaurant and after lunch we either go watch a movie if there is something good showing on the Movie Theater or go shopping and then afternoon tea at the mall. Sometimes, instead of dinning out for lunch, my grandmother would have us over at her house and cook for us. I must admit that her ox-tail soup and chicken fried rice are very unique. There is something about them that make them special but I can't tell what it is that makes it outstanding. Every time I ask her, my grandmother only smiles at me and says, “This is my special recipe, my dear. I will tell you only when the right time comes. Be patient.” The right day comes? Hmm… I ponder. During her leisure time, my grandmother goes golfing with her friends or invites them over to her house to have dinner and plays Mahjong and Black Jack. Her life is full of colors and excitement. Every time I visit her, I see a happy face. The only times I see an unhappy face are when any of her family members and friends are anxious, irritated, bothered, and pessimistic over the matters
of money and relationships. Every time, if anything happens that money is the only solution to resolve the problem, my grandmother, without hesitations, gives out her emergency money to help them. When she sees her love ones are hurt from a relationship, she tries to cure them by manifesting the power of forgiveness. To me, my grandmother is an angel. I love her so much (Bernice, SS, 4/10).

The Clan grandmothers also worked their way into almost every other aspect of Stone Soup life. When food was shared, whether it was Oreo cookies, apples, or tortilla chips, grandmother had either cooked it herself, created the recipe, or sent it along (from Tokyo, Taiwan or Toronto) with her best wishes. All of the Clan’s craft projects became reproductions of things grandmother used to make. Songs and dances (like the Stone Soup rendition of Michael Jackson’s “Beat It!”) had all been passed down from grandmother. Card games were played by grandmother’s rules, and Stoner norms for polite social interaction were maintained because grandmother said we should do it this way.

We were surprised at how deeply the Stone Soup members took this part of the simulation to heart. As Mona’s notes indicate, the lines between in-the-flesh grandmas, and the simulated versions of them became very blurred.

The other finding I got from this class is the memory of my grandmother. My grandmother died when I was really little, I barely know anything about her. However, many members from Stone Soup culture share their stories to me about their grandmothers make me feel as if my grandmother had the same characteristics or experiences as their grandmothers. By listening to my members’ stories about their grandmothers, whether they are true or not, I construct my own grandmother in my mind by embracing their information. I do not feel awkward or uncomfortable when they talk about their grandmothers because my memories toward my grandmother are inextricably entwined with how the people around me feel about theirs. The reason is that we can understand ourselves only through our relationships with others. Even
though everyone's grandmother is not all the same, I believe that the characteristics of grandmother, for example, kind and loving to their own grandchildren, are the same. I really appreciate my new "family members" because they help me to create my grandmother's image by sharing their stories with me. Therefore, I will not hesitate or be confused when somebody asks my "how is your grandmother?" because she IS doing well somewhere I cannot reach but she is always in my mind (Mona, SS, 4/17).

Meanwhile, in another location, members of the Fair Trade Cartel were learning code words and gestures that would allow them to trade effectively without giving away important information to outsiders. They worked at making these signs as difficult to decipher as possible. For example, according to the original language rules the Cartel was given, the colors of the trading cards (red, green, blue, yellow, orange and white) could have been communicated using the first letter of each color, followed by the short ‘a’ sound – ‘rah’ for red, ‘gah’ for green, and so on. Instead, the first letter was used, but the following sound could be any form of any vowel. Red could be communicated using ‘rah’, ‘ray’, ‘ree’, ‘rye’, ‘roe’, ‘ruh’, ‘rue’. Cartel members would know to listen to only the first sound, but outsiders might be led to believe that each sound had a different meaning. The Cartel followed a similar plan in communicating numbers, in hopes of confusing the Stoners for as long as it might take to gain an edge in the trading games.

When the first envoy of Traders returned from their visit to Stone Soup territory, we learned that the Traders assumed the Stoners had also been building similar defenses against outside intervention. At first they had no idea what to think about the Stoners’ incessant references to their grandmothers. The consensus was that grandmothers, either in the conventional sense or in some symbolic way that the
Traders did not yet understand, played a significant role in Stone Soup life. After careful consideration, the Traders came away with the conviction that the word “grandma” was some sort of secret code. (Actually, in these first weeks, Traders were also sure that the word “soup,” or references to the practice of “making soup,” was a code, but this soon faded from the Cartel field notes, where comments about “grandma” did not.) The Cartel spent considerable time during their business meetings trying to decipher the “The Clan’s Code”, and particularly the meaning of the word “grandma” in Stone Soup culture. The following excerpt is from Arnold’s visit to Stone Soup territory:

Semi-mockingly, I asked how their grandma was and what she was cooking. They responded deceptively and each told a story of nonsense. One said her grandma was climbing Everest and she was at base camp and how it was dangerous and a lot of people die attempting to climb it, etc. As the TA came by, a member of the table asked her how her grandma was and she told another unbelievable story. It didn’t always seem completely nonsense as one member (Japanese) mentioned his grandma still lived in Japan on a farm with chickens, etc. His story sounded semi-plausible so I am not sure if all the stories are completely made up or not, and I have no idea what they might really mean. They might be cannibals. When they talk about soup, they might be saying “let’s have him for dinner” (Arnold, FTC, 4/19).

In the third week of the simulation the word ‘grandma’ took on totally new meaning, and a life of its own. A common theme during the Fair Trade meetings had been about whether and how Fair Trade Cartel members who disobeyed the rules of trade should be censured. Eventually it was decided that any Trader who failed to use the official trading language (by reverting to English, or using commonly-recognized signs) should be punished by a fine of $50, to be paid to the banker, and the forfeiture of one trading card. Any person witnessing such an offence was to call attention to the
offender, and would be allowed to draw a card from the rule-breaker’s trading deck. But how could this take place without the censor also breaking the ordinance against using English? The problem was solved when one of the citizens called for the creation of additional vocabulary words to be used in policing and censorship. After several unpopular suggestions (animal names, for the most part) Daniel shouted out, “I’ve got it!” Let’s use ‘grandma’ to announce that someone has broken the rules. Whatever ‘grandma’ means to them, it most likely is not ‘you’re a cheater’. That will really confuse them!” It was a perfect (if aggressive) way to solve the Cartel’s communication problem, and at the same time to further complicate the Stoners’ predicament.

So the idea was unanimously and gleefully accepted. Beginning immediately, Traders who were caught cheating were called “grandmas”. In addition, the practice of refuting an accusation by shouting “grandpa” back at the censor was suggested and approved. Should this happen, other traders would step in to arbitrate (boisterous!).

We discussed cheating and stealing in class today. We decided that there should be penalties for both of these acts, and our way of accusing someone of cheating was to yell “grandma!” We thought this would be funny because it was part of the Alpha language and it would confuse the visitors from their culture (June, FTC).

In class today we discussed coming up with a name for someone who violates the codes of trading, and what the repercussions would be. Many ideas and words were thrown out, but the majority did not agree on them. So we all finally decided on using the term “grandma” due to the Clan Culture using this term constantly in high respects, we felt it would highly confuse them if we used the word “grandma” to name those who are bad/criminals in a sense. During trading I heard many people shout out the word “grandma”, but it seemed to be a prank. Since the other culture had come to visit/spy it seemed as if people were shouting out the word left and right just to confuse them. I think this was due to us all knowing that the last visitors/spies that had come on Thursday had gotten or understood our culture all too well; more so than we did of that of their
own culture. For this reason I felt that people were going out of their way to confuse them. It seems almost as if it is a game of cat and mouse. Since our natural environment in the Fair Trade Cartel is to be competitive I think we bring that out in all aspects in which we interact. We do not want them to know more about our culture than we do of their own culture, because that would mean they are winning the game. We do not like or use the term 2nd Best (Elliotte, FTC).

Before long the habit of using the culbit “grandma” in situations where someone was thought to have overstepped any sort of boundary spread rapidly, and expanded to include all varieties of mistakes and infractions. When the facilitator forgot to bring in a day’s quiz, a student was unable to answer a question about one of the readings, or someone accidentally hit the light switch, they “got the grandma word” (a phrase that featured often in the field notes along with “used the grandma word” which was sometimes shortened to “used the G-word”). Spilling drinks or dropping food earned one grandma status, as did loosing track of time in the trading game. One (male) student arriving late for class muttered, “I’m such a grandma”.

When the breach between the cultures occurred and the Cartel struggled to figure out what had taken place and how to move forward, much of the conversation centered on the “G Word”, as it became known in these discussions.

We realized that we’d trivialized the words “grandma” and “Grandpa” by using them to call one another out on our errors, but these words are obviously important in their culture and it was probably offensive to hear them used in such a way (Jade, FTC, 4/15).

My newest thought is that maybe we attacked them. Not physically but emotionally. Maybe us using ‘grandma’ really hurt them and since they treasure their family so much they felt they couldn’t be around us. This would also support our idea that they are ‘family oriented hippies’ (Harry, FTC, 4/15).
We all started to throw out different ideas and came to the conclusion that we offended them in some way... We believe they thought we were making fun of them when we called out "grandma, grandma" when someone performed an illegal gesture. The Alpha culture values their grandmas very deeply and when we started yelling out "grandma, grandma" they thought we were disrespecting them and their family members. We needed to solve this problem right away in hopes that they would come back. So instead of yelling out "grandma, grandma" when one performs an illegal action, we will call out a number that shows someone did something wrong. For example, if someone shakes their head to say no, instead of using our hand signals, then the person interacting with the offender would yell out, say, "23" and then they would take a card from them as a punishment (Maddox, FTC, 4/15).

Despite all of the soul searching that went on around the use of the word, and the unanimous decision to replace it with numbers, its use persisted, and if anything, proliferated, both inside and outside of class, as June reports:

The word "grandma" became so significant to me. We had a debate on using the term, and we had a fun time using it. I even started using it outside of class. A few days ago, I was in the bookstore and saw a book that had the word "grandma" bolded in big font on the cover page. I just started giggling because I just naturally thought 'someone broke the rule.' I could imagine shouting "grandma" when I saw that cover page. My friend did not understand why I was giggling and even after I explained the reason, she did not find it fun at all (June, FTC, 4/29).

Several student field notes told of instances where the term had been used spontaneously outside of class, to the confusion of their friends. Cathy shares the following "embarrassing" incident.

I can't believe the way I think about this class all the time and the way some of the fake culture has become so real to me. It can get so embarrassing at times. Last night I was sitting in the Price Center with some of my friends and one of them kept stealing french fries from me. Normally I don't care, but I was really hungry and I told him to go buy his own but he kept stealing mine. When he ate my last one I yelled at him, "You are such a grandma!" Everyone started to laugh at me and I tried to
explain about the class but I knew that there was no way they would understand (Cathy, FTC, 4/24).

Before the quarter was over, the word “grandma” also became a verb. Near the end of the term when the two cultures were meeting together again as a single class, the professor used a mild oath when the projector proved uncooperative during his presentation. From the back of the room a Fair Trade member shouted "grandma!" In the laughter that ensued, some of the Stone Soup students wanted to know what had happened. Another Trader explained, "Professor Mike swore, and then Harry grandma’d him".
Money, Money, Money Makes the Simulated World Go ‘Round, Too.

No real money changed hands during this simulation. From the local toy store I purchased a metal cashbox, complete with several thousand dollars in play U S coins and currency, and a black plastic “pot of gold” (a cauldron-like container filled with fake gold doubloons). The gold coins became the Stone Soup Clan’s shared treasure. The cashbox, and the paper money in it, played a central role in the Fair Trade Cartel’s game and system of exchange.

Prior to the simulation, money, or the meaning that the students attached to the idea of money, was the result of the students’ larger life experiences outside the simulation, and so was assumed to be somewhat consistent across the two cultures. Once the concept of money was introduced into the two groups, however, it was differently transformed. Once the two cultures began to interact, it became apparent that these transformations were profound.

Almost immediately after the initial stake of $200 was distributed to each of the Traders, alliances inside the small trading groups strengthened. Although it was not part of the original trading instructions, the Traders were observed making agreements within their small groups whereby no two players would attempt to collect the same color of cards. In addition, even though it had been made very clear that trading could only take place while the “floor was open” (we rang a bell at the opening and closing of the 10 or 15 minute trading period each day), players were observed surreptitiously trading within their own small groups until each player had all of the group’s inventory of one certain color, red, for example, and had relinquished all differently colored cards
to others in their group. This assured that once the bell rang, and the players moved onto the trading floor to begin trading with people from the other groups, they would not all be competing for the same cards.

The introduction of money boosted the tempo in a class that was already briskly paced. Suddenly the speed with which a trade could be accomplished became a key factor. As completed sets of cards were compiled students would run, literally, to the banker’s desk and clamor to turn them in for cash. The introduction of money into the game visibly upped the players’ emotional ante as well. The politeness of earlier days all but vanished. Trading that had been animated and conscientious, now became frenzied. It was hard to believe that play money could have such a dramatic effect on the players and the game. Virginia shares her interpretation of the day’s events:

Before starting the trading Deb passed out a packet to everyone. Inscribed on the outside was your first and last name along with the name of your group. The fun stuff was waiting on the inside which included ten cards and a wad of $200 cash! (Play money of course) Also, there was another note card that had your name on top and space for you to record the amount of money you had in your possession at the end of each class. Once everyone received their packet the trading began! Due to my success from the prior trading practice I was extremely excited this time around. My strategy was to trade within my own group before trading with those in other groups, since there was no point in two members in our group trying to accumulate the same color of cards. Once I had what I needed from the other members of Bella Trading Company, I was on the prowl looking for the other cards to fulfill my set. I kept my eyes open for 3’s and 5’s that they are rare. I charged at only the other Betas that had the color I needed. Adrenaline pumped throughout my body as I anxiously hunted down the cards I needed. And in no time at all I had already cashed in my straight for $100 and a brand new set of cards. Although I did have challenges adjusting again to the Beta language, the effort paid off in the end! Before I knew it I was back at the bank trading in another straight for another $100 and some more cards! (Virginia, FTC, 4/15).
Just as the Traders had picked up on the importance of grandmothers to the Stone Soup, so the Stoners immediately sensed that money meant more in the Fair Trade culture than it did in their own. The Stoners repeatedly described the Traders as "motivated by money", "consumed by the need for money", or "focused on only money." Most often this was discussed in contrast to their own culture’s disapproval of any overt effort to amass personal wealth. When the Traders visited Stone Soup territory, the Stoners took it upon themselves to try and teach the "cash-crazed foreigners", as Travis liked to call them, about money’s proper place in Clan life. Jaime’s story shows how fruitless these efforts were.

One visitor kept just randomly taking money from the pot for no reason. We just ignored her and continued our conversations about our grandmothers as much as we could. (It’s hard not to go off on tangents though now because we’re all kind of friends now so chatting is inevitable.) They were leaving and we took a group picture and then it was Allie’s (our treasurer’s) idea to give them their own currency back - to try in some way to show them that we valued their company, not their money. We had 1’s and 50’s so we put the 50 dollar bills into the middle of the stack of 1 dollar bills to surprise them. "If we could only see the look on their face!" Allie said as we gathered the stack together. Since she couldn’t talk to them (she was the treasured one), I said I would say they were from her, but then I just ended up handing our visitor the stack and saying "thanks for coming!" Even though they didn’t play according to our rules too well, they still deserved a parting gift. But after all that, she still took our coins for herself too sooo ;…..(.

(Jaime, SS, 4/17)

As it became clear that there was little chance of changing the Traders’ attitude toward money, the Stoners jumped whole-heartedly into the practice of folding, coloring, threading and spindling Fair Trade currency in the production of jewelry and various other hand-crafted items. On the surface this was done in the spirit of creativity and generosity; most of the pieces were given away to the visiting Traders. Underlying
this industry, however, was the smug knowledge that the Stoners were belittling that which the Traders valued most. The Stoners had discovered how to engage in outgroup aggression in a socially sanctioned way. A ritual soon developed; the Stoners fashioned treasures and “innocently” bestowed them upon the greedy Traders; the Traders feigned delight and responded with profuse gratitude, before slipping away to hastily destroy the Stoners’ artwork in order to cash in the currency.

When the cultural leak occurred and the Stone Soup was forced to regroup and reorganize their practices, one of the first things they did was “bury” their communal pot of gold in order to protect it from the thieving Traders. Up until this point the fake U S coins that had come with the cashbox and the paper currency had not been used. Rachel produced them now for the Stoners to use as tokens in playing their card game. As far as the Stoners were concerned, these coins had absolutely no value at all, but to the visiting Traders, money was money, and the coins were scooped up with abandon. The Stoners were both amused and disgusted, as Mikelle makes clear.

_I don’t think the girls from the other culture got the point of the game--but they have caught on that money is not of huge significance to us. When it was time to leave us, the two girls decided on their own without asking that it was okay to take most of the coins in our pile. They thought that it was just as valuable as the gold coins, and that in the end--they could exchange these coins for something valuable. I thought it was rude and impolite that they did not ask if it was okay to take our coins, but since our culture does not value wealth in terms of cash and coins, it should not matter, right? Either way, it is still impolite! I feel like their culture is a “dog-eat-dog” world, and reaching to the top of the ladder in society may mean that you need to step over some boundaries. If only their society wasn’t so focused on material wealth! That is why I like our culture a lot more--because wealth is not measured in terms of monetary value, but of how deeply connected we are to our grandmothers (which is
our history, our foundation) and to each other. There is no hatred, but lots of happiness and laughter (Mikelle, SS, 4/24).

Fair Trade members were thinking a lot about the meaning of money as well, and while they were performing in alarmingly money-focused ways in the simulation, the Traders were also working to make sense of these actions in their nightly field notes. The Fair Trade group’s first priority was to perform as successful members of the Cartel; that entailed being honest yet openly competitive, law-abiding yet aggressive. The problem was that in their efforts to be all these things, the Traders found themselves in situations where it was in their best interests to take (unfair?) advantage of the Stone Soup Clan. What exactly constituted an unfair advantage was questionable, since there were no explicit rules about how to trade with outsiders other than the admonition to always trade only in the Beta language, which, of course, the Clan members were not able to speak.

In the beginning the Traders seemed to have no problem with this, at least none that they mentioned in class or in their field notes. But as the simulation progressed, and it became clear that the Clan was not going to decipher the Beta language or the rules of trade, a few of the Traders lost their appetite for Stoners’ blood. It was too easy. The playing field was so unbalanced that there was simply no sport in the game. But the majority, as Virginia indicates in her notes below, acknowledged the unfairness of it all, and then went along with the flow.

I did in fact today take full advantage of the Clan members trying to earn back my high trading status. When I simulated motions for them to give me their currency I knew what I was doing. I knew their currency is valued at a much higher rate than the Fair Trade currency. I did not trade with them to help them. I did it out of greed to try to secure my
financial success. Clearly in this action alone you can witness the different moral values of the two cultures. It's kind of bizarre how the mentality of the Fair Trade culture to make money had overtaken my own personal values, at the end of this experiment I was not thinking like Virginia Robinson. I was thinking as a Cartel member (Virginia, FTC, 4/24).

Following the final meeting between the two cultures, both camps were buzzing with talk of a cross-cultural marriage that had taken place in Stone Soup territory. In this impromptu ceremony all of the complexities that had developed in the Fair Trade/Stone Soup monetary exchange system came to the surface. The wedding appeared to be almost a non-event as it was taking place. Brandt, the groom, did not even mention it in his field notes. But its subsequent interpretations were complex. As Elliotte, the bride, told the story to her fellow traders, she approached one of the male members of the Clan (nameless to her at this point) who was wearing a “feathered” headband that he had fashioned from Cartel money. She complimented him on his work, and asked if he would make one for her as well, but out of fifties instead of ones. He agreed, created a matching headband for her, and placed it on her head. Someone produced a camera and took the couple’s photograph. This pleased Elliotte, who began to pose and tell the group that she and (“what is your name? Brandt? Hi, Brandt!”) Brandt were now married. Those in the immediate vicinity all give similar, and benign, accounts of the event, but as the story is retold it takes on disapproving overtones, as these successively derogatory comments demonstrate:

I heard laughter from the table behind us and saw that Elliotte was being crowned with a sort of headdress made of money attached to a string. The guy putting it on her head wore one just like it. I exclaimed, "You guys are married now!" and pulled out my cell phone to take pictures. I took a picture of the "bride", a picture of the crowning, and a picture of the "newlyweds". Fifteen minutes were up and it was time to go. Our group
invited us to take our winnings and our new fans and jewelry. We gladly accepted (and took some more coins as well) and went back downstairs to the Cartel. We told the rest of the Cartel about the willingness of the Clan to give us money, which is an experience that everyone else who visited them can identify with. We talked about the engagement and the wedding, and everyone had a good laugh (Elliotte’s teammate, Cathy, FTC, 4/29).

Apparently, one of the girls got married into the other colony which was a whole new ritual that we were unfamiliar with. She came back with a crown and she seemed really upbeat about being married so I assumed the ceremony was really cheerful, etc. The main thing I really focused on from their account is that they said they were able to get lots of money and even asked for the jewelry cash, which was technically mutilated tender. A member of her group even stated something along the lines of they didn’t care if it was destroyed, it was still money. This is interesting in that I probably would have thought the same way, but in perspective, they were having this beautiful wedding ceremony, but her group was still focusing on getting money and winning in our culture. It seems that the 2x a week ritual of our culture has really gotten a hold on our mental state. It could be the promise of a reward at the end or just getting caught up in the game but it really does seem to be affecting us. I am curious if the other culture are as into the game and their cultural (probably family/social values rather than monetary gain) than we are (Cartel member, Eric, 4/29).

I was extremely surprised to learn that the Cartel members joined us in making origami out of their money because they were trying to smuggle back some of the money! When the girls came to visit our family, I really believed they were making origami because they liked the jewelry and wanted to make some for themselves and to take back to their family members. I thought they were different outside their culture, but they proved me wrong. They even went so far as to have a wedding ceremony so that they could make a money headdress, but then they took it back and took it all apart for the cash. They have carried their greedy cultural beliefs with them on to vacation (Brandt’s family member, Johanna, SS, 4/29).

Below the bride speaks for herself. Although she is quoted discussing the “wedding” in several other participants’ field notes, in her own she never mentions
either Brandt or the ceremony – focusing instead on the Stoners’ money-based handicrafts.

By this time I had paid very little attention to the game which was going on, and was more concerned with participating in their culture. I watched all the Clan members create beautiful objects out of the money they had; one made a frog, another made an origami turtle, and another made a bracelet. When leaving the Clan culture and heading back down to the Cartel culture, all my group members were referencing to how much money was on my head, they did not care how or where I got it but where more concerned to how much money it was. They were saying things like, "Oh my God Elliotte you have so much money on your head." I really did not care about the money because if I did I would have immediately taken it off my head to count how much was there, but instead I was trying to understand the way of their culture (Caley, FTC, 4/29).

As you will read in a later chapter, when the simulation portion of the class was over, and we all reconvened to unpack our cultural experiences, the attitudes toward money took center stage as the core features differentiating the two cultures. It was fitting that while entering the conference room on the final day of class, I overheard one of the Stoners saying, "I feel like we're surrounded by Traders, guard your money!"

Rose and Felton (1955) focused on the minimum requirements necessary for the emergence of the rudimentary expression of certain shared experiences that qualify as cultural artifacts. Their work stripped the process of cultural genesis of as many of the contextual and affective trappings as possible. In this simulation I have attempted to reveal the same processes exposed by Rose and Felton within more complex and natural social interactions, and in doing so to further our understanding of their development. By following the two cultures’ adoption and adaptation of the word “grandma” and by tracing the complicated relationships around money that developed within the cultures, we were able to watch group-specific ways of thinking and acting
emerge. Rose and Felton’s model allows us to see that the participants in this simulation were, in fact, participating in the creation of culture.
White Korean cowboys: Interweaving systems of meaning

One of the goals of the data analysis was to better understand the relationship between the students’ participation in the simulation and their larger cultural contexts. I have found it useful here to use a "social-ecological" notion of context, ordinarily represented as a set of concentric circles or nested dolls in which the focal activities are at or near the center, constituted by and constituting the levels above and below them (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Cole, 1996).

In using a "concentric circles" notion of context we are especially mindful that causal influences flow between largest and smallest circles in both directions, and that there are often several layers of contextual influences at work simultaneously. Used in this manner, the image of overlapping concentric circles captures the embeddedness of social activities. For example: Our focal activities take place within the simulation, which is a part of a class in the communication department of a large university in San Diego, which can be further defined by its location, state and national affiliations, and more. Within these dynamic contexts, a Stone Soup citizen like Allison, who is a commuting transfer student, a single mother of Mexican descent, and the first person in her family to attend college, brings (and takes away) quite different sensibilities than does a Trader like Penrhyn, who is a fifth generation Vietnamese-American male, with parents who are both physicians, and who is living in a fraternity house near the campus.

Of particular interest were instances where there was some mismatch or conflict between the norms that were developing within the simulation and the cultural habits
the students were bringing with them into the course. Exposing these moments offers insights into how the students were going about synchronizing the various cultural systems to which they belonged.

I was thinking in terms of narrative framing (Bruner, 1991: Wertsch 1998, 2002) to explore how the participants reconciled their actions in the simulation with the sometimes contradictory sets of values they brought into the class. In many instances it appeared as if the students were pulling ethical frames from different levels of social context, trying them out, reframing certain tasks several times, discarding one frame after another until they found one, or devised one, that made their actions more palatable

We were fortunate to have six students of Korean heritage in the Fair Trade Cartel: Eric, June, LinHee, JuLi, Maddox and Harry. Five of them organized a study group the first week of the term which met weekly throughout the quarter and frequently corresponded via text and email. The students’ discussions about the assigned readings and the events of the simulation as it unfolded soon evolved into opportunities for them to examine the ways they believed their Korean sensibilities shaped their involvement in the project. I should say here that these six students comprise a very small sample and no effort is made to generalize any of their responses to a larger Korean population. These students’ field notes and reflection papers represent a unique perspective on the simulation, one that would have been invisible to me had the students not been partners in this research. The Korean students offer some valuable insights into the interplay between the simulation and the participants’ broader
cultural circumstances which might shed light on the ways we all work to synchronize our small everyday stories with our larger cultural narratives.

Eric, by his own account, was the most Westernized of the five study group members, and the only one born in the United States. Eric was majoring in International Business, with a special focus on American-Korean business practices. He was a part of my follow-up analysis team and much of what is written in this chapter is the result of Eric’s efforts. He collected the following descriptive information from the other Korean students and included it as part of his final reflection paper in the class. Eric’s parents had immigrated to California from South Korea when they were children. They met and married in college, worked and raised Eric and his sister in the San Francisco Bay Area, and reside there still. Harry’s father traveled between Seoul and Los Angeles on Business. Harry attended high school (boarding) in Canada before coming to UCSD for college. JuLi and LinHee were both citizens of South Korea who first entered the United States four years earlier when they were accepted to UCSD as freshmen. They were seniors and would be returning to South Korea shortly after graduation. June’s father, a white American soldier, met her mother while he was stationed in Seoul. Their family moved to America when June was a baby, but insisted that June and her brother spend their summers with their grandparents in South Korea to improve their Korean language skills, and to “think in Korean”.
Maddox showed no interest in joining the other Korean students in a study group. In fact, his first field notes led us to believe that he might be trying to distance himself from them as much as possible:

> I think Country Inc. is the best group because we have the most white people, and white people are more outgoing than other races. This should give us an edge. We are a bunch of cowboys and we're gonna kick some butt! I consider myself to be white, I'm definitely a Twinkie, yellow on the outside, white on the inside.\(^{22}\) (Maddox, FTC, 4/1).

All six students are fluent in English. Eric, June, LinHee and JuLi speak Korean at home. Eric, June and Maddox speak English with west coast accents, and they read and write better in English than in Korean. I was confused when Eric described himself as being in a different generation from the three girls, because they are all about the same age. His response was, "you know, I'm first generation American. They were all born in Korea." Although it had been Eric who organized the study group, he was the one who admitted to some frustration in trying to communicate smoothly with JuLi and LinHee. Eric did not like speaking Korean when discussing literature they had all read in English, saying he found it difficult to translate many of the ideas effectively. But as soon as the conversations switched to English, JuLi and LinHee stopped talking – even though they were both quite fluent in both languages and had read the articles in English without problems. June was the bridge. Being female and having more experience than Eric in Korea itself, she was able to draw JuLi and

\(^{22}\) Where many of the students' opinions included below are taken from conversations that took place within the study group context, Maddox's comments were all from his class participation or from his field notes submitted directly to the course database. Because Maddox was not in the study group, Eric did not collect descriptive data about him, but Maddox indicated to me in a subsequent class that his parents were both born in the United States. His mother was of Korean descent, his father was Japanese. He spoke some Korean at home (only with his grandmother), but no Japanese.
LinHee into conversation. She explains: “We spoke Korean when we were together because in English JuLi and LinHee were meek and distant, which irritated Eric a lot”. Eric said, “I just kept switching back and forth because I guess my Korean was not really enough. I understand everything. It was just easier to talk about the stuff from the class in English”.

Eric was particularly interested in drawing connections between what he called the “Confucian family values” that he felt he and the others had been steeped in, and the ways the Korean students functioned in the simulation. In his final reflection paper he points out that for many Koreans it is impossible to separate family and business the way that Americans seem to do. The five students’ parents all had experiences with the system of "chaebols", which Eric explains are "large business firms that are privately owned and managed by the founders and their families. Within Korean chaebols outside recruitment is non-existent and ownership is restricted to blood relations". Americans, Eric writes, are often torn between their commitments to their jobs and their families, and so each of those priorities is weakened by the other. For Koreans, responsibilities to family and employer are often one and the same and therefore undivided and intensified. In all cases, family and chaebol come first. Individual needs, when considered at all, take a very distant back seat. This arrangement conflicted head on with the Fair Trade cartel system where individual accomplishment was paramount, trading teams a distant second, and loyalties to the Cartel only came into play when dealing with the outgroup, the Stone Soup.
JuLi wrote detailed and thoughtful notes from the beginning about her struggle to reconcile the requirements of the class with her cultural habits. She begins her midterm reflection with the following:

I was born and raised in South Korea, where people value social harmony and being considerate and thoughtful in understanding each other's needs and wants even without words, more than being aggressive, direct and fast in getting what you want. I felt from the beginning that Beta culture was conflicting with my native culture. This simulation has been a genuine cultural struggle of my own (JuLi, FTC, midterm reflection).

JuLi told me there was never a moment in the simulation when she was not aware of her “Korean-ness”. In the first week we assured all of the students that they were not compelled to do anything in the simulation that felt wrong to them; they could simply say ‘no’ without penalty. We asked that, if they felt comfortable doing so, they include sections in their field notes explaining the logic or sentiments behind a decision not to participate. JuLi chose to take part in all of the activities, and she used her field notes as a tool for working through her thoughts and feelings about her position as a Korean woman trying to survive in a highly competitive (albeit simulated) Western business environment. About half way through the simulation I called her in to my office hours to be sure that she was holding up and not feeling pressured into doing anything that ran contrary to her beliefs. She assured me that she was fine, and her next set of field notes contained the following affirmation:

In this class I'm doing things I have never done before. I never really pushed myself to try the ways of American girls, although sometimes I would wish I could. Now I know what it feels like to be more aggressive and sometimes even loud. I don't think this will ever be the way I am, but I am happy to say that I have tried it (JuLi, FTC, 4/22).
LinHee was struggling with many of the same issues. Early in the simulation she "felt sad" because she knew that her (male) teammates were frustrated with her tentative participation in the trading sessions. "They tried to be nice but they kept saying that each one of us should work to add to the Sapphire money totals and then they would look at me to make sure that I understood. I did understand but it was hard for me to speak out in an American way." In the first few days of the simulation LinHee and JuLi spent a lot of time trading with each other, which was more comfortable for them but did little to increase their wealth, or their perceived value to their trading house.

In JuLi’s notes, below, we see that the simulation caused her to rethink her interactions with LinHee as well, not knowing whether to attribute LinHee’s kindness to team affiliation, friendship, or the fact that they are both Korean.

During my very first trade with one of my group members, LinHee, she offered to give me the card I needed for whatever card I didn't need in exchange, even though she knew that I didn't have any card she really needed. For the first time I felt some kind of group mentality. Then I assumed that it was because we seemed to share the same value of serving others and avoiding unnecessary competitions for the sake of social harmony, but now I wonder. Did I assume we were thinking the same because she gave me what I needed, because we were on the same team, or because she just looked like me because she is Korean like me (JuLi, FTC, 4/15).

June reports that "all of us had a sense of hesitance in approaching and dealing with the simulation, but the initial discomfort experienced by JuLi and LinHee was greater considering they had recently come to America." June and Eric both note that they had learned in other classes that Koreans have a "very skewed and idealistic" (June) view of Americans, believing them to be open, big-hearted, friendly and trusting.
"Koreans believe that Americans usually conduct business with a high degree of integrity."

(Eric) In class discussions (after the simulation portion was over) June told the class that she and her Korean friends had a terrible time sorting out their loyalties in the beginning. "I didn't even realize that I had this order set up in my head where I felt like I should be loyal first to the other Korean students, second to the Americans, and last to the non-Korean Asians." At this point June apologizes for assuming that all of the Korean students were thinking the same way, but some of the others assured her that they had been, even if they hadn’t recognized it at the time.

In the discussion that followed, Korean students who were not in the study group added that being assigned to a Cartel trading team or to a Stoner family complicated their participation. Suddenly they found themselves affiliated with persons from several ethnicities, against teams that were equally constituted. The decision to align with a non-Korean trading team member against a Korean from a different team, for example, was not always an easy one to make. The team or "family” loyalty usually won out, but not without considerable soul-searching and subsequent second guessing. In every case the students expressed surprise and regret that this had made a difference to them, and a lengthy discussion followed in which they argued about whether these feelings were unique to the simulation, or if they were present but unrecognized in other campus interactions as well.

JuLi and LinHee’s discomfort was further complicated by issues of gender and differences between American (as they perceived the class to be) and Korean expectations for women’s behavior. The following field note is intriguing because in it
JuLi reports feeling offended and cheated when her American team member, Landon, broke the rules to obtain money during a trade, and yet she seemed quite unperturbed when Eric, a fellow Korean, did the same.

While I was standing next to the TA, Eric who was at another table, asked the Alpha members at his table if they would just give their coins to him. And they gladly said yes and began giving away their coins. Landon did the same, and she received all the coins from the table where we played together. She had one coin at the end of the game, and now she had twenty-seven coins in her hands. I felt offended and cheated that she cheated, because she didn’t seem to try hard to play the game, and now she was way ahead of me in terms of the number of coins she had all of the sudden (JuLi, FTC, 4/17).

Eric did not find her attitude odd at all, and explains it this way:

Holding Americans to a higher standard of morality plays a factor in how JuLi reacted. She just expected Landon to be honest in her dealings. She would never say anything negative about me because, well it's complicated. This may also play into the Korean patriarchal system in which lower members of the team are never to question the actions of their superiors, and sometimes not even those of equal level peers. JuLi wasn't offended and shocked by my participation in the exploitation because I was also a Korean and a male. However, her expectations and beliefs about Americans were shattered by this isolated experience with the Alpha culture.” (Eric, FTC, final reflection)

LinHee took part in this event along side the others, but rather than label Landon as a cheater, LinHee judges her to be an exceptionally efficient trader. "When Landon asked the Alphans about their rules, they told her everything. Therefore, Landon knew a lot about their culture and was able to use that information to earn a lot of money while she was there." Eric felt LinHee’s reactions were grounded in the same stereotype that JuLi’s were:

LinHee just assumed that because Landon was American all of her actions were honest. She saw Landon as kind and righteous and assumed that
because Landon claimed to understand their culture, she simply knew more than the rest of us and thus earned more (Eric, FTC, final reflection).

Eric then turns a critical eye on his own participation in the event:

My approach to trading seemed very bold and Americanized in comparison to the two Korean girls in my trading company. After going back and forth in their game and not really making any money, I asked the Clan members if I could have some money and they happily gave me money from each of their stacks. They kept giving us their money until they had none to play with. They asked for some back and we did give them some, and so we continued playing the game. I was definitely aware that I was exploiting their culture and their openness and happiness. Despite the exploitation the competition pushed me to maximize my profits at their cost. I can certainly see why certain cultures were so eager and quick to exploit other cultures that were generous or held different values. Though my actions went uncritized by LinHee and JuLi, I didn't feel 100% good about it, but I was certainly admired and adopted by the white members of my culture that saw my actions and followed suit (Eric, FTC, final reflection).

Harry had been silent in all of these discussions. His participation in the group was contained to talk about the course readings and assignments. In class he was arguably the most aggressive trader in the Cartel. He was the self-appointed leader of his trading team, avid defender of all Fair Trade practices, and outspoken basher of all things associated with the Stone Soup clan. He wrote long and impassioned field notes defending his positions on everything from trading policies to donut selections. Eric reported in week three that Harry no longer attended the study group’s weekly meetings, but he continued to take part in their email discussions, and often hung around after class to chat with the other members of the group. Near the end of the simulation Harry included these comments in his field notes:
I'm thinking that the transition from Korean to American culture is much harder for females than it is for males. I have to say honestly that I don't have any problem exploiting the Stoners, or even the other trading groups, if it means I can earn more cash. I do feel differently about the Bella group though. I want them all to win something. Just not as much as me. I think Korean businessmen are just as aggressive as Americans and they are probably more corrupt. There are also Korean "Dragon Ladies" in business as well, but I guess no little girl really wants to grow up and be one. I don't know though, maybe they do (Harry, FTC, 4/29).

In the end all five of the study group students reported that because of the rigid gender roles they were accustomed to, the simulation had been a lot easier on Eric and Harry than it had been on the female members of the group. But even the girls found a convenient loophole. The cultural pressure they felt for high scholastic performance was not gender specific. The imperative to do well in the class far outweighed any discomfort they might be feeling at pushing the boundaries of polite behavior. The women's eventual willingness to step outside their comfort zone and fully participate in the highly aggressive trading was remarkable. I had been prepared to give them considerable leeway in their participation grade, but in the end there was no need for this. Not only did they jump in and take part in the trading, but they became formidable competitors.

Once the girls gave themselves permission to fully participate in the aggressive trading game, their insider's position in the trading culture provided them with and outsider's perspective on their own South Korean heritage, as JuLi reports below.

Because Beta Culture is very different than my own native culture, first I felt a strong resistance to accept the trading rules, and my conflicts of value system had begun. At the same time as I 'naturally' resisted to absorb Beta's cultural values because of my native culture, I was rationally preoccupied by following Beta values of making trade efficiently
and making maximum profits because I felt pressured to do well in trading as I assumed it would be reflected in my class grade, since my native culture valued education highly. In this process, I became uncomfortable with my own values and began the re-evaluation process of my own culture. Some of the parts were not compatible with the others. I was expected to be quiet and polite, but I was also expected to do whatever was necessary to be successful in school (JuLi, FTC, final reflection).

The Korean students weren’t the only ones trying to maneuver between the desire to be faithful to the spirit of the simulation and the need to meet the academic demands of the class. In other words, the simulation was compelling, and had evoked a strong desire from each of us to truly create small group cultures of our own; but the fact remained that this was all taking place within a graded university course; when situations arose in which decisions had to be made between acting in accordance with culturally acquired inclinations about how to behave in certain social situations, and acting in ways that might improve the chances of a good grade in the class, the students faced a dilemma. Stoner Brandt offers one great example: “I just wanted to tell all of the greedy B.....to go back where they came from, and not to come back until they were ready and willing to act as if they were decent human beings. But we were not in the real world, we were in a Communication class, so I knew we had to hang around and communicate.” Trader Jade offers another: “Truthfully, I could not see any reason why we had to build relationships with the Stoners at all. We had our society and our jobs to do and they just got in the way. Okay, Okay, I know that I'm missing the whole point of the class. It was just hard to remember the class was real and the game was not.”

Indeed.
Final Reflection

Although it is generally accepted that culture cannot fail to emerge anywhere that people congregate, the majority of the research on cultural processes looks at the influence of culture on the individual, without addressing the ways in which cultural norms arise in the first place, or are transformed over time. Thus this project is presented as a necessary complimentary opposite to other forms of inquiry into culture. The observations reported here illustrate how the simple thoughts and everyday actions of ordinary people may create culture, and should be of interest to those concerned with the emergence and persistence of culture as well as with the impact of individuals’ actions on broader social structures.

In the introduction to this thesis I wrote that my goal was to explore the ways small group cultures come into being and develop among previously unacquainted individuals who come together around a common activity. I conceptualized the genesis of culture as a collective narrative process – a creative meaning-making endeavor that entails ongoing negotiation and adaptation, affective investment, the synchronization of previously learned systems of symbols and practices, the development of new practices, as well as the formation and definition of group boundaries. I approached this issue using a Romantic Science research strategy grounded in Goethe’s argument that scientific knowledge must be the product of a collaborative relationship with nature – of a sympathetic participation in the development of natural phenomena. This approach
seemed particularly appropriate in that I was seeking to observe and document the processes of cultural genesis, both from the outside, as a social scientist, and from the inside, as an engaged, responsive, intentional participant. Goethe also argued that science is a natural process in which everyone who participates is changed. Thus Romantic Science was a choice that would allow me to achieve a second goal, to demonstrate the effectiveness of a “participatory pedagogy” in which undergraduate students joined with me on a scientific journey, and if all went as planned, to demonstrate to the students their capacity for effecting social change.

In keeping with the idea of culture as an ongoing poly-vocal narrative, the words of the students as well as my own observations were arranged to unfold as a story, allowing for considerable leeway in the readers’ interpretations. I have followed what John Watkins (1963) refers to as “confessional” style, inviting the readers to experience the events of the simulation in their natural order rather than coercing them into accepting a conclusion by offering a series of propositions which they must accept. In addition, I have organized my research to around a set of concepts relevant to understanding cultural genesis taken from the works of such “classical” social science scholars such as Edward Rose & William Felton, Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif, Kurt Lewin and Leon Festinger. Using more conventional, methods, these researchers provided a tool kit of potentially important concepts (cultbits, drive to convergence, the centrality of intergroup interactions for intra-group organization) each of which was derived from their empirical work on small group processes in such a manner that they could propose them as general laws governing their phenomena of interest. The present
project was designed to build from their insights by building a medium in which the psychological process they isolated through their methods could be observed as simultaneously, intermingling, living phenomena rich in emotional tone, uncertain, and always in the process of becoming. In so far as I have been successful, I hope that having now taken this journey of exploration with me and the students, the reader, like the participants, has been able to experience the process of cultural genesis in writing, without losing sight of the rich living qualities of the process “in life.”

At the conclusion of our simulation, thirty-seven of forty students reported they felt they had been placed in the right culture for their personalities, even though these assignments had been entirely random. Looking back I see that from day one the students displayed emotional attachments to their own groups, and in a very short time (by the second meeting) the field notes revealed common ways of thinking and acting within the groups that soon expanded to include commonalities in the ways they wrote about and treated members of the outgroups. I interpret this as evidence that the students had created two distinct idiocultures and had entered into the cultural processes that they were attempting to understand.

Below are my attempts to build schematics explaining the changes we observed within and among the two cultures. I began with Bartlett’s notion of affective determination. I surmised that the initial mood established by the small collection of artifacts each group was given on day one (a legend and a game), along with the carefully designed contexts, had heightened the students’ attunement to different aspects of the simulation and encouraged them to approach problems in different ways.
These approach patterns would have implications for the ways relationships developed both within and between the two groups.

The first diagram below shows the model of change observed in the Stone Soup culture. The ethos established by the Stone Soup legend and card game heightened the players’ attunement to each other’s happiness and to the resources necessary to create a positive and nurturing atmosphere. Decisions were made based on maintaining the welfare of the group as a whole. These thinking patterns framed both the in-group and out-group activities, decreasing in-group competition and strengthening in-group connections. This ethos also encouraged benign out-group relations, which made the Stoners vulnerable to exploitation by the Traders, but also more dependent on group cohesion.

Schematic 3.1:

Model of Group Change Processes: The Stone Soup Culture
The following diagram shows the model of change observed in the Fair Trade culture. The Parable of the Talents, and trading competition heightened the players' attunement to personal wealth and material resources. Decisions were made based on personal achievement and the acquisition of individual fortune. Once again, these thinking patterns framed the in-group and out-group activities, increasing in-group competition and weakening in-group connections. They also encouraged predatory out-group behaviors. These out-group behaviors became competitive in that the Traders were vying among themselves for access to the Stoners’ wealth. This competition further stressed the Trader in-group relationships.

Schematic 3.2:

*Model of Group Change Processes: The Fair Trade Culture*
The students reported that, within a short period of time, the events of the simulation began to feel very real. Rachel and I were both surprised and relieved; we no longer had to feel silly for having those feelings ourselves. Jean Baudrillard would not have been surprised. He explains that we construct a simulation because we cannot obtain the information we want from the target entity directly; so we proceed indirectly by creating a model which is sufficiently similar to the original that we are confident it will reveal the information we are looking for. Problems arise when we begin to test the reaction of the social apparatus to our simulations. “The network of artificial signs will become inextricably mixed up with real elements…You will immediately find yourself once again, without wishing it, in the real, one of whose functions is precisely to devour any attempt at simulation, to reduce everything to the real – that is, to establish order itself…order always opts for the real” (Beaudrillard, 1994: p. 20-21).

According to Beaudrillard, it is practically impossible to isolate the process of simulation from the force of the real that surrounds us. For this reason the BaFa’ BaFa’ social simulation functioned perfectly as a Romantic Science method in this project. Not only did the game allow us to expose and manipulate the social processes we were seeking to understand, but it engaged the students and elicited feelings in ways that permit us to draw plausible connections between events in the research setting and those we encounter in naturally-occurring life experiences. And, conveniently, the meso-genetic method of data collection, in the form of the students’ commentaries about how real the simulation seemed to them, provides evidence that the students were deeply involved in the processes we were investigating.
The heightened emotion of the simulation played a large role in the students' engagement in the academic portion of the class as well. Surprised at how heavily invested they had become in their cultures in a few short class meetings, the students were eager to learn how this was possible. Earlier we discussed the deliberate measures taken to establish particular affective environments or moods for the two cultures, but we were also, equally as deliberately, creating academic atmospheres as well.

Parker Palmer, in The Heart of Higher Education, writes that there are ways of teaching that create community, but these require a virtue not always found in university classrooms: hospitality (Palmer, 2010, p.29). This lack of hospitality in the classroom is far more common than we may think. Even in seminar-style classes, we learn early on to keep an intellectual straight face. It is rare to hear an honest question, to say nothing of an admission of ignorance. Instead, students ask questions designed to let the professor know that the lesson has been heard and understood. University classes should be hospitable spaces not merely because kindness is a good idea, but because real education requires rigor. In a counterintuitive way, hospitality supports rigor by supporting community. A hospitable learning space is one where students can disagree with the professor, argue with classmates, and admit ignorance.

In our research class ignorance was the starting point for all of us, and learning had less to do with acquiring a body of knowledge than with creating a body of knowledge along with other ignorant souls. It simply was not possible to remain outside the issues we were addressing. Anything we might have taught about cultural
processes from a text would certainly have been less compelling than reading those texts while engaged in practices where the sights and sounds and feelings of cultural creation were inescapable elements of the educational experience.

I have two points to make here. The first is that the simulation would not have been as successful at creating culture, if successful at all, in a less hospitable classroom environment. Moreover, the kind of research I wished to accomplish, the deeply embedded Romantic Science experience, would not have been possible in an unfriendly space. The students could not have let down their guards enough to truly get inside the often silly activities of the simulation. The second point is that this carefully arranged classroom experience provided the time and the scaffolding necessary for the students to experience Goethe’s metamorphosis. During the reflection phases of the class they were able to examine their data and integrate their new information into preexisting knowledge structures. And, once again, the meso-genetic documentation made this process visible to us.

I include a field note comment written toward the end of the quarter by Maddox. You might remember him as the self-described “twinkie, yellow on the outside, white on the inside”. Now, having gone through the simulation and the course of which it was a part, Maddox’s comments represent the kind of development through reflective participation that the Romantic Scientist considers to be the goal of the process of participatory inquiry.
I've been thinking about everyone talking about the Traders as being the "individualistic" culture and the Stoners being "communist" (or socialist or whatever) culture. This subject always comes up when people talk about yellow and white people and I think yellow people get really tired of it, or at least I know I do. So I was thinking about the movie The Life of Brian. Brian was this dude who was born the same day as Jesus and he lived next door, so people were always mistaking him for Jesus Christ and following him around asking for miracles. One night he hides out in his mom's house with his girlfriend, but when he wakes up in the morning and opens his window the crazy crowd is waiting for him outside. He gets really mad and screams at them all to go away, telling them that they're all individuals - that they're all different. So they hear this and they start to cheer and chant all together, "We are all individuals! We are all different!" over and over, but there's this dude in the back that says "I'm not." And just walks away. So this is my really long way of saying that I'm watching our group and we're all proud thinking we're individuals but we're really all acting just alike, probably even more alike than the Stoners are. Does that make me like the guy who walked away? I don't know (Maddox, FTC, 5/8).

This is the kind of research and educational outcome I dreamed of. It came about through a processes of combining theory and practice in the manner prescribed by Goethe and implemented widely by Mike Cole and numerous members of the Laboratory for Comparative Cognition. I hope it does so in a manner that the reader finds engaging, and even, perhaps, compelling.
APPENDIX A: Class Syllabus

COHI130 : Cross-Cultural Communication - Spring 2008
Tuesday/Thursday 8:00-9:20am – Warren Lecture Hall 2115 (& MCC 201, MCC133)

Professor: Michael Cole mcole@ucsd.edu OH: M 1:00-2:30
Researcher: Deborah Downing Wilson dewilson@ucsd.edu OH: TH 10:30-11:30
TA: Rachel Cody – rcody@ucsd.edu – OH: TBA


In this class we will address questions related to the ways that cultures develop and the processes that facilitate this development. How is it that cultures come into existence at all? How do cultures come to have particular characteristics and customs rather than others? How do cultures persist and change over time? In one sense this class is the complementary opposite to other courses you may have taken in the Communication Department. In COHI100 and COCU100, for example, you looked at the power of culturally acquired ways of thinking and acting to shape the daily lives of individuals and groups. Here we will look at the microlevel processes through which those cultural patterns emerge in the first place and are transformed through social interaction.

The first half of the course will consist largely of a participatory investigation designed to provide you with first-hand experience of the dynamic self-organizing and norm-establishing activities that take place within budding cultures. We have arranged for you to become enculturated within a simulated society that you help create, and then experience being an outsider in a foreign culture created by your classmates. Through class discussions and field notes we will unpack and reflect on your experiences, using those experiences as a jumping-off point for future class endeavors which will introduce you to scholarly writings and other sources of knowledge about the processes of cultural genesis.

Class Requirements:

The class is experimental on many interacting levels. You will be an embedded ethnographic researcher writing field notes from within the culture, and within the communicative and psychological processes we will all be seeking to understand. Your reflections and analysis will be the raw data for the investigation of these processes. Some of the class activities will be strange, and their value may not be immediately discernable to you. We ask that you suspend your disbelief for a while and jump into the project whole-heartedly.
Attendance: In the first weeks of the quarter you will need to **come to every class**, **come to class on time** and **participate fully** in the activities of the day.

Field Notes: Following each class you will be writing detailed field notes describing your experiences. Step-by-step instructions for writing these notes are attached at the back of this syllabus.

Online Discussion: Each culture will have an online forum where you can post questions and comments as the quarter progresses. Instructions for access are attached.

Midterm Reflection Paper: At the end of the fifth week you will be asked to review your field notes and use them to create an account of your experiences in the class to date. This paper should be about 3-5 pages long. A detailed prompt will be handed out one week before your reflection is due.

Presentation of Literature: Once during the 2nd half of the quarter you will participate in a short (5-10 minute) group presentation of one of the theoretical positions discussed in the assigned literature. Your presentation should explicitly link the readings to your experiences in the simulation portion of the course. A sign-up sheet will be circulated later in the quarter.

Quizzes: In order to inspire you to do all the reading, there will be a one-question quiz for you to answer and turn in **at the beginning of each class**. No need to panic. You only need to demonstrate that you have read, not necessarily mastered, the readings.

Final Project Paper: There will be no final exam in this class. Instead you will be writing a short (5-7 pages) ethnographic research paper reporting on your experiences in the simulation and interpreting these experiences in light of the theories and literature we discuss in the second half of the class.

Grading:

Involvement (present, on time, engaged in activities): ................................................ 20%
Field Notes (comprehensive, detailed, relevant) .............................................................. 20%
Midterm Reflection Paper (honest, thoughtful): ............................................................ 25%
Presentation and Quizze .............................................................................................. 10%
Final Paper (comprehensive, thoughtful, well-written): .............................................. 25%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orientation &amp; overview. Discussion on ethnographic research and field note writing Random assignment to one of two simulated cultural groups.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write two paragraphs describing your impressions/expectations of the class. Send it to the email address on your culture assignment slip.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction to culture. Small group assignments.</td>
<td>In Class: Alpha: “Stone Soup” Beta: “The parable of the talents”</td>
<td>Write a personal rendition of your group’s parable and send it to gmail address.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Inherit artifacts and learn the language and rules of your culture. Practice the work of your culture.</td>
<td>Mantavani, Forward, Intro, Intro to part I, and Chapter 1. (pp. vii – 15)</td>
<td>Write field notes on day’s events to be expanded after next meeting.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1st group (observing only) crosses borders - reports back to their own culture in the last 15 minutes of class.</td>
<td>Mantavani, Chapters 2 &amp; 3 (pp. 16-30)</td>
<td>Add today’s events to Tuesday’s notes. Add reflection and submit.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2nd group (interactive visitors) crosses borders - reports back to their own culture in the last 15 minutes of class.</td>
<td>Mantavani, Intro to Part II &amp; Chapter 4 (pp. 31-42)</td>
<td>Write field notes on day’s events to be expanded after next meeting.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3rd group (interactive visitors) crosses borders - reports back to their own culture in the last 15 minutes of class.</td>
<td>Mantavani, Chapters 5 &amp; 6 (pp. 43-60)</td>
<td>Add today’s events to Tuesday’s notes. Add reflection and submit.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4th group (interactive visitors) crosses borders - reports back to their own culture in the last 15 minutes of class.</td>
<td>Mantavani, Intro to Part III &amp; Chapter 7 (pp. 61-71)</td>
<td>Write field notes on day’s events to be expanded after next meeting.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Celebration Day!</td>
<td>Mantavani, Chapters 8-9 (pp. 72-88)</td>
<td>Add today’s events to Tuesday’s notes. Add reflection and submit.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Alphas report on Betas - Betas unpack and perform beta culture for Alphas</td>
<td>Mantavani, Intro to Part IV &amp; Chapters 10-11 (pp. 89-111)</td>
<td>Make notes! You'll need them on Thursday.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Betas report on Alphas – Alphas unpack and perform alpha culture for betas</td>
<td>Mantavani, Chapter 12 Conclusion and notes (pp. 112-141)</td>
<td>Submit one page comparing/contrasting Alpha and Beta cultures. Which culture might be best to live in? Which culture has the best chance of survival?</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Research on small group cohesion, competition, and border negotiation.</td>
<td>Sherif, et al. Robber’s Cave Experiment</td>
<td>Midterm reflection essay due</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>The emergence of shared categories and norms. Lecture includes Arrow &amp; Burns “How Cultural Norms Emerge in Small Groups”</td>
<td>Rose and Felton, Experimental Histories of Culture</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Cultural as Multi-vocal Narrative Part II</td>
<td>Bohannon,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>VII</td>
<td>Remember Mantovani: “Culture is a collaborative narration, shared, contested, negotiated.”</td>
<td>“Shakespeare in the Bush”</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Culture as performance I</td>
<td>Peckham,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>5/20</td>
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<td><em>The Dramatic Metaphor</em></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Culture as performance II</td>
<td>Conquergood,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5/22</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Communication as Performance</em></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Idiocultures and Host Cultures.</td>
<td>Fine,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>5/27</td>
<td>Culture as multiple, nested, interactive schemas.</td>
<td><em>Small Groups</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cultural as Multi-Vocal Narrative Lecture includes Wertsch, “Narrative as a cultural tool for representing the past”</td>
<td>Benhabib,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>5/29</td>
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<td><em>The Claims of Culture</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>What have we done here? Created culture? Learned about culture?</td>
<td>Kitchens,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>6/3</td>
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<td><em>Student Ethnographers</em></td>
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<td>Petranek,</td>
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<td><em>Written debriefing: a vital step in learning with simulations</em></td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Were the simulations successful? How or how not? Why or why not?</td>
<td>Saegesser,</td>
<td>Quiz and presentations</td>
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<td>6/5</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Simulation Gaming in the classroom</em></td>
<td>Q-Sort</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday June 12th</strong></td>
<td>Term paper due 10:00 am</td>
<td>Research Paper Due</td>
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<td>Hard copy to LCHC</td>
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Days 4-7 time schedule:

8:00- 8:20................................................................., In-Culture discussion
8:20 – 8:25 .............................................................. Envoys’ travel to foreign culture
8:25- 8:30 ............................................. Visitor’s acquire local currency and game materials
8:30 – 8:55 ................................................................. Culture games
8:55 – 9:00................................................................. Visitors check out
9:00 – 9:05................................................................. Envoys’ return home
9:05 – 9:20................................................................. Report back to home culture

Readings:  Posted on course database:  www.lchc-resources.org
APPENDIX B: Field Note Writing Guide

COHI130 – Field Note Writing Guide

See the attached handout “Instructions for Accessing the Class Database” for...you guessed it...instructions for how to sign on to the database where you will be posting your field notes.

You should include four main sections in your field notes:

1. A header
2. General site observations (like setting the scene)
3. A narrative of the days’ events (the main section, like a play's script)
4. A reflection (like a postscript commentary in paragraph form)

1. Your header should include:

Your name
Dates: The date(s) of the event(s) that you are reporting on, and the date when you are writing and submitting the notes.
The location of the event
The name of your group

2. Your general observations should address such questions as:

What did you notice as you came in?
What was the feeling of the room, the general attitude of the group as a whole?
What other activities on campus or in the world may be affecting the environment or atmosphere of the simulation activity?
What are the feelings of the other university students and faculty in the room?
What types of interactions/activities are taking place between university students or students and faculty before the simulation activities begin?

3. In your narrative:

Concentrate on describing the interaction between you and the other participants in the simulation.
Add more information about the environment around you, if relevant, as accurately and thoughtfully as you can.
Tell us what went on, how you interacted with the others, how they interacted with you and how they interacted with each other.
A productive strategy is to try to recall parts of the day that stand out in your mind, and work backwards and forwards in time from those events.
Be sure to note how you arrived at a specific activity, what the reaction was to the activity, and what difficulties or problems you encountered when dealing with the activity.
Pay close attention to language, and physical materials or tools used during the course of the activity.
Try to recall the exact dialog as it unfolded and include this in your notes.

Remember that negative events such as ways the interaction breaks down, or misunderstandings about the activities, are as interesting as positive ones; in fact, they are very informative when we try to understand what goes on when things go well.

Some possible aspects to attend to (do not do all of these, but use them as jump-off ideas, or to jog your memory):

Shared understanding and smooth interaction in the simulation:
No difficulty? We immediately got into it. (how?)
Some difficulty (describe it!). How did you go about solving it?
How did you structure the situation? What kind of understanding did you start with?
What happened afterwards? Were you successful in solving the problems?
What strategies did you use in solving the problem?
Facilitation or hindrance caused by another participant:
How did they react? How did you? What was the affective (emotional) quality of the interaction? Were you and the others happy, sad, frustrated, angry, indifferent… during the activity? Before and after?
The role or position that you assumed:
Within your own culture were you a leader, teacher, peer, student, observer?
As a visitor were you aggressive, timid, open-minded?
Did you enjoy the activity? Did you find it difficult, easy, meaningful, silly, or what?
Interactions among the others:
What was the nature of the collaborations you observed between others?
Were players helpful? Supportive? Actively engaged? How or how not?
Was there in-group or between-group competition? Describe it.
Was this healthy or destructive for the group as a whole?
How did other members of your group deal with the visitors?

4. In the reflection section,

Step back and state your opinions and thoughts about yourself, your role, and the simulation.
Note any thoughts you might have about previous experiences that relate to what's going on.
What beliefs have been revealed or challenged?
What prior beliefs influenced the way you acted or the way you interpreted a situation?
In retrospect what might you have done differently?
Have you questioned/reaffirmed/altered any of your prior thinking?

How is the experience of being a part of the simulation and writing field notes changing for you as the weeks go by?

*Take this opportunity to comment on aspects of the activities that you think are particularly positive or problematic, and any other ideas that may be helpful in the next weeks for yourself, other students, or future classes.*

Once again, there is no way to say anything wrong in your field notes. We are looking for nothing here except your honest observations. Your grade has to do only with how thoroughly you report on your experiences in the simulations. These are YOUR notes, written by you and for your own use in the class. The richer, more detailed and complete they are, the more you will be able to fully participate and benefit from the experience.

Instructions for submission: After class on Tuesday, and before class on Thursday, write your field notes on Tuesday’s activities. After class on Thursday write you notes on Thursday’s activities, reread your notes from both days and write the reflection section.

Post your weekly notes by 10:00 pm on Sunday night, at the latest, so that we have time to read them before we meet again the following Tuesday.

Addresses for posting your field notes at the end of each week:

Alphaculturesp08@gmail.com
Betaculturesp08@gmail.com

We thank you in advance for taking the field note portion of the class seriously. Your field notes are the best way for us to get a glimpse inside the processes that we are all trying to understand. Above all, we ask that you are as honest and as thorough in your descriptions as you can be. Your reflections are the raw data that comprise the heart of this research project. We look forward to reading them!

*References for the material we discussed in class today:*


*etic* perspective: scientific analysis, an outsider observing with cross-cultural awareness and a preset criteria for analysis. Drawbacks = failure to address insider knowledge, difficulty understanding why something occurs or what it signifies.

*emic* perspective: insider knowledge, understands from a membership perspective. Mono-cultural, reflexive, shared knowledge.
According to Pike the goal is not to strike a balance between these two positions, but to simultaneously hold both – he uses the term “stereoscopic” provides for thick descriptions, rich analysis.


Cultural understanding is essentially produced, not merely recovered. Ethnography is a very special kind of intellectual autobiography, a deeply personal record through which a whole view of the human condition, an entire sensibility, is elaborated. We no longer try to approach the world (as the natural scientist would) as a fixed array of objects, but rather as a reality that cannot be fully separated from our perceptions of it. It shifts over time and in response to our gaze. It interacts with us. And the knowledge that it yields must always be interpreted by us, by the particular kind of complex social, cultural, and psychological self that we bring with us into the field. (454.)
APPENDIX C: Midterm Reflection Prompt

COHI130 Cross-Cultural Communication

Midterm Reflection Paper - 4-6 double-spaced pages - 25 points possible
Due at the beginning of class on May 6th.

Bring a hard copy with you to class and submit a soft copy to your culture’s email address.

This is an opportunity to step back and tell us your opinions and thoughts about the simulation, about yourself and the role you played in your culture. You might find it helpful to talk with others in your group in order to get a broader understanding of the events that occurred. The data sources for your paper are the field notes that you have written thus far, and your memories and impressions of the events that you participated in. Read your field notes, moving sequentially through the weeks of the simulation. How did the experience of being a part of the simulation change for you as the weeks went by? How did relations within your culture develop and change? Within your immediate group? How did you experience group coherence or conflict? How did you deal with the experience of being an outsider when you visited the other culture? How did you feel about the foreigners when they came to visit? What surprised you? Have any of your thoughts about culture or cultural boundaries changed because of this experience? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about the way you function within a group? What questions have arisen for you as a result of this simulation?

You are not limited to these questions. They are just prompts to get you started. Remember, there is nothing you can say that is wrong. Unless you feel that it will help you to express your thoughts, there is no need to discuss the class readings, or any other source material outside of your field notes and your discussions with your classmates. That will all come later. We just want to know what you are thinking at this point in the class. Your grade will be based on how thoughtful, detailed, complete, organized and well written your reflection is. Not on whether or not we agree with what you’ve said. We look forward to reading your papers!
APPENDIX D: Final Research Paper Prompt

COHI130 Cross-Cultural Communication

Final Research Paper +/-7 double-spaced pages

Due on the final exam date for this class: June 12th 8:00 am.

Turn a hard copy in at the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 3rd floor, room 303, Social Sciences Research Building. (Formerly the Chemistry Research Building) AND submit a soft copy to your culture’s email address.

You have now completed a quarter of ethnographic field work and note writing and it’s time to write a research report on your findings and observations.

Your term paper brings together two sources of knowledge, your own experience in the simulation and the outside sources of information that we discussed in the class, allowing you to reach your own conclusions about the processes of cultural formation and change. You should draw heavily on your field notes and/or those of your classmates. Interpret your observations and reflections using the theories and insights gained from the readings we have discussed in the class.

There are two obvious approaches you can take. The first is to start with your field notes about the simulation and then compare and contrast your observations and insights with those of the authors we’ve read in class. The other is to discuss the various authors’ theories in light of your experiences in the simulation.

Your paper should include references from Mantovani, Sherif, Rose & Felton and Fine, as well as at least one of the following scholars: Peckham, Conquergood, Wertsch, Abbott, Bohannon, Patranek, or Saegesser.

You may want to include quotes from these sources, but there is no need to include extensive passages. We are most interested here in YOUR ideas. YOUR interpretations. YOUR words. Like the reflection paper, your grade will be most dependent on how detailed, complete, thoughtful, honest, insightful, organized and well written your paper is.
APPENDIX E: Daily Lesson Plans

COHI 130: Cross-Cultural Communication
Day 1 Lecture Notes: (Use to create ppt slides.)

Introduction and class overview
Discuss the syllabus
Idiosyncrasies of this class
Sociogenesis – what is it?
Simulations – why?
Ethnographic research – ethnography as a pedagogy
Field note writing
IRB Consent forms – sign and turn in today (to Jaime)*
Draw lottery for culture assignments

Handouts: Syllabus, Field note writing guide, Class database access instructions, Culture assignment slip with email address and room for next meeting.

Homework assignment: Write two paragraphs describing your first impressions and expectations of the class. Send it to the email address on your culture assignment slip.

The sociogenesis of culture. In this class we will be thinking about culture as an emergent property of social interaction. Specifically, we will look at the micro-level processes through which cultural norms develop and are transformed through social interaction. In this class you will have an opportunity to experience first hand the dynamic self-organizing and norm-establishing activities that take place within budding cultures. The course has been designed as a participatory science project. You will observe and practice some of the basic skills of ethnographic research and then use your findings as a foundation for discussing contemporary literature about the establishment and reproduction of culturally acquired ways of thinking and acting.

Simulations. Rather than teach you what is ‘known’ about cultural genesis, we intend to use games that allow you to discover for yourselves some of the mechanisms of social interaction, and hopefully to experience for yourself the excitement that accompanies the investigation of important issues. (Piaget: For children, games provide an introduction to life, to rules, to the idea of taking different roles and playing under different sets of rules, to an understanding of personal and collective goals.) Simulation games are caricatures of social life. They allow us to magnify some aspects of social relations and exclude others, breaking certain elements of social interaction from their natural context and giving them a special context of their own. The simulation you will be participating in incorporates certain elements of social organization. Our goal is to extract, isolate and simplify some of the principal rules and rewards that characterize social relationships so that we can better observe how they
operate and are transformed in social interaction. Using simulations, we are able to focus in specific and non-threatening ways on the social mechanisms we employ to create groups and to define ourselves as group members, as “insiders” or “outsiders”.

Ethnographic Research.

The risk in traditional research is that our investigations could be either naïve celebrations of our own culture from the inside, or a shallow critique of another culture from the outside. Either way we fail to achieve a sympathetic and rich understanding of the culture we are interested in. Ethnographers try to straddle this divide by taking on the role of “other” as a way of seeing the familiar as strange, and at the same time relying on their “insider status” as a way of understanding the exotic as familiar. In this class we will try to establish a very careful combination of insider and outsider perspectives in our approach to the events we experience. You will be both an authority on, and a naïve observer of the cultures you are participating in, an examiner who is “in the know,” but who also isn’t blinded by ethnocentrism.

Field Notes. You will writing as an embedded ethnographic researcher - from within the processes we all seek to understand.

Kenneth Pike: *A stereoscopic window on the world*

Nancy Schep-Hughes: *The Margaret Mead Controversy*

*To preclude student worries that lack of consent to use their field as research data might jeopardize their grades, we have arranged for Jaime in the Communications office to collect the signed forms and hold them for us until the end of the quarter when grades for the class have been submitted.*
Lesson Plan for Alpha Day 2 – First meeting of Alpha Culture

I. Set the stage:

Arrange furniture for small group conversation, no obvious front or podium, homey comfort food spread around room, soft music playing, warm casual greeting.

Materials: Food & Drinks, Book of Knowledge, Red Beads, Chest of Coins

II. Solicit and field questions on class structure and field note writing

III. Introduction to Alpha clan traditions

Matriarchal – honors elders
Communal – wealthy as a group - no personal belongings
Peaceful – kindness above all else
Sense of humor = most desirable characteristic
Certain “treasured” individuals
Pastime game

IV. Appoint a matriarch

Create four small families
Designate “treasured ones”

V. Introduce the “Book of Knowledge” and have the matriarch read the parable of “Stone Soup”

VI. Confer membership – sign names in “Book of Knowledge”

VII. Homework:

Write personal parable
Develop a grandparent history (true or embellished)

(Sample script) We are a group who loves to be together, to laugh, to tell personal stories, to stand close, to touch each other on the arms or shoulders, and to protect each other from outsiders. We are always kind. Even when faced with adversity or rude and inappropriate behavior, we respond with respect and kindness. To do otherwise would be to lower ourselves to the level of lesser clans.

Ours is a matriarchal society. [Facilitator randomly chooses one female student in the group, places her hands on the students shoulders and declares her the clan matriarch.] Our leader is kind and good. Our leader exemplifies the code of Alpha society, which is
to always put the welfare and happiness of the group before individual needs. Our leader is always right. We defer to her in all things and never question her authority.

We are a people who believe in the power of community and tradition. Because we have been faithful to the traditional ways, we have always prospered. [Show the large pot of tokens] This is the clan treasure. Everyone is trusted here, and may take from the pot as needs arise. Money itself has no real value, and there is no need to ever hoard it, or to designate it as ones own. To do so would be to show a lack of faith in the clan, a lack of respect for our ancestors, and would result in a loss of face within the group.

When Alphans meet, the very first thing we do is ask about each other’s grandparents. You should think about some interesting ways to answer this question when it comes up. Feel free to embellish or even fabricate your stories. Your answers don’t necessarily need to be true, but they should fit with your personal family history. They should at least be possible in your life.

Alphans are all from the same clan. There are no exceptions. Within the clan there are four families of five people each. These families do everything together, create original art together, eat, drink, sing, dance and play games together, travel together to the foreign culture, and work together on presentations and joint projects as they come up in the course of the simulation. While you will work most closely with those in your immediate family, you will also maintain close ties with the others in the clan. There is no competition between families and there are no secrets from others in the larger clan. There are no game strategies, and there is no accumulation of goods, information, or wealth associated with the immediate family. While the family is important, clan affiliation is paramount.

[Facilitator designates the families – those sitting in proximity of each other – and gives them ten minutes to get to know each other and to come up with a family name, and an idea for a family symbol or crest.]

Each family has a “treasured one” designated by these red beads. This person is protected at all times by the other members of the family. Before anyone outside a given family can interact in any way with a protected one, they must ask for permission from a family member. This permission, once requested, is always given, but should someone from outside the family try and interact before permission is granted, the “treasured one” simply smiles and walks away, ending the interaction.

[Facilitator (randomly) hands beads to one member of each family. ]

Each family may decide whether to designate one permanent “treasured one” for the duration of the simulation, or to have this honor rotate among them.
[Facilitator presents the “book of knowledge” to the matriarch, which to date has only the “stone soup” legend written on the front page. ]

This is the Alpha “Book of Knowledge”.

We will use it to keep track of clan members and the clan legend in all of its manifestations. Each family should come up one at a time and enter their names and their marks in the book.

On the front page is our clan’s most beloved story. Listen carefully as it exemplifies the spirit of our ancestors and all that we, as their descendents stand for.

[Leader is given the book and asked to read the parable “Stone Soup”, first to herself, and then to the rest of the clan.]

Our last task for the day is to come up with a name for our clan. Each family should make a suggestion to the matriarch who will present all four names to the larger group for discussion. After carefully weighing everyone’s advice, the matriarch will choose the most appropriate name from among the suggestions.

[Provide an ink pen or an ink well and brush and quite ceremoniously have her enter the name of the Clan on the cover. Then each family should be called up one at a time to enter their names on their family’s page in the book.]

You have been entrusted with knowledge that only members of (whatever name they give themselves) have access to. As holders of this information, you are now a full-fledged member of (whatever name) with all of the privileges and responsibilities that that membership entails.

Today’s introduction to Alpha culture is complete. Your homework assignment is to think of an incident in your own life that is exemplified, or related to, or resonates with, the “Stone Soup” parable. Remember, ours is a peaceful happy tradition that thrives on community spirit. We value happy endings and prize humorous tales because of the way they ease tension and facilitate happy social interactions. Your story should reflect this alpha mindset. If necessary, you may make a story up, or embellish one to make it fit, but it should tell of an event that could possibly have taken place in your life. (Do not include any information that is uncomfortable for you to share.) Your story should fit with your personal history and may include real family members or friends or yours as long as you change the names.

Write this up (1-2 pages) and email it to the alpha clan email address before the next class. In addition, print a hard copy and bring it with you to the next class to be
entered into the clan’s “Book of Knowledge”. And, please memorize your story. You will be needing it in the clan meeting on Tuesday and in the future.

You might also want to be thinking about some of your favorite short jokes and riddles. Keep them clean, politically correct, and kind.

At the next class you will learn about the work of Alpha clan. You will inherit the Alpha artifacts, the ways and the tools of alpha culture.

Please remember that, above all things, the ways of the clan are kept secret. Once learned, they are never discussed, not even among ourselves. The only way for an outsider to be accepted by us would be for them to spend time in the Alpha world, respectfully observing our ways until they could behave in accordance with all of the rules.

Repeat the main points:

Alphans are always kind – always – no matter what
Alphans love to be together
Love to laugh
Love to tell personal stories, funny anecdotes, jokes, limericks, riddles.
Stand close and touch each other on the arms when talking
Protect each other from outsiders

Homework:
Write “stone soup” story – AlphaCultureSP08@gmail.com
Think about grandparent responses
Jokes? Riddles?
[The “treasured ones” should leave the red beads before they leave the class.]
Lesson Plan for Beta Day 2 – First meeting of Beta Culture

I.   Set the stage: conference room furniture arrangement, whiteboard at front, coffee and donuts on back table, business-style name tags, facilitator in business attire, quite formal greetings.

II. Field questions on class structure and field note writing
    (Stephen Spielberg – suspend disbelief)

III. Introduction to Beta Cartel traditions

You have all been randomly assigned to the Beta group.

In the Beta culture our success is determined by our ability to be effective traders. As you will see, to be an effective trader you must be honest, consistent, persistent and drive a hard bargain.

Our task is to prove that good guys can finish first! As Betan’s (soon to be renamed as you see fit) we thrive on healthy competition. We will be doing our best to win in every kind of challenge that will come our way during this simulation, but we will place honesty and fair play above winning, always holding those who beat us in high esteem.

Time management is an important element of Beta success, as the more trades you can get into a trading session, the more opportunity you have for increasing your personal wealth, the wealth of your trading firm, and the overall Beta economy.

Ours is a society that rewards personal achievement, as well as teamwork and group loyalty.

We will appoint a chairperson today, but that position will be reassigned daily to the person who has earned the most Beta dollars during the previous meeting.

The work of Beta culture is accomplished through a card trading game. We will learn the rules of the game next week. Our bookkeeper (the group facilitator) will keep track of all the profits earned during this simulation. At the end of the simulation portion of this class, prizes will be awarded to the three Betans who have amassed the largest personal fortunes, and lesser prizes to all of the members of the trading group that has the highest combined earnings.
All trading is done in the Beta Trading Language. This language sounds complex when heard for the first time, or even when heard repeatedly if no one explains the rules to you. In reality the language is quite simple to both learn and use.

There are only 13 words in the language: 6 words for colors and 7 words for numbers. This limited vocabulary insures that all conversation will be confined to the task of trading. In fact it is very rude and distracting to talk any other language except Beta when trading is going on.

We'll go over the language briefly now so that you can start thinking about it, but don’t worry if you don’t feel like you’ve mastered it. There is time for that later.

Beta trading cards come in six colors, blue, red, orange, yellow, green and white.
Ba means blue in Beta language, as does Be, Bi, Bo and Bu.
Guess what Ra means? Red, right? As does Re, Ri, Ro and Ru
And White?
White = Wa, or We, or Wi, or Wo, or Wu
Orange = Oh – easy!
Green = Ga, or Ge, Gi, Go, Gu
Yellow = Ya, or Ye, Yi, Yo, Yu

All you need to do is listen for the first letter – which will be the same as the first letter of the color name. Very quickly this will become second nature to all of us, but outsiders will have no idea what these words mean.

The vocabulary for numbers is equally simple, and yet very difficult for outsiders to decipher. Each person will say them differently, depending on their initials, but that won’t matter. All that you need to do is to keep track of the number of syllables in the word. There are only seven numbers used in trading, so this is not as difficult as it sounds.

My name is Deborah Wilson. My initials are DW. When I want to convey a number to members of the group I’ll do it like this.

1 = Da
2 = DaWa
3 = DaWa Da
4 = DaWa DaWa
5 = DaWa DaWa Da
6 = DaWa DaWa DaWa
7 = DaWa DaWa DaWa Da
[Take a couple of students from the group and work through their number vocabulary. Then give everyone a few minutes to practice communicating numbers with the people on either side of them.]

There are also gestures in the trading language. To say ‘yes’ touch your chin to your chest.

To say ‘no’ raise both elbows sharply and let your hands hang loosely.

‘Say again’ or ‘repeat what you have just said’ is indicated by shaking an open hand rapidly back and forth.

If you want to request more than one card in the game, you begin by pumping your forearm once for each card you want.

[Give the participants time to practice all of these gestures among themselves.]

Once again, today’s introduction is just that, and introduction. Don’t be concerned if it all seems Greek to you right now. At the next class meeting we will go over all of this again, and by the time you need it, it will come quite naturally to you. I promise.

It is rumored that the foreigners who come to visit have many valuable resources, so you will probably want to trade with them. If you do, they will likely try to speak to you in English. Remember, however, that Beta is the trading language and no other language can be spoken while trading.

It is important for you to remember that you cannot teach the Beta language to outsiders. All visitors must learn by listening and observing.

You can speak to them in sign language, however, and you are likely to be surprised at how easily you will be able to communicate with them. Foreigners should not ask about the rules of trading, the language, or any other part of the culture. If they do, you should not answer them.

One last thing. Betans respect each other’s personal space. You should refrain from standing too close or from touching each other’s body if possible.

IV. Assign small groups
We will divide up now into four small firms of five traders each. Each firm will travel together to visit the foreign culture, read and comment on each other’s field notes, and work together on group projects and presentations.

[ Divide participants into four groups of five members.]
Please introduce yourselves to the others in your firm. Together you should choose a
name for your trading firm come up with a suggestion for naming the larger trade
cartel.

[Allow time for this, and then write the firm names on the white board, and their
suggested name for the cartel beside it. Then take a vote to decide.]

V. Establish historical roots (Parable of the Talents)

The Beta Legend

[Pass out the flyer with the Beta legend, and then read it aloud.]

The lives of these traders exemplify the moral and ethical foundations upon which our
organization was built and has prospered. It is our goal to honor them and their work
by living up to these ideals in all that we do.

VI. Confer membership

[Pass out the ledgers.]

As members in good standing of the (what ever name they have chosen) you have all
been entrusted with important inside knowledge that will confer huge advantages in the
trading sessions that follow. Remember that the information acquired here should not
be shared with others. To do so would jeopardize not only your own success on the
trading floor, but also that of the entire group.

Please open your ledgers and enter the name of your firm on the first page. Now sign
your names below your firm name as you will be signing them on all official paperwork
throughout the simulation. Then establish accounting pages, one for each member of
your firm, and one more for keeping track of your firm totals.

VII. Homework Assignment:

Betans love success stories. The more inspiring the better! Tell of a time when hard
work, persistence, and shrewd thinking paid off for you or for someone you know. If
your story sounds too ordinary, feel free to embellish it from your imagination. If
nothing comes to mind, borrow a story from someone else or make one up, but be sure
to tell a story that is possible, one that may well have taken place in your world.

Submit your story (1 or 2 pages) to the class database before class on Tuesday and
bring a hard copy with you to class.
Lesson Plan for Alpha Day 3: Second meeting of Alpha Culture

I. Set the stage: furniture arranged for small group conversation, no obvious front or podium, homey comfort food spread around room, soft music playing, warm casual greeting.

II. Field questions about earlier meetings.

Starting today, and continuing for the rest of the simulation, this first five minutes or so of the class is the only time you will be able to ask questions about, discuss, and clarify the Alpha cultural rules. Once the actual simulation portion of the class begins, you must adhere to them as best you can, adlibbing and compensating when you are not sure, so that the simulation runs as smoothly as possible without interruptions. Once the interactions with the other culture commence, it is absolutely forbidden to discuss, give advice, or answer questions about the Alpha cultural habits. Outsiders must learn by observation and interaction alone, not through explicit instruction. (The way we learn about other cultures in real life.)

III. Restate the Alpha worldview.

Introduce “arts and crafts” style artifact production.

Share grandparent stories.

You are an Alphan! Remember, your purpose in life is to enjoy being with other Alphans, laugh, play and get to know each other within the rules of the clan.

First, when you approach another Alphan, greet her or him with a smile and touch them in some way. Maybe an arm squeeze or a pat on the shoulder or back. Alphans are comfortable with touching and being touched and do so often during conversation. When not touching, Alphans stand close together. Standing more than a few inches away from another Alphan is a sign of disrespect. Shaking hands is not acceptable as it keeps people far apart. An offer of a handshake is an insult, and like all other insults is ignored in a friendly way.

Alpha is a matriarchal society in which the leader is honored. Alphans live together in close-knit families. Each family has a “treasured one” who is carefully protected by other family members. “Treasured ones” may freely approach other “treasured ones”, but generally wait to be approached by others. When someone outside an immediate family would like to approach a “treasured one”, they simply ask a family member if this would be a good time to do so. Permission is always granted. Should someone speak to a “treasured one” before getting permission, the “treasured one” simply smiles and walks away.
After the initial greeting, Alphans discuss in detail the health, achievements, and wisdom of their grandparents. If you don’t know much about your grandparents (or don’t want to share private information) it is permissible to fill in details from your imagination. Just be sure the stories fit well with your personal cultural history.

IV. Pass out game cards and explain the matching game.

After you have greeted, touched, and talked about your grandparents, you play a game called “match the leader.”

[Pass out the card sets containing 2 red and 2 black playing cards, one face card, and the Alpha Card]

The game “match the leader” is very simple. 2 or more people can play. Normally if there are more than 4 players, the groups break up into two games. Each person holds their cards face down in front of them and casually shuffles through them. One person leads off by turning his card deck over to reveal the bottom card. (If the matriarch is taking part, she always leads off. “Treasured ones” never lead off.) The aim of the game is for the player(s)’ bottom card(s) to match the color of the lead-off card, which was the first card turned over. If this happens, the lead person gives the other person one coin. If not the other person gives the lead person a coin. There is one exception. If the matriarch is playing, she always wins.

Most important – the game is considered silly – as a pleasant pastime – a reason to mingle and spend time together. Laugh and be happy whether you win or lose. Remember, if you wind up with more than a few coins, put the extras back in the pot. Never hoard them. If you run out of coins, take a few from the pot.

Always linger and talk some more after the game is finished. To leave immediately would be rude. This is a good time to tell your personal legend to the others, or tell a short joke or riddle. You may also talk about anything else, sports, politics...Just be careful not to talk about the rules of the Alpha culture or the Alpha game. Remember, stand close, touch, laugh.

As a parting gesture you should sign one another’s Alpha card with your initials...if you feel the other person has obeyed the rules of the Alpha culture. An Alphan feels good when they have a card full of signatures. If you feel the other person did not obey the rules, then you should use any three numbers to sign the card. The numbers serve as a reminder to the offender and as warning to other Alphans that the person is not honoring the Alphan way of life, and that they might need a little more help learning the rules.

To invite a third or fourth person into your conversation, you reach out and touch them on the shoulder. It is customary, however, to allow the person to stand and wait for
some time before inviting them into the conversation with a touch of the hand. The waiting gives them time to feel and understand the drift of the conversation or the game before joining it. Naturally it is considered quite rude to walk right up and immediately join a conversation or game before being invited. Similarly it is unkind to invite a person to join before giving them adequate time to feel and understand the flow of the conversation.

The face card is included in your game but is never displayed unless you want to remind someone that they have broken the rules. To do this you hold up the card to the offending person, smile, but do not speak to them. They will understand that they have not conformed and will think about and correct their behavior.

So the basic social transaction is as follows: Greeting, talking about your grandparents in great detail, playing the matching game, telling your story and talking about topics of mutual interest, signing each other’s cards and moving to another Alphan. At all times you should stand close, touch, laugh, appreciate one another, be a good listener, and enjoy yourself.

V. Practice doing Alpha culture

Practice for about 30 minutes. Start within your immediate family. Be sure each person has the chance to tell his personal legend, and then disperse to interact with the larger group. [reconvene]

VI. Designate one family to be the first to travel to Beta Culture
    (observers only)

Alphans love to travel and to experience other cultures. The first Alpha group to take a journey will be the matriarch’s family. Next week they will report here at the beginning of class to get directions to Beta culture. In return, we will have an envoy of Betans visiting us here. These first travelers will be observing only. They will not interact in any way with the culture they are visiting. Our Alphans will watch carefully the ways of the Beta culture and then report back to the rest of the Alpha clan on what they have discovered. The Betas will do the same. Should anyone from Beta attempt to speak or interact with you in any way, you should smile politely and walk away.

VII. Homework assignment:

Field notes – TODAY – using the guide we passed out on the first day, make some good notes to yourself on events of today’s class. You will need them to complete Thursday’s field note writing.
Mantovani: Read forward, introduction and chapter one. (pp. vii – 15)
Lesson Plan for Beta Day 3: Second meeting of Beta Culture

I. Set the stage: conference room furniture arrangement, whiteboard at front, coffee and donuts on back table, business-style name tags, facilitator in business attire, quite formal greetings.


II. Field questions on class structure and last week’s class

This first five minutes or so of the class is the only time you will be able to ask questions about, discuss, and clarify the Beta cartel rules. Once the actual simulation portion of the class begins, you must adhere to them as best you can, adlibbing and compensating when you are not sure, so that the simulation runs as smoothly as possible without interruptions. Once the interactions with the other culture commence, it is absolutely forbidden to discuss, give advice, or answer questions about the Beta trading habits. Outsiders must learn by observation and interaction alone, not through explicit instruction. (The way we learn about other cultures in real life.)

III. Pass out game cards and explain the coding system

The aim of the trading game:
Each trader has a stack of ten trading cards.
Notice that the cards come in six different colors.
Each card has many numbers on it, but the only ones that are important are the ones in the corners of the cards.
The corners are numbered from 1 through 7.
If you can collect seven cards with the numbers 1-7 in any one color, it’s like a straight flush in poker.
At the end of each trading session, each straight flush can be turned in to the banker for a payoff of $100 beta dollars.
At the end of the simulation it will be the person who collected the most sets of 7-card sequences who is declared the most successful trader, and who will win the reward.

Trading procedures:
The trading procedure is basically the same as any trading situation, you ask people for the card you want and you offer them a trade in return. For example you might come up to a person and say “I want a blue 3” while holding up a yellow 7, meaning, “I’m willing to give you this yellow 7 for a blue 3.” They might accept this offer, in which case you exchange cards, or they might make a counter offer by saying no, and holding up another card that they are willing to trade.

So, hold up the card you are willing to give away, and ask for the card you want.
The only hitch is that all trading must be done in the Beta Trading Language.

IV. Use BaFa BaFa CD to review Beta language and to learn trading game.

Let’s go over the Beta Language again - pay serious attention this time. [Play CD]

To recap: there are six colors,
Ba means blue in Beta language, as does Be, Bi, Bo and Bu.
Ra means red, as does Re, Ri, Ro and Ru
White = Wa, or We, or Wi, or Wo, or Wu
Orange = Oh – that’s it, only Oh.
Green = Ga, or Ge, Gi, Go, Gu
Yellow = Ya, or Ye, Yi, Yo, Yu

There are seven numbers, 1-7. These are designated by the number of syllables that you repeat, not by the sound of the word that you say. The man who created this language had the initials, BF, and thus the name of the game, Bafa, BaFa. (which means 4, by the way.)

1 = Ba
2 = BaFa
3 = BaFa Ba
4 = BaFa BaFa
5 = BaFa BaFa, Ba
6 = BaFa BaFa, BaFa
7 = BaFa BaFa, BaFa Ba

You could use his vocabulary, but if each of us did that the Beta language would be fairly easy to decipher. By switching to our own initials, the language sounds much more complex to outsiders.

V. Practice trading

So, take your trading cards out of your envelopes now and practice trading among yourselves, using the Beta Vocabulary for numbers and colors. Remember that no other language is allowed. If someone speaks English to you, you must not trade with them. Ignore them and walk away to find a more suitable trading partner.

[After ten minutes or so, interrupt the trading to re-introduce the approved gestures.]

The Beta trading procedures allow for the use of certain gestures.
If you would like to indicate ‘yes’ touch your chin to your chest, and for ‘no’ raise both elbows sharply and let your hands hang loosely.

You can indicate ‘say again’ or ‘repeat what you have just said’ by shaking an open hand rapidly back and forth.

If you would like to request more than one card in the game, pump your forearm as many times as the cards you would like to trade.

Continue to practice trading.

VI. Designate one cartel to be the first to travel to Alpha Culture
   (observers only)

[Facilitator asks one group to volunteer to be the first to visit the other culture.]

During the trading portion of our next meeting (group name) will be visiting the Alpha culture. This is a reconnaissance mission only. Our members will be observing life in the Alpha world and returning here to report their observations to the rest of us. Likewise, a group of Alphan’s will be visiting us here while the trading floor is open. You are not to interact with them in any way. Just go about your trading business as if they were not present. I remind you to take special care when the visitors arrive to use only the Beta language while trading. The use of English, or any commonly understood sign language would result in decreased trading success in the future.

VII. Homework assignment
Lesson Plan for Alpha Day 4: Third meeting of Alpha Culture

I. Set the Stage.

II. Field questions about earlier meetings.

III. Prepare the first family for their visit to the Beta culture.

“Today one of our families will be taking a trip to observe the other cultural group in our simulation. When you arrive, the Betans will be going about their daily business as usual. You will be present strictly as silent observers. You must not interact with members of the Beta culture in any way. You will have about twenty minutes to pay close attention to the Betan cultural practices. At then at the end of this time, you will return home to give a full report on all that you have observed.”

IV. Discuss how to deal with the outsiders who will be observing us today.

“Just as members of our group will be visiting the Betans, the Betans will be sending a group to observe us. Today only, do not interact with these visitors in any way. They are here only to observe. It is very important that we do not discuss the rules of Alpha culture in front of them – even among ourselves – the rules must be learned through observation, trial and error. Just go about your business, enjoying life in the Alpha tradition.

In the future, outsiders will be dealt with in exactly the way that we deal with Alphans who don’t observe the rules.

All people are treated with kindness, no matter how they behave.

If a person breaks into a conversation before being invited or address a “treasured one” without permission, simply smile at them and then ignore their presence.

If a person is too aggressive or too concerned with winning in the Alpha game, smile and show them a face card.

If a person appears to place excessive value on money, or attempts to hoard too much money for themselves, give them all of the money you have in your hand to demonstrate how worthless it is.

If they seem unable to learn the rules of Alpha society, be sure and sign their cards with numbers instead of your initials in order to signal other Alphans that this person needs to learn the rules.”
V. Send the matriarch’s family off to observe Beta culture

[The first family (the one with the matriarch in it) is launched off to the land of Beta. They are instructed to observe only – not to interact in any way with the Betans. They should return to Alpha territory for the last 15 minutes and give a brief report on what they observed.]

VI. Practice Alpha culture for about 30 minutes.

Beta observers will be present for most of this time.

VII. Ask the Beta visitors to leave.

Alpha first family returns and reports on Beta culture.

[Allow members of the first family time to tell about their visit to Beta, and to give their interpretations of Beta behavior. This should lead naturally into questions and answers, but if it does not encourage conversation by asking open-ended questions.]

VIII. Choose a second family to travel to Beta land next Tuesday.

IX. Homework:
Lesson Plan for Beta Day 4: Third meeting of Beta Culture

I. Set the stage.

II. Field questions on class structure and last week’s class

III. Introduce the day’s activities

“Today we will be trading in earnest. All completed transactions will be recorded in the official ledger to be reconciled at the end of the simulation. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on April 24th. You will be competing in two different but inter-related categories. Awards will be given to the single individual and to the two runner-ups who have the highest accumulated earnings overall. Awards will also be given to each member of the team that accumulates the largest combined wealth. You can see that it is very possible, probable even, that one person can win in both categories.”

IV. Prepare the first cartel for their visit to the Alpha culture.

“Today one of our trading cartels will be going on a business trip - to observe the trading practices of the Alphans, the other cultural group in our simulation. When you arrive, the Alphans will be going about their daily business as usual. Our Beta representatives will be present strictly as silent observers. You must not interact with members of the Alpha culture in any way. You will have about twenty minutes to pay close attention to the Alphan trading practices. At the end of this time, you will return home to give a full report on all that you have observed.”

V. Discuss how to deal with the outsiders who will be observing us today.

“Just as members of our group will be visiting the Alphans, the Alphans will be sending a group to observe us. Today only, do not interact with these visitors in any way. They are here only to observe. It is very important that we do not discuss the rules of Beta Business transactions in front of them. The rules must be learned through observation, trial and error. Just go about your business, taking part in Beta business as usual.

In the future, outsiders will be dealt with in exactly the same way that we deal with Betans with whom we are doing business. When the rules of trade are being observed, we trade with them as usual. When the rules are not being observed, the same sanctions that we apply to each other should be enforced with the Aphan traders.

Remember, all traders must be treated equally and fairly.
Lying, cheating, stealing, or any other form of dishonesty is never practiced nor tolerated.

Always do your best. Try your hardest to win in each and every trade. Straightforward competition is respected as the highest and best means of achieving both your personal financial goals and those of your trading cartel.

It is most important that you remember that all trading must be accomplished using the Beta language and the Beta hand signals. No other language, English for example, may be used. Should anyone attempt to speak to you in anything but Beta during the trading period, you should not engage in conversation with them at all, but walk away and trade with others who are speaking Beta.

If a person you are trading with does not seem to care whether or not they win, or appears not to be taking the game seriously, you should refuse to trade with them.”

VI. Send one cartel off to observe Alpha culture

“Today we send our first envoy of traders to visit a foreign market. This is strictly an exploratory venture. Those of you who go will not be trading with the locals at all today, but will observe and try to learn as much about the local trading system as they can and report back to the rest of us.”

VII. Ring the bell to signal that the trading session is open.

[Practice Trading for about 30 minutes –Alpha observers will be present for most of this time.]

VIII. Ask the Alpha visitors to leave.

IX. The Betans who were away return and report on Alpha culture.

[Allow members of the recon group to report on their observations of Alpha Culture, and to give their interpretations of Alpha behavior. This should lead naturally into questions and answers, but if it does not, encourage conversation by asking open-ended questions about their trip to Alpha.]

X. Choose a second group of traders to travel to Alpha next Tuesday.

XI. Homework:
Lesson Plan for Alpha Day 5: Fourth meeting of Alpha Culture

I. Set the stage:

II. Field questions about earlier meetings.

III. Prepare a family for their visit to the Beta culture.

“Today the __________ family will be taking a trip to interact with the other cultural group in our simulation. When you arrive, the Betans will be going about their daily business as usual. Your job is to try and interact and take part in the daily life of Beta as best you can. Upon arrival you will be given a small package containing the artifacts you will need to participate in Beta activities. You will have about twenty minutes to join in. Please pay close attention to the similarities and differences among the two cultures. At then the end of this time, you will return home to give a full report on all that you have observed.”

IV. Discuss how to deal with the outsiders who will be observing us today.

“Just as members of our group will be visiting the Betans, the Betans will be sending a group to observe us. Unlike last week, when the Betans were here as observers, this week they will be joining us in our daily activities. Remember: outsiders are to be treated kindly no matter how they behave. But when they do not conform to acceptable Alpha behaviors, they are dealt with in exactly the way that we deal with Alphans who don’t observe the rules.

If they break into a conversation before being invited or address a “treasured one” without permission, simply smile at them and then ignore their presence.

If they are overly aggressive, or overly concerned with winning in the Alpha game, smile and show them a face card.

If they appear to place excessive value on money, or attempt to hoard too much money for themselves, give them all of the money you have in your hand to demonstrate how worthless it is.

If they seem unwilling or unable to learn the ways of Alpha society, be sure and sign their cards with numbers instead of your initials in order to signal other Alphans that these people need help learning the rules.

V. Launch second group (first interactive group) of visitors.
During the travel time, the stationary families meet briefly and discuss each other’s notes from last week. When visitors arrive the games begin.

Facilitator greets visitors from Beta and gives each one a set of playing cards, a few coins and an Alpha Card.

[Note: The facilitator should just hand a few uncounted coins to each visitor so that they each get a different number to start with. When the visit is over, each visitor will cash in whatever coins she has at the end for credit that will be redeemed back in her culture for Beta Dollars. Just write on their Alpha Card, the number of Alpha coins you took from each visitor, and let them take their Alpha Card with them when they leave.]

[Carry on with the Alpha game, being as tolerant as possible of the Betas without relaxing any of the important Alpha social rules.]

VI. Dismiss Beta visitors.

[When the time is up, ask the Beta visitors to leave.]

VII. Allow time for visiting family to report back on their experiences.

[When the visiting family returns encourage them to talk with the group about their experiences in Beta territory.]

Homework:
Lesson Plan for Beta Day 5: Fourth meeting of Beta Culture

I. Set the stage.

II. Field questions on class structure and last week’s class

III. Prepare second trading company for their visit to Alpha.

IV. Discuss how to deal with the outsiders who will be visiting Beta today.

“Just as members of our group will be visiting the Alphans, the Alphans will be sending a group to observe us. Unlike last week, when the Alphans were here as observers, this week they will be actively trading with us.”

“It is rumored that the foreigners have many valuable resources, so you will probably want to trade with them. If you do they will likely try to speak to you in English. Remember, however, that Beta is the trading language and no other language can be spoken while trading. You can speak to them in sign language, however, and your are likely to be surprised at how easily you will be able to communicate with them. You cannot teach them Beta language. They must learn by listening and observing.”

“Remember, outsiders are to be treated kindly and respectfully no matter how they behave. But when they do not conform to acceptable Alpha behaviors, they are dealt with in exactly the way that we deal with Alphans who don’t observe the rules.”

“Foreigners should not ask about the rules of trading, the language, or any other part of the culture. If they do, you should not answer them.”

V. Send second cartel off to trade with Alpha.

“Today we send our second envoy of traders to visit a foreign market.”

“Unlike the team who visited last week, you will be actively participating in Alpha business transactions. This won’t be easy since their practices are completely different from ours. You must carefully observe Alpha customs and attempt to take part in as much of Alpha life as possible. Any money that you earn in Alpha can be exchanged for Beta dollars and applied to your Beta net worth.”

VI. Ring the bell to signal that the trading session is open.
“Remember, today’s trading counts! All completed ventures will be recorded in the official ledger to be reconciled at the end of the simulation. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on April 24th.”

[The Trading floor should remain open for about 30 minutes –Alphans will be present for most of this time and will be trying to engage in Beta trading as well.]

VII. Ask the Alpha visitors to leave.

VIII. The Betans who were away return and report on Alpha culture.

[Allow members of the recon group to report on their observations of Alpha Culture, and to give their interpretations of Alpha behavior. This should lead naturally into questions and answers, but if it does not, encourage conversation by asking open-ended questions about their trip to Alpha.]

IX. Choose a second group of traders to travel to Alpha next Tuesday.

Homework:
Lesson Plans for Alpha and Beta Day 6: Same as day 5 with homework assignment update

Lesson Plan for Alpha and Beta Day 7: Same as day 5 and 6 with homework assignment update and planning for feast day

Alpha: Plan for Feast Day to be celebrated at next class meeting.

“Thursday marks the end of the simulation portion of our class and will be the last time the _____________ Clan meets separately from the rest of the class. We invite you to plan a celebration that exemplifies __________ culture as it has emerged in our group. You can bring in music, dance, stories, arts and crafts, games, and lots of food…anything you like as long as it is somehow in keeping with the spirit of the clan.”

[Leave ten minutes or so at the end of class for party planning. Facilitator should volunteer to bring whatever foods the students suggest, and encourage them to bring in their favorites as well if possible.]

Beta: Announce Thursday’s Awards Ceremony

“Thursday will be the last day of the simulation portion of this class and the last day that the two groups will meet separately from each other. Today is the last day of trading, and therefore the last day for you to increase your personal wealth and add to the wealth of your cartel. The final awards ceremony will be held during Thursday’s class. At that time the highest earners will be announced and prizes will be awarded for their achievements.”
APPENDIX F: Recap of Simulation

The Simulation Days in Brief:

April 1: Day One - The Introduction

Students were told that they would be participating in a project that was experimental on many interacting levels. They were given a brief overview of the schedule of events, randomly assigned to one of two groups, given instructions for submitting their field notes, the location of their next class meeting, and dismissed. For a few minutes more than half of the students just sat at their desks, looking at us expectantly – as if they believed there must be more to follow. The first batch of field notes, based on this brief introduction, revealed that they were simply baffled, too confused to even formulate questions.

Surprise of the day: No one dropped the class. If nothing else, we had tweaked their curiosity.

April 3: Day Two – Enculturation Begins

Members of the Alpha group entered a casual homey atmosphere, and were greeted warmly by “Mother Rachel”, who served toasted raisin bread and apple juice. They learned that theirs was a wealthy, matriarchal society that treasured its ancestors, camaraderie, generosity, and peaceful collaborative solutions to common problems. Alphans listened to an oral rendition of their clan legend, “Stone Soup” and learned the insiders’ rules for interacting with each other and for playing the game that represented the “work” of Alpha Culture.

The Beta Group, entered a “business meeting” conducted by Mrs. Wilson, the “banker”. Beta participants were treated with professional courtesy, issued name tags, and seated around a large conference table. They learned that theirs was a society of highly competitive traders where honesty, accountability, fair play, and personal achievement, were valued above all else. Students were asked to read a short “history” of their group (presented on the back of a “banking brochure”) which was based loosely on the New Testament “Parable of the Talents”. They were introduced to the rules of trade, which included a special language that was to be used when the trading was in session.

Surprise of the day: Cartel member MH writes in his field notes, “I think Country Incorporated is the best group because we have the most white people, and white people are more outgoing than other races. This should give us an edge.”
April 8: Day Three – Different Mindsets

This day was planned as an opportunity for the students to practice being members of their assigned groups, and in doing so begin to create their own cultures. Alphans, now called the USS Clan, ate and drank, played their card game, talked among themselves about their grandmothers, and got to know each other better. The USS group worked on small craft projects, creating artifacts that exemplified the values of their clan. Symbols from nature, like the sun and a maple leaf, were common themes in the drawings and on the articles of jewelry the clan members produced. The general mood of the day was relaxed and comfortable.

Betans, who had adopted the name “The Fair Trade Cartel”, learned there would be rewards at the end of the simulation for the most successful traders. Because of this, they were industriously engaged in learning the rules of exchange and the Beta trading language, which included words for colors and numbers, as well as a few quite silly hand and body gestures. During the practice session many of the traders became frustrated and resorted to speaking English (which was not allowed) or using forbidden gestures, like head nodding. This angered those who were trying to comply with the rules, and noises were made about instigating some sort of sanctions against those who broke them.

Surprise of the day: In comparing notes after class, Rachel and I noted that while more than a third of the USS group had been absent or tardy, all of the Traders had come to class and only one had been late (3 min,).

April 10: Day Four – The First Cross-cultural Encounter

Today USS Clan members shared small artifacts that some had brought from home, introducing them as objects they believed embodied attributes of USS culture. One student brought a Michael Jackson CD and choreographed a dance to “Beat It”. They worked at being polite, which meant following the rules about how to treat each other and in particular, about how to interact with the “chosen ones”. They played their card game, and, true to the spirit of their ancestors, winning was not as important as being kind to their opponents. Likewise, no special value was placed on the clan fortune, which was spilled out on a central table for all to use as they saw fit. The money was never hoarded by one person, but offered freely without regard for one’s personal wealth.

Fair Trade Cartel members arrived at their classroom to find the banker ready with a large metal cashbox. She gave each player an initial stake of $200 (monopoly dollars) with which to begin the day’s trading. The introduction of “real” money into the game upped the players’ emotional engagement considerably. Trading that had been animated and conscientious the day before, now became frenzied. The politeness
of earlier days all but vanished, and alliances within the small trading groups strengthened.

About half-way through the class, envoys of five students from each of the groups were sent to observe “daily life” in the foreigners’ culture. Hosts and visitors alike were instructed to have no interactions at all with the “others”. After fifteen minutes, each group of visitors returned to their home culture to report on their findings.

The USS travelers reported feeling “like total outsiders” and “without a clue” as to what was going on in the Fair Trade Cartel. One student thought the Traders seemed “cold and distracted” and another felt “completely ostracized” by them.

Cartel visitors to the USS Clan had quite different things to say. They reported that “We have them all figured out!”, that they are “simple”, “immature” and “primitive”. Among members of the Cartel it was agreed that the use of the words “grandma” and “soup” must be part of some secret language or code – much like the Beta trading language – and that “grandma” held some special significance.

These responses were confirmed by the field notes of those who acted as hosts. USS hosts reported being “sad” or frustrated about not being able to interact with the Trading visitors, “because we wanted to make them feel welcome”. Many of the hosts in the Fair Trade Cartel did not mention the USS visitors at all, and if they did, it was to say that “we ignored them” or that they had just “gotten in the way of our trades”.

Surprise of the day: In the final minutes of the session, Tim was showing off a coin to fellow Cartel members that he had stolen during his visit to USS, while Clan member Marina quietly told her group, “I don’t want to get anyone in trouble, but I saw one of the Traders put some of our money in his pocket and leave with it.”

April 15:  Day Five - Us and Them

In their business meeting the Cartel discussed what to do about the Country Inc. Trader who had stolen from the USS Clan. One of his colleagues spoke on his behalf and a lengthy debate occurred. He got off with a reprimand and the coin was confiscated.

A second group of visitors was exchanged, but this time each one was given a bag with some of the currency and playing cards used by their host culture. No instructions were offered about how to use these artifacts, but the visitors were free to interact with their hosts as best they could.

The USS Clan was much more animated today. More students arrived on time, early even, and eagerly entered into the simulation. Some discussion ensued about what to do with the Beta money that the travelers had returned with last week. Someone suggested that it be used to make jewelry – and so it was. It was colored with markers, folded into rings, twisted in tied into bracelets and necklaces, and used as feathers in head-dresses. When the Traders arrived everyone made a special effort to make them feel welcome, asking them about their grandmothers and generally making
nice. The Trader visitors were intent on playing the Clan’s game, and on winning as much of the Clan money as possible. Clan members gave their money away freely – a big surprise to the Traders.

In Fair Trade territory emotions were running high. While playing the game last week it had become clear that certain necessary cards were extremely scarce and the competition for them was heating up. Some Traders were suspected of cheating, and in the class discussion it was decided that some sort of penalty was necessary. The problem was that Beta language had no vocabulary with which to accuse another of not playing fair, and English was not allowed on the exchange floor.

When the Clan visitors arrived it was discovered that they were in possession of the coveted scarce playing cards. Traders aggressively attempted to trade with the visitors, who were highly intimidated and clustered together in one corner of the room. Occasionally a Clan visitor would venture into the fray and try to strike up a conversation with a Trader. “How is your grandmother?” The trader would bark something back in trading language, like YO! DaWa DaWa! (I want a yellow four!). When the Clan visitor, who had no clue about what was being said, did not immediately respond, the Trader would hurry off to look for his card in someone else’s hand.

The visiting USS citizens returned to their home base quite discouraged. They really did not like visiting the Cartel. Likewise, their comrades did not enjoy entertaining the “rude” Cartel visitors.

Surprise of the day: In what appeared to be an act of aggression, the Traders unanimously decided to use the word “GRANDMA” as a way to announce that someone had broken the rules. (To accuse someone of cheating during the trading session, they would point at them and yell “GRANDMA”!)

April 17: Day Six – Leaks and Lies

The Saphire Trading group visited the USS clan. While playing the USS card game with the Sun Family, Trader Lauren began a “friendly” but relentless campaign to uncover as much insider knowledge about the Clan as she could. Clan member, Briana, despite repeated instructions never to reveal such information, happily answered all of Lauren’s questions – and even offered some additional unsolicited information. Nearby clan-members, overhearing snippets of the conversation, tried to interfere, but not before irreparable damage was done.

The clan-members who visited the Trading Cartel came away feeling frustrated about how impenetrable the foreign culture seemed to be, and like they had been exploited in the trading game.

Field notes from both cultures told the same story – virtually all of the “secret” USS Clan information had been leaked to the Fair Trade Cartel. I called an emergency meeting with Mike and Rachel to try and salvage the simulation – and my research project! We decided to take a day off from the inter-group activities to give the USS Clan time to address the problem.
Surprise of the day: Joy, a member of the Saphire Trading group who visited the USS Clan today, asked that her field notes be kept confidential as she had things to say that she did not want other members in her group to hear. It seems that while returning from their visit, the Saphire group had huddled in the stairwell between floors and agreed to distort parts of the information they had acquired about USS in their report back to the larger Cartel. They hoped that this would give the Saphire group a distinct edge in future cross-culture interactions.

April 22: Day Seven – A Hurricane Strikes

When the Cartel visitors (The Bella Trading Group) entered Clan territory, they found the room empty except for Professor Mike who appeared to be just as baffled as the students were. He pointed out a hand-drawn picture (a tropical island scene) that had been taped to the front door and mused with the Trading group about what could have happened to the Clan. The Bella group returned home to find other members of the Cartel just as confused, because the expected visitors had not arrived - which meant their profits for the day were meager at best. In the discussion that followed many ideas were thrown around about what might have caused the exodus – the most widely accepted was that we (the Cartel) had offended the Clan with our blatant negative use of the word Grandma and our overly aggressive trading.

In another building on campus the Clan was circling their wagons. The requisite recriminations were brief and kind. It was quickly decided that some of the Clan practices should be changed and made less transparent, but that the overall mentality (community spirit/kindness) must be maintained. The rest of the period was spent devising new games and new ways of communicating that could be implemented in time for the next meeting.

Surprise of the day: Some of the Bella group members returned to the Cartel – furiously angry! They did not know (or seem to care) what had happened, but they had lost their only opportunity to exploit the natives, severely hindering their chance of success in the group competition.

April 24: Day Eight – The Reunion

The USS clan members arrived with renewed spirit. They had spent the interim days scheming and planning and were now ready to face the Cartel as a more cohesive and prepared collective. The Cartel was fractured and weakened. Many of them wanted to find ways to make nice with the foreigners (if the Clan showed up, that is - no one was sure). But others, mainly those who had lost out on trading opportunities, felt the need to redouble their efforts to earn as much money as possible in the days that remained.
The Clan did show up, and the trading happened, but everything was a little out of sync and unsettled. There were distinct shifts in the demeanors of both groups. Clan members were wary and protective. Traders were tentative and, maybe, a little more observant and thoughtful.

Surprise of the day: In their field notes several Cartel members report they are growing increasingly uncomfortable with the aggressive exploitation of the Clan. Just as many of them report a growing disdain for the Clan – seeing them as “…spoiled, because they don’t need to work for their money. Everything is just handed to them.”

April 29:  **Day Nine - Struggling with the Right and Wrong of it All**

This day was an add-on to the simulation – arranged for the most part because the Country Inc. Trading group aggressively lobbied for it to happen. They had been the first group to travel into Clan territory, the group who was not allowed to interact with the locals. Country Inc. was angry because this left them with no opportunity to trade in foreign currency and put them considerably behind in earnings. So we carried on for one more day, which seemed fairly even-keel and uneventful.

Surprise of the day: The Field notes were some of the most thoughtful of the simulation. The students took this opportunity to muse about the moral dilemmas we face when dealing with those from other cultures.

**May 1:  Day Ten – The (separate) Celebrations**

The Clan creates a festival of crafts, song and dance, and food.

The Cartel has an awards ceremony followed by competitive “team-building” and “ice-breaking” activities.

**The students were given this day off from writing field notes.**
REFERENCES


Downing Wilson, Deborah. (2004). Telling Tales: Using folk stories to investigate the role of socially constructed schemata in collective remembering. An honors thesis submitted to the University College London in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of BSc/Psych.


Sherif (1966) argued that the best way to reveal the source of people's beliefs was to look at how they interpret the changing relationships among groups. Together with his wife, Carol, Sherif spent the better part of his academic career testing this theory. The Sherifs' "Robber's Cave" experiment provoked a new interest in small group research - on the formation of in-group/out-group attitudes, on group conflict and reconciliation, and on the phenomenon of emotional investment in one's group. Their classic work has spawned a rich and varied body of literature that spans a number of disciplines from psychology, sociology and anthropology to political science, economics and game theory. (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 2010).

Fine establishes the same relationship between theory and description that Clifford Geertz (1973) does in his highly influential essay, Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.

"In ethnography, the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself —that is, about the role of culture in human life— can be expressed...The aim is to draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts; to support broad assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life by engaging them exactly with complex specifics (Geertz, 1973, p.27)."

My goals were slightly different than those of Geertz. Rather than try to make "assertions about the role of culture in the construction of collective life" I was attempting to explore the other side of the cultural coin as well; I wanted to make assertions about the role of everyday life in the construction of culture.

Tajfel's research looked at the minimal conditions necessary to provoke this three-part group identification. In experiments where division into groups was determined randomly, by a coin toss or drawing of straws for example, where no social interactions, either within or among groups was permitted, when participants had no reason to expect that they would ever interact with the others at any time in the future, and where no instrumental link between an individual's responses and their self interest existed, Tajfel's results showed a clear and consistent pattern. Subjects identified with their groups, preferring members of their own group over all others, judging them to be superior on all measures tested, and favoring them with rewards, often at their own expense. (Tajfel, Flament, Billig & Bundy, 1971; Billig & Tajfel, 1973).

Tajfel (1982) finds two characteristics of intergroup behavior particularly important. The first is that as individuals display increased in-group identification, there is a corresponding decrease in variability, or a move toward uniformity, in the attitudes and behaviors of in-group members toward members of an out-group. Tajfel's second observation is that as individuals increasingly identify with an in-group, there is a corresponding decrease in variability in the characteristics of the members of the out-group as perceived by in-group members. Moreover, as intergroup relations deteriorate, this phenomenon of "undifferentiation," depersonalization and stereotyping tends to increase in scope (Tajfel, 1982, p.13). In other words, as people come to see themselves as part of a group, they begin to think alike about members of an out-group, and they begin to think that all members in the out-group are the same. Tensions between the two groups exaggerates these tendencies. This was the case in Sherif's Robber's Cave experiment.
discussed above, and in the 1970 replication of that work done by Diab in Lebanon.

This process, which Lee Ross (1973) called the fundamental attribution error, is fairly transparent when we are evaluating our own actions. We are eager to explain our own behavior in terms of context and circumstance. I was late for class today because my alarm failed to go off, so I missed my ride and had to walk. But we are quick to apply crude generalizations when evaluating the behavior of others. You were late for class today because you are Mexican and lazy, or blonde and ditzy. When we are explaining the actions of others, we routinely place excessive emphasis on unchanging personal or group traits and too little on the particular situation. The opposite is true when we critique our own actions.

John Turner (1975), a student of Henri Tajfel's investigated groups, like those in our simulation, who compete for resources that have no value outside the context of the competition itself. He found that when competitions are institutionalized, as in groups competing to win a contest, or to achieve higher status or ranking, games become “real” to group members, commanding inordinate investments of time and energy and evoking stronger than expected emotional responses. In these circumstances realistic norms of the social situation develop as the games progress. Turner reports that game participation is not taken as seriously, nor deemed to have as “real” consequences, when players compete as individuals as it is when players compete as members of a group, even if those are nominal groups.