

HUGH P. WHITT is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is currently working in a number of areas, including social definitions of mental illness and the effects of status inconsistency. Recent or forthcoming publications are in *Social Science and Medicine*, and *Social Forces*.

THE RUSTIC AESTHETIC IN SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE:  
ACCUMULATED CEREMONY AND A CULTURAL  
MEANING OF STYLE IN RUSTIC AMERICA

Eldon R. Turner  
*University of Florida*

Mid-American Review of Sociology, 1983, Vol. VIII, No. 1:3-37

A mighty Spirit came Lately upon abundance of our people, to reform their singing which was degenerated in our Assemblies, which made a Jar in the ears of the more curious and skilful singers. . . . But who would beleeve it? Tho' in the more polite City of Boston, this Design mett with a General Acceptance, in the Countrey, where they have more of the *Rustick*, some Numbers of Elder and Angry people bore zelous Testimonies against these wicked Innovations, and this bringing in of Popery.

Cotton Mather to Thomas Hollis, Nov. 5, 1723

In writing this letter Cotton Mather described part of a sudden and very disruptive change, not just in music but in a whole culture. With his ironic description of the "Rustick" attitude, he also joined in the establishment of an "organon," a standard of taste which drew together the colonials and the metropolitans of the British empire, the English. These changes and the appeal of English style have been well documented, and the existence of variety and change in fashion is clear. Yet, the cultural and social meaning of style itself has not been clear, probably because working with an aspect of life that is so open to multiple interpretations has made social scientists wary. Still, a body of theory exists which allows social scientists and historians to think about aesthetics. Using this body of theory eclectically, I attempt to understand the cultural meaning not of the "organon" that Mather helped establish, but of the rustic culture that he and others so contemptuously opposed.

Eric Gombrich, in his "In Search of Cultural History," collects a series of his longstanding theoretical questions into one central question: how can scholars get at cultural history? Acknowledging advances in social history, Gombrich accepts the value of demographic analyses and the recent discoveries about changes in social organization. Cultural analysts must use them as they come to hand. Nevertheless, he notes, cultural history must still depend on an impression of interactions, "resonances," which show how "forms, symbols and words become charged with what might be called cultural meaning" (Gombrich, 1979:25-50, 55).

Cultural meaning was formerly explained both through the comparison of form and syntactical references.<sup>1</sup> Now, however, this combination has largely ceased to yield insights. It has been successfully charged with elitism and with ahistorical bias. Accordingly, intellectual historians have moved to social history and have separated themselves from cultural forms. Their new concern is the relation between texts and "inarticulate" lives (Adams, 1981:261; Higham and Conkin, 1979:Introduction; Bouwsma, 1981:283-288).

Their findings have been useful and interesting, yet, they stint the artistic identification of groups; that is, they pay scant attention to the stylistic markers for personal and group identification. Gombrich's "resonances" disappear as the social and intellectual historians fit together text and kinship networks, patterns of ownership, length of life, child rearing and so forth. Even so, these items of social information may provoke new insights into cultural and intellectual meaning by allowing historians and social scientists to reinterpret texts that were formerly the source of the history of ideas. In this present instance, for example, discoveries of demographic and economic pressures have helped create a new vision of the New England farmers, now "peasants," and have thus provided a new perspective on the farmers' vision of their world.<sup>2</sup> An extension of Gombrich's question as it might be related to this group is: what did an aesthetic mean to these American peasants?

Karl Mannheim's statement helps create an adequate perspective. Having acknowledged the existence of systematic and

logically consistent surveys of the history of style, of artists, and so forth, Mannheim suggests a look at "certain experiential wholes."

Within the history of style, for instance, we have certain analytical tools which enable us to say *how* style changes; but if we want to account for the *cause* of the change, we must go beyond the history of style as such and invoke some such concept as the 'art motive' . . . as the factor the mutations of which explain the changes in style. And in trying to elucidate in turn the causes of the mutations of the art motive, we must make reference to even more fundamental factors (Mannheim, 1971:11).

Even though my interest is in the resistance to change, Mannheim's concept of experiential wholes, of which style is one component, is important. Most often, he suggests, such concepts have found expression in the "history of ideas." Yet, he notes, they should be extended to "cultural studies" and would thus require students of culture to bring together "these various strata of cultural life in relation to each other," and to penetrate "to the most fundamental totality in terms of which the interconnectedness of the various branches of cultural studies can be understood" (Mannheim, 1971:11).<sup>3</sup>

Although Gombrich believes that the aesthetician studies the high culture as a matter of duty, he nevertheless stresses just what Mannheim clearly depicts: discursive utterances are only part of the socially relevant "intellectual" ordering of the world. Non-rational utterances, acting to accumulate the marks of style, can be studied. Thus, from my perspective, the methodological foci have obscured a more influential role for aesthetics, the ceremonial role, which is opposed to the dynamics of fashion and is constantly uttering the importance of both an aesthetic and the ceremonies that it accompanies. *An* aesthetic, then, becomes accumulated ceremonies. This is the idea that underlies the following discussion.<sup>4</sup>

With this theoretical approach set out, I want to discuss one instance in which aesthetics seems to emerge into more than a secondary or supporting role to economic and political

relationships. The rustic aesthetic has persisted and, I think, has helped *mold* rustic culture and society.<sup>5</sup>

## I

In a sense, the culture that I write about is the perpetual antagonist of the "art motive" of the age. It was originally defined textually and stylistically not by its own proponents but by the proponents of change who saw in an art mutation a superior culture and social position. These people identified and described what they called the "rustics." Indeed, the scope of this change and the failure of some people to accept it provoked great tension because the change was not just in artifacts but in the dominant aesthetic itself. That is, the change and the social response to it were related to the appeal of and revulsion from space and texture and to the avoidance and acceptance of line, or of time, as an aesthetic pattern. In the older artifacts, space and matter interpenetrated, and the absence of clear line or the definition of matter as matter predominated. Hence, this aesthetic was florid and spatial with an indeterminate border between space and matter (space and time in music). In material culture it displayed the active or busy and irregular protrusion of matter into space, hence, "movement" and texture in the artifacts. I think that music as an artifact of mind and emotion is a key indicator of this aesthetic; thus, I will be writing a good deal about music, but I will also raise some questions about this old style in art and artifacts. Let me set out briefly the scope of the change.<sup>6</sup>

Between about 1690 and 1750, in Virginia, South Carolina, and Massachusetts, colonials began to accept a new style of architecture, decoration, furniture, and costume. Their architecture changed from the medieval and baroque, and they began to live with mixed forms. Finally, they came to prefer the smoothly plastered and plain interiors with painted walls, the balanced and spatially plain exteriors, and the definitive contours of the early Georgian period. They thus followed the dynamic of a style that they imported from England, and they

moved away from the old style that they had adapted from seventeenth-century rural England (Miner, 1977:18-19, 22, 36).

But the old style remained. It is interesting because it came to be regarded as old-fashioned during this period. Those who preferred it accepted a florid design without clear lines in structure and decoration. Exposed beams, rough plastered and unpainted timbered walls with carving on exposed wood—lambs' tongue, vines, tendrils and other stylized symbolic holdovers from Europe—worked to provide the desired "movement" in this style. When occupants could not afford the carving, they often turned to the adze marks or decorative studs and other rough finishing to give the requisite textures. Indeed, these people watched the world through diamond paned leaded windows and moved in and out of their houses through doors that they decorated with textured iron and brass studs. They continued this extravagant motif in the exteriors of their houses where they adopted pilastered chimneys with their non-functional layers of brick, the overhang of the second story, drops and other architectural remnants. In addition, they also covered these external decorations with carving in the same motif that they used in their interiors. Overall, this style lent texture to the home and fit the open display of utensils—tongs, toasters, ironware, and other articles of daily use (Miner, 1977:17-22).

In furniture the colonials accepted a similar change. About 1700 they began to accept the smooth line and the definite contour of the Queen Anne highboys, chests of drawers, chairs, and so forth. Moreover, they came to prefer a satiny laquered "Chinese" finish with figures, fruits, and animals done in earth tones—golds and browns especially—and set off with small pulls and other brass accompaniments. Their new preference for pieces with specific functions set aside the old-fashioned chest and court cupboard and left the ornamented "turned" chairs mere curiosity pieces (Lyon, 1977:22-23, 34, 83, 139-145).<sup>7</sup>

In costume, those who preferred the new style chose a clear outline for their person and chose it in subdued colors, an elegant simplicity in the long coat and vest for men or the square bodice and plain shift and clearly molded skirt for women.

But change in costume came more slowly in rural areas. Accordingly, rural people retained an attachment to elaborate embroidery—flowers, vines, tendrils and so forth, and, in a degree, to the slashed-sleeve, beribboned outline with falling lace at cuff and sleeve and the fluttering movement of ribbons for men and women alike. Such clothing gave the effect of obscuring the personal outline, allowing the individual through costume to merge with space (McClellen, 1977:339-377).

Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gravestone carving presents a component of culture that was similar to furniture and costume. By about 1730 the people who chose the new style chose an individuated figure, even an impression of the actual face of the deceased, and discarded the abstract and symbolic art of the older period. Yet the people of Plymouth and Connecticut and other rural areas persisted in their choice of the symbolic carving. Their gravestones continued to exhibit the ascending souls and descending spirits, the wavy lines and rosettes along with vines and other decorative items that reflected the motifs in wood carving. These decorations gave movement to the stones both in the stylistic sense and in the symbolic and intellectual sense. Symbolically, these stones drew together the large textual corpus that historians have come to call the jeremiad. Thus, the continued preference for old-fashioned carving suggests that the rustics continued to live in the symbolic world of seventeenth-century religion. Parochialized, these symbols supported New England's special redemptive rôle in cosmic history along with the ceremonial displays that accompanied it (Tashjian and Tashjian, 1974:57-58). Indeed, this religious vision included not only the cosmic role but also the jeremiad itself and its allegorical promises—personal redemption, ancestor worship, and the recovery of the golden past by means of a return to old-time religion.<sup>8</sup>

Though the identification of the rustics is impossible,<sup>9</sup> an extended description of their culture is possible. Furthermore, though the material preferences are ambiguous but important, the description of rustic culture does not depend on them alone. Elite ministers tried to reform the psalmody among the New Englanders, met resistance, and left a record which clearly

shows that this reform and antagonism to it were aesthetic and social. In addition, the elite reports allow the reconstruction of the aesthetic and provide insight into the “resonances” between the old-fashioned style and political, social, economic, and religious preferences.

How does the old-fashioned music fit the culture? Descriptions reveal that it was spatial in two ways. First, it displayed an almost tactile harshness in the voices. Along with the harsh tone, it emphasized dissonances and odd musical intervals. Second, it was unruly. It was painfully slow and utterly without rhythm. Furthermore, it supported various tempi in the same phrase and allowed singers to substitute one musical phrase for another. Thus, the old-style singers interchanged tunes and used improvisation and musical embroidery instead of particular musical phrases. In short, the contour or line of the tunes was irregular, decorated with spatial and non-linear or untimely musical qualities: harshness, graced phrases, and a disregard for regular time. When comparing this spatial style with the old styles in furnishings, clothing, architecture, and funerary art, they have in common a preference for the indeterminate border, the interpenetration of matter and space in material artifacts, of space and time in music.<sup>10</sup>

This spatial preference was important in another way, also. Those who chose the culture of smooth contours were carriers of the “art motive”—dynamic, socially superior, and sophisticated. In addition to the musical reform, they proposed other reforms, especially religious reforms that streamlined religious ceremonies and shut out old rituals. In this way they deprived the rustics of familiar ceremonies. Moreover, they attacked the rustics for believing in superstitions and equated the rustics' defense of old-fashioned song with wrong logic and “frivolous” beliefs. Thus, they created an embattled minority that felt itself pressed to give up its style, its ceremonies, and its unseen world of spirits. Here, too, the cultural and aesthetic correspondence seems clear. Literally, the space that the rustics saw and sang was not empty. It was the place of unseen spirit and was filled with good and bad angels. It harbored ghosts. It promoted uncontrollable magic (Butler, 1979:318). Thus, as

a result of the enspirited antagonism that the anti-reformers displayed, elite critics saw the rustics pursuing an out-dated and disgusting aesthetic and also making "superstitious" personal and ceremonial choices. These choices made the rustics near outcasts from their own religion.

As I read it, then, this aesthetic, the interpenetration of space and matter or time, is the chief marker for the rustics' cultural and social life. Hence, the spiritualized world of the early eighteenth-century peasantry diverged from the dynamic borning world of the Enlightenment which was material, linear (timely), and "scientific."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, my thesis in Part II is that the aesthetic in various forms influenced rustic choices not only in art but also in social, political, and economic matters. As a result, this culture was established in America and was defined from the beginning by its antagonism to the emerging exchange orientation of the dominant culture. It has persisted with much the same effect—safeguarding ceremony. In Part III, I raise some questions about the implications of my analysis.

## II

To support this unconventional thesis, I will look more thoroughly at the eighteenth-century transition in psalmody. In this transition the aesthetic was clearly important. On it the reformers centered their attack. Rustics responded accordingly, defending the style, hence the aesthetic. As they responded, the rustics drew from the reformers the pejorative "country," which came to stand for a whole culture, from costume to institutions. More important, the mark for this term was the old-fashioned aesthetic, and the reformers, centering on psalmody, associated the aesthetic with a way of thinking and with political and social ideas.

Specific components of the rustics' musical style were grumbling, loud falsetto, screaming, howling, irregular tempi, supernumary notes, turns, frills, and an irregular entrance to and egress from the psalm tunes. It probably sounded something like the singing of the southern upland Baptists whose hymns

Alan Lomax has recorded and described. This music is "free-rhythmed antiphony." Moreover, it is ceremonial: "a leader intones to a set tune the words of the first line, leads the congregation through this line in unison, intones the next line, . . . and so on." In addition, Lomax notes a syntactical resemblance to the style by relating the text and the ceremonial aspects of the process: "The complexity of text, the rhythmic freedom, and the variation of movement from singer to singer in this lined-out style create striking and often rich heterophony . . . but because the singers pull away and constantly return to the central melodic current in deeply felt ornamental variations, great emotional tension is created, like that of a surging crowd pouring down a narrow street" (Lomax, n.d.:inner jacket).<sup>1 2</sup>

Contemporary complaints about this style were not only aesthetically judgmental but were also descriptive. For example, Nathaniel Chauncey wrote that the "quavers and semi-quavers [extra notes]," turns and frills, "belong wholly to airy and vain songs" (Hood, 1846:136). This "oral tradition" as Thomas Symmes called it, consisted of "quavering as in the singing of the mass [extended tremolo]," and disorder, jarring, irregularity, longsomeness, undulation, and clamorousness (Thatcher et al., 1723:*passim*). Thus, critics allow modern analysts to determine that this was a "folk" style an oral tradition, florid, different in performance from one congregation to another, but aesthetically uniform (Chase, 1953:29).

Reformers also made clear that this style had a political and social relevance, but this relevance has been largely disregarded. It is significant here because the reformers centered it in their aesthetic judgment. Understanding this relevance requires the statement of two facets of rustic life: first, the rustics imbued their singing with a special reverence (Hood, 1846:78), and second, they imbued their local community with the "peasant" quality of integration (Lockridge, 1970:18; Zuckerman, 1970:Introduction). In short, rustic psalmody was a bulwark in a local yet cosmic struggle between right and wrong, and right and wrong centered on the protection of the community.

In this integrated peasant vision, reformers saw a concept of power that was open to ridicule. Important in this regard was the falsetto, widely used by men in the congregations. Also important was the common assertion that women should not sing in church (Thatcher et al., 1723:6-8, 11, 13). At issue was a patriarchal vision of authority, part of the peasant vision, and a corresponding organization of the family which made the powerful father (and by descent, the male) the figure of authority. In contrast, over a number of years, reformers had proposed a shared power among the ministers, (i.e., delocalization). Indeed, they had proposed the elimination of elders from the congregations and the replacement of the fatherhood of God as the appropriate metaphor with the brotherhood of Christ (Elliott, 1975:Chap. 1). In short, the ministers proposed a broadly based professional pluralism and opposed the old patriarchal system.<sup>13</sup> Thus, contention about power appeared in the quarrel about the aesthetic of old-fashioned singing.<sup>14</sup>

Country people, however, continued to prefer patriarchy. As a consequence, the rustics saw in the reforms a "Catholic" conspiracy, and, though wrong, their reasoning was clear. Shared power among their foremost elite, the ministers, reflected hierarchical designs. Such power especially seemed ominous when they considered their military situation. They and their kind were militarily embattled as the French and Indians perpetually threatened the border of New England. French Catholics were an easy reference for any larger collective power such as that proposed by reformers from outside the local community. Thus, reformers who proposed a disciplined, smooth contour in the psalmody became "Catholic" enemies of the spiritual style as the rustics turned away from the collective "judgment of esteemed men" (Chauncey, 1728:3).

In addition to the concern about authority and style, the rustics seemed to show a concern about their economy. Rural New Englanders in the early eighteenth century lived with a chronic economic pinch. More important, farming itself was mystical. Weather was truly unpredictable. To help, the almanacs stressed the astrological method of planting. Thus, they were a magical predictor (as well as a source of mystery), and they

gave some assurance that forces in space would magically assure a good harvest (Sagendorph, 1970:42-46). Mystery was thus important to the farmers' economic plight.

Paradoxically, the rustics were equally concerned about the purity of their reformed religion. Ministers cost money, and the more exalted their ideas about themselves, the more removed from the local community, the more money they might cost. Here, of course, the problem with authority joins the economic pinch. John Wise, a spokesman for the "fraternity" of the New England churches, salted his famous and popular *Churches Quarrel Espoused* with references to the peasants' economic problems. Of the proposed associations that would join ministers together he wrote, "for there are no such great Creatures . . . [that] can fare in hard cold Countries as the *Camelion* does in warm, there must be a very great hoard to support them; and Nature does honestly Confess, she cannot answer the Bills of Fare" (Wise, 1715:60). Furthermore, Wise related this economic threat to traditional patriarchal authority and, metaphorically, to astrology. Wise's chief concern was the old sacred constitution, the Cambridge Platform. This constitution, Wise wrote, required every church to have elders. Moreover, the "standing Officers" (minister and teacher) should do their duty in local communities, not set themselves up as stars to dim the old order. Wise made some "astrological remarks" which related the combined ministers to Guy Fawkes day, and he furthered his argument by again and again asserting the validity of old ceremonies of rule.<sup>15</sup>

Social considerations were clearly based on the aesthetic and went well beyond the question of mere politics to establish a hierarchy of class. Rural congregations in New England consistently demanded what we would call "old-time" religion. In this regard, ceremony and the aesthetics of it played an important role. For example, the Puritan ceremonies of prayer, Bible reading (with comment, never without), congregational discipline, relation of salvation experience, excommunication, psalm singing, and covenant making were all important (Hembrick-Stowe, 1982:67). Such ceremonies were especially important among a religious group and in a discipline in which tendencies

toward ritual had been purposely frustrated. Indeed, Puritans scrupulously avoided the ceremonies of other Christian disciplines and affirmed the scriptural source of their own.

But during the early eighteenth century, ministers proposed reforms in Bible reading (reading without comment, "dumb reading," a "Papish" practice), the relation of experience (moving it from the public arena to the minister's study), church discipline (making the process general rather than local by referring it to ministerial councils), and, of course, psalm singing, (proposing not only a change in style but also a change from the practice of lining out, usually accomplished by a deacon). Rustics seem to have interpreted all such reforms as damaging to their spiritual lives (Youngs, 1976:72-98). More pertinent is the ministers' association of old-style singing and the social and geographical identity of the "rusticks" with the objections to all reforms.

For example, Thomas Symmes, while he positioned the rustic aesthetic and the rustics as socially inferior,<sup>16</sup> took the time to add a catalogue of fundamentally wrong-headed attitudes that the rustics inflicted on their society. Rustics were, he wrote, anti-intellectual, unwilling to give up old superstitions, bigoted, foolishly allegorical in their historical perceptions, too ceremonial in their own practices (not truly reformed), and were too suspicious of those outside their congregations (Symmes, 1721:29, 33, 35, 40, 44, 51). In accordance with the developing ideals of his own day, Symmes tried to individuate the rustics and to bring them to a "reasonable" vision. He failed, as other reformers did, not just because he heaped ridicule on them, but primarily because their whole set of beliefs supported a fundamental, cohesive, spiritualized rural peasant community. This was their society, and it was deeply ceremonial.

This social separation was real, of course, but it was also metaphorical. In their vision of themselves, the peasants displayed the same spiritual emphasis that they asserted in defense of their music and their religion. True to their parochial cosmology, they identified enemies: nefarious ministers, secretly "Catholic," whose congregational affiliation was a masquerade. From the critical view that makes this vision symbolic of the

unseen world, I read John Wise, John Higginson, and Cotton Mather (in his early career) as supporting this vision and thus eulogizing early New England's golden age when almost divine leaders promoted an authoritative and complex set of institutions or, more accurately, ceremonies. These ceremonies structured family, religion, and politics. Folk embattlement and the perception that these ceremonies were increasingly distant helped the rustics associate the ceremonies with their place in society and made the ceremonies an almost conscious "fit" for the aesthetic—rough, local, and associated with the old allegory. Here, I think, the New England peasant began the process of accumulating ceremony in artifacts, music, allegory, and a style of thinking.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly, in a cultural mosaic which included artifact, song, superstition, and parochial ceremonies, the rustics held to a textured, spiritual and mystical view of the world. Their dismay, directed at their "betters," came to center in their music and its aesthetic which was resonant of their culture. Inasmuch as the New England peasants preferred to keep their broken patterns, their irregular tempi, and their rough tonal quality, a look at their music and their defense of it is a look into the textured, ceremonial heart of rustic life.

### III

At this point I want to engage in some theorizing that may be fruitful. I think that the rustic style, with its emphasis on spirit and allegory, was and may still be the primary cultural marker in a culture that is distinct in two ways. First, it lacks the institutional divisions that sociologists and others usually associate with modern society. Hence, it operates with fewer institutional and more informal social distinctions and tends toward continuous ceremony. Second, it formalizes many relationships and processes by fitting them to the "country" style. Although this culture has shared with and mixed with the dominant exchange culture of modern society, that is, it is not "pure," it nevertheless exhibits a more, rather than less, ceremonial orientation. I want to note that this is not "folk" culture in the sense that

"folk" has been defined (Glassie, 1968:1-36), nor mountain culture, nor ethnic culture. These merely provide the best source for description. It is "rustic" culture and depends on the aesthetic for its deep appeal.<sup>18</sup>

In eighteenth-century New England, the "rustic" culture was resonant with patriarchy, local or parochial social views, and an orientation toward reality that emphasized non-corporeal experience, hence, non-rational or irrational or "paranoid" views of the world. Referred to the rustic aesthetic, such views express a ceremonial, not institutional, preference. Accordingly, symbols and texts become "charged with cultural meaning" through their relation to the aesthetic. Through them the rustics became irrationally defensive as they reacted against the substitution of institutional forms for ceremonial activity. Consequently, one important aspect of this aesthetic is the constant return to ceremony or, stated another way, the constant reiteration of spirit or mystery.

A second constant is more problematic. "Country" behavior that seems irrational from a "modern" analytical perspective may be a residue of social norms that were "rational" in an earlier age. Hence, from the perspective that social scientists usually accept, these peculiar behaviors come to be analytically defined as historical or "irrational." Accordingly, analysts look for a historical or material explanation which accommodates them. That is as it should be. Yet, even after these behaviors have been accounted for in a material and rational sense, there remain some interesting but unclear "resonances" between the behaviors and the reiteration of spirit that I have noted above. Thus, the analysis lacks the wholeness that Mannheim's "cultural studies" promises. Regarding "country" behavior, then, I think that looking for such resonances from an aesthetic perspective will contribute to an understanding of "rustic" residues in the modern world. Hence, I want to begin the formulation of some relevant questions by looking first at the reiteration of spirit in symbols, then at ceremony itself, then at music and art, then at an epistemology, and finally at institutions.

I think that the constant mystification or reiteration of spirit through symbol and metaphor has been important in rustic culture. It is not too much to suggest that the quilts and clothing, the homemade furniture and even the figurative and literal timelessness of old styles and songs have provided the country people with an aesthetically structured "spiritual" feeling for ceremony. That is, references to such items and their textures "tell" these people how the world ought to work and support their religious belief that it is *one* world, the seen and the unseen. Hence, magic and deep Christian faith merge, and even the metaphors in the artifacts support the aesthetic.<sup>19</sup> These metaphors are now devoid of their traditional symbolic meaning, yet, they are still part of the ceremonial life of the rustics and still stand for the easily identifiable rustic culture, hence, for the aesthetic. In the broadest sense of the term, are they "spiritually" desirable?

Ceremony itself reflects the aesthetic by enspiriting social relations. Popular country music performances of the late twentieth century parody the "institutional" characteristics that country people once accepted and for which they still profess a nostalgia: the extended family, isolation from formal legal authority, and codification of honorable behavior through the intervention of extra-institutional persons of wisdom. Yet, these aspects of organized life have been fiercely defended from time to time, and they still survive in the metaphorical knowledge that rustics transmit: loyalty to family, the blood feud, possession by spirits, and a host of informal rules that require behavior which is at odds with the dominant culture. To be sure, these receive support from other aspects of the culture, the code of manhood, for example, in its family utility, or the protective function of narrow political ties. Nevertheless, they encourage the complex and ceremonial aspects of life and discourage the transmission of exchange strategies in society.<sup>20</sup>

Reiteration of spirit is important in products, including music, that are themselves both ceremonial and symbolic. As I have noted, the texture in eighteenth-century psalmody seems to have reflected an attachment to the spiritual world. Like the eighteenth-century psalm singers, "folk" singers seem to prefer

the indistinctness between time and space, hence, an artistic interpenetration of space and time in their music. Syncretism, especially the melding of "folk" music and "country" instrumentation, has tamed this a good deal in the twentieth century, bringing a distinct rhythm to "country" music. This rhythm would probably have sounded wrong to old-style singers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Malone, 1968:9). Yet, the texture of the style persists, most notably in the uninstrumented hymns, but also in musical practices. For example, country singers "grace" the melody with added notes, and part of the "country" style is multiple shifts in tempo along with modulations which occur at emotional breaks in the song. Furthermore, instrumentation itself exhibits some of the aesthetic. Fiddle accompaniment is the best example of such spatial texture, of course, but even the five-string banjo with its bright sound but "melancholy phrasing" (Malone, 1968:14) lends itself to the use of tempo rather than dictation by tempo.<sup>21</sup>

Music is the most pervasive component of rustic culture, but folk art or primitive painting is also important. Even though the dominant marker for such painting is its flatness, when one looks at the paintings from the aesthetic perspective that I have suggested, they are not "flat."<sup>22</sup> Indeed, artists often include such details as clefts in the hills of a landscape or an especially florid tree. From the aesthetic perspective such details "penetrate" the flat material world and create a hidden place which produces a beckoning quality.<sup>23</sup>

This suggested aesthetic approach to rustic music and art finds an analogue in a rustic preference for anti-material, anti-scientific, and anti-rational points of view. Historical connections are clear between anti-intellectualism and an antagonism to reforms which have often been read as despiritualizing by the rustics (Hofstadter, 1963:3-141); Weller, 1965:Appendix). Time and again, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth, country people have made their defensiveness a matter of patriotic duty. They are commanded by spirit. Indeed, it is not too much to say that this anti-reform attitude has been raised to the level of an epistemology: knowledge comes from revelation *rather*

than from rationalization and science. Antagonism thus becomes an enspiriting ceremony in itself, and symbols reiterate it. "Reading" such artifacts as quilts, paintings, decorations, and so forth, suggests that they are channels for the transmission of a revealed truth—"we" are right, good, integrated, and historical while "they" are wrong, wicked, fragmented, and non-traditional.

If, as I suggest, antagonism is enspiriting in this instance, the epistemology produces a ceremonial aesthetic which is florid and complicated, tends toward isolation and, of course, reiterates the importance of spirit. In this regard, supernaturalism has been an important aspect of fundamental belief since the eighteenth century (Marsden, 1980:62-66), and, often, even if only anecdotally, the real fundamentalism of modern America seems to flourish along with superstition (Weller, 1965:131). Hence, forms of knowledge put into practice among the rustics often require the interpenetration of spirit and matter. They thus describe the aesthetic by requiring or invoking some spiritual aspect of life—religion or simple or complex superstition—to explain material problems.<sup>24</sup>

Even more interesting, this epistemology seems to derive support from the often renewed political and religious allegory that the first New Englanders established: collective renewal of commitment to the only true religion (old-style) wards off the anger of God (or the power of the Devil) and saves the nation (Bercovitch, 1978:93-175). Is there some credal aesthetic, derived from this epistemology and satisfyingly reflective of it, that persists in this combination of matter and spirit, gives the nation its' mission, and identifies the proper ceremony by matching it aesthetically with the allegory?

Finally, in actual institutional matters, there seems a continuity or recurrence in a pattern of social choices among the rustics. Aspects of this pattern are the demand for a socially tactile life, the closeness of family, extended kinship, attachment to place, and, when one moves, to the recreation of an extra-institutional network (Mayo, 1970:25-33). In conjunction with known political and social preferences among some rural people, is there here an ideology that includes a repugnance to

the rational, material, and linear exchange orientation that tends to direct family, political, and economic relations in modern society? Some of the antagonism that I suggested in discussing the epistemology and the aesthetic certainly fits this pattern, but the greater preference here would be for the mosaic of a ceremonial life as opposed to an exchange life.<sup>2 5</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In this essay I have tried to raise the possibility that through the eclectic use of sociological and anthropological theory it is possible to identify the basic marker of a "rustic" culture, to see it emerge historically, and to consider the meaning of its persistence. When I examine this culture from an integrated perspective and see it forming (or being identified and defined by an elite), I find that the marker for its integration was an aesthetic. This rustic aesthetic was described and defined with enough clarity in the early eighteenth century that it can be abstracted from its specific content: it is the interpenetration of space and matter or space and time. The aesthetic was characteristic of craft, art, and music and was reflected in rustic social and religious preferences. These "resonances" in the culture lead to the suggestion that the rustics found ceremonial supports in this aesthetic and that they preferred ceremony to broader social forms, i.e., institutions. Thus, I suggest that the rustics found in their culture an accumulation of ceremonies.

The rustic aesthetic has persisted. There are two evident characteristics of its function: the reiteration of spirit and, partly tied to this reiteration, certain behaviors which must be referred to ceremonies. From the aesthetic perspective that I advance, it is possible to raise questions about the meaning of the aesthetic in regard to symbol, ceremony, music, art, epistemology, and institutions. I hope that these questions will provoke closer examination of the processes through which this aesthetic affected the lives of the American rustics.<sup>2 6</sup>

### FOOTNOTES

1. For example, if a question about the meaning of time grew out of the elaborate and expensive clocks of the late middle ages and if scholars

could find associations in religious or social texts (a general metaphorical concern with time), then the idea of time could stand as representative of interior lives. Thus, the history of ideas and cultural history were melded into cultural and intellectual history, and the meanings of form and metaphor were drawn together.

2. Political and economic insights into the New England farmers' society, polity, and economy have been produced by a series of studies too numerous to mention here. Most notably, the introduction of the idea that these were peasants has caused rethinking (Lockridge, 1970), and the furtherance of this idea as an aspect of community in the eighteenth century, though controversial, has been influential (Zuckerman, 1970). Emory Elliott's sensitive treatment of the metaphorical transition from patriarchy to brotherhood (Elliott, 1975) is important, and Douglas R. McManis' treatment of the farm problem in eighteenth-century New England has also cast new light on these peasants' lives (McManis, 1975).
3. Branches of study in which style is important are literature, history, philosophy, architecture, art, costume, decoration, and so forth. Usually, not only ideas but also art and music along with craftware and other material artifacts, when they have been regarded at all, have been regarded as merely supportive. That is, they follow preferred or necessary economic and political relationships. I think that this approach is largely accurate; cultural artifacts have been supportive, especially since the early modern period when change and variety became necessary aspects of an expanding European economy. During this period aesthetics came to be tied to high culture. Moreover, individual artistic intention and creativity marked the artistic process even though a mutual downward and upward sharing occurred (Burke, 1978:24-28). One aspect of the "art motive" in this culture was an emphasis on discovery and change. Hence, the social significance of style was subsidiary to the expansion of society and economy. Accordingly, scholars have interpreted this style in its supporting role. Two examples are most significant. Scientific materialists have regarded ideas, art, music and so forth as evidence of developing historical forces (Lukacs, 1971:49-51). This culture is thus a developing or nascent bourgeois culture, and its standards of style support its development. Second, academic aestheticians have largely confined their analysis to "high" culture, i.e., art music or "fine" art or the critically acclaimed. By concentrating on elites or dominant trends, both approaches have yielded insights and have expanded the understanding of the place of style in culture. Yet, both disregard aspects of style that may fit neither the organization of material reality and its changes nor the established high culture. Both fail to take advantage of comparison within a culture.

These present polarized criticisms but are generally representative. Historical perception, following Max Weber, is that this rising bourgeoisie favored bureaucratization but not stasis, centralization but not close direction. From my perspective and with an eye on increased Atlantic trade, the attention to change and fashion seems clear. Indeed, import-export statistics, though incomplete, bear out the surge of change between 1700 and 1725. For example, gross increases in silk imports to North America: 5,573 pounds in 1700; 14,441 pounds in 1710; a depressed market between 1715 and 1720 with 7,225 and 6,791 respectively; in 1725, 19,157 pounds. Other fabrics, perrets and serges, show a steady increase to 1720, and glass and earthenware move from 93,166 pieces imported in 1700 to 469,483 pieces in 1725, though there was a substantial downturn between 1715 and 1720 (Schumpeter, 1960: Table XXIV, Table XXV, Table XLII). The reduction between 1715 and 1720 probably arose from a monetary crisis during this period when the North American colonies were entering the Atlantic trade but were hampered by the inability to coin money. They settled this problem by issuing paper bills of credit often based on the value of public land.

4. Another field, the anthropology of signs and symbols, contributes a whole range of theory that would be intermediate here. Although the focus on an aesthetic *per se* is unusual, several theorists have been pursuing similar ideas, especially Clifford Geertz, Victor W. Turner, and Mary Douglas. All have contributed to my understanding of daily ceremonies and the importance of art and ritual in which the artifact and even the characteristics of the artifact are imbued with symbolic importance. In this regard, interest in hermeneutics and art has yielded insight into deep meaning or unspoken "knowledge," as in Janet Wolff's recent monograph which draws together developments in the sociology of knowledge and the social "knowledge" of art (Wolff, 1975). This has been important in my idea that artifact *and* song represent accumulated ceremony. The longstanding disregard for such ideas as "world view" and so forth has given way to anthropological discoveries and interpretations (Geertz, 1973:Chapter 5). Such insights come together with the field of aesthetics in a number of ways, most notably in the reification of aesthetics in artifacts (Margolis, 1967: 32-45).

The distinction that I use here is not unusual in social science, but it is unusual, I think, to compare roles and processes by means of such a distinction. Ceremonies are the formal or ritualized face-to-face interactions among people. As Clifford Geertz writes, the ceremonialization of daily life accompanies "anonymization of person" and the "immobilization of time," and provides a "style" in social behavior, in my own terms, an aesthetic (Geertz, 1973:399-400).

Institutions, on the other hand, are broader and, though formal in the behavioral sense, much looser and tending toward a built-in anonymity. They allow, even demand, a psychological as well as a social existence. Hence, the economy, society, polity and religion with their accompanying structures form the institutions that I write about. Rustics have been connected to them, of course, but from my perspective would prefer their connections to be through ceremony, that is, grouped rather than individuated. They thus remain marginal in institutional association and are necessarily defensive in their associations with the broader society.

5. This culture, or subculture, has been studied for its art and craft, for its music, its quaint social customs, and so forth. These are identifiable as part of a whole and have become the basis for folk studies of the Appalachian hill folk, especially in the South. Many older collections and histories represent efforts to portray the "flavor" of rustic life, the context, or what Gombrich calls "resonances" among the components of culture. In some studies these have been tied to topography and geography in especially effective ways, for example in Phillip Shaw Paludan's *Victims* (Paludan, 1982:Chapter 1) and in an older study (Miles, 1975:v). My description of this aesthetic and its representative nature runs counter to the received wisdom about folk crafts—that they tend toward the plain and the functional. Some do. But a reading from my perspective of, for example, a cane-bottomed chair would emphasize not its functional comfort (which may be considerable) but its texture as an individual piece as well as its textural place in the household, that is, its material texture and its ceremonial texture. An examination of this culture reveals that much of it is and has been florid and complicated (Lipman and Winchester, 1974) and has involved the aesthetic that I describe. The problem of symbolism in such a culture has been treated (Skorupski, 1976:36-53), at least theoretically; it is clear that our present level of understanding acknowledges the existence of general symbols (as opposed to identifiable symbols from the history of art and decoration) and that these may be unconscious and unacknowledged. Nevertheless, there is no indication of the process by which they come into existence.
6. This cultural change has been described (Wright et al., 1966; Lyon, 1977; McClellan, 1977; Worrell, 1980) but has been little analyzed (Gowans, 1964). That older forms survived, especially in decoration and furniture, indicates a preference, hence, some social meaning which I take to be the preservation of general symbol in general ceremony. Several points of view have been put forward by historians and archeologists (Benes, ed., 1976, 1978) regarding gravestone art and the symbols that it presents. Peter Benes (Benes, ed., 1981) has

traced some innovations in church architecture and the movement of music reform and found striking parallels in the transmission of cultural innovation. He notes that a turn to Isaac Watts' hymnal in the Connecticut Valley during the mid-eighteenth century was "probably consistent, too, with Connecticut Valley tastes in decorative arts and architecture. Like checked shirts, black-red-and white check-woven coverlets, and scalloped table edges, the Christian lyrics of Isaac Watts were part of a household and ecclesiological aesthetic that gave regional cohesion to a dispersed population" (Benes, ed., 1981:131). Benes chooses a highly specific and focused arena for his analysis, but I think that the culture and the music bear him out. In addition, the idea of an aesthetics or "poetics" of space in consciousness has been used by John F. Moe (Moe, n.d.) to show the impact of "popular" architectural structures. Both Benes and Moe have influenced my ideas.

7. In terms of such changes, furniture is more interesting than architecture because some colonials clearly continued to prefer the old-fashioned styles. These "rustics" preferred chests decorated with the same elaborate symbolic carving that they had in their homes. On the chests this carving was often deepened by the application of black enamel in the lines, red on the protrusions, which produced an indeterminate outline in space. Rustics also preferred the court cupboard, a piece that they used for the display of their china or pewter, items of pride in the household. These cupboards were structured by the intrusion of space. For example, the upper section often consisted of a core topped by a shelf that was supported by columns which were themselves decorated with elaborate overlay. Structure and decoration emphasized the spatially indeterminate quality of these pieces. By about 1730 the rustics had carried this style into elaborately painted chests. On these the spatial indeterminateness depended on the "movement" or "busy" qualities of the decorations, but even here the rustics clearly continued to prefer the intrusion of space into shaped matter (Trent, ed., n.d.:*passim*).
8. This analysis has been developed chiefly by Sacvan Bercovitch and has been influential in the study of early American literature. Bercovitch finds that, though the seventeenth-century Puritans saw such a golden age at the founding, they looked pessimistically at the "decline," and that by the eighteenth-century they had entered a period of optimism which generated metaphorical force and supported the American Revolution. I think that two traditions separate here, the optimistic accepting the dynamic of fashion, and the pessimistic retaining a spiritual and allegorical vision, hence, preferring to stick with tradition (Bercovitch, 1975; Bercovitch, 1978).
9. Exactly who the rustics were is not clear. Most people in New England lived in a very mixed culture. Documentary evidence shows some uneasiness about the new styles, and the uneasiness was mostly rural; yet, the evidence also shows that the people in Boston believed that the rural people avidly desired the new styles, so much so that they were willing to "ruin" the colony's economy to get them. Thomas Paine, for example, writing about the economy, asserted that both country and town created too much debt occasioned by the purchase of too many goods from England and the West Indies, "whereby the honest Country People have been induced . . . to take up more than they can pay for." Furthermore, he wrote, "the Misery and Impiety of it is, the inferiour sort of People will be clad in as costly Attire as the Rich and Honourable" (Paine, 1721:5-6). In contrast, Edward Wigglesworth wrote that "country People" should be "discouraged from making their own Cloaths so much as of Late they begin to do" (Wigglesworth, 1721:14). Were they making old-fashioned clothing? Advertisements in the colonial press offered "antick" dresses for sale, new homes in Boston and in the country, "old-fashioned" silverware, and so forth. Thus, this was clearly a mixed culture with mixed preferences. Nevertheless, the perception of "countryness" is clear, and elites identified it in cultural preferences.
10. Spatial aspects of music are internal dynamics, tone, and timbre (Seeger, 1951), aspects which reformers found objectionable. Reformers preferred a linear approach—the infusion of rhythm as opposed to the rustics varied tempi. Such aspects of "folk" music are covered in Alan Lomax's cantometrics study which places this tradition and explains the internal dynamics of it in theoretical terms (Lomax, 1968:136).
11. This aspect of colonial culture has been little studied, and what has been produced has been anecdotal. It is nevertheless useful. Recent studies have broached the survival of superstition in New England and elsewhere (Butler, 1979; Leventhal, 1976), and the existence of astrology, the anatomy, and the survival of ghost stories and a whole host of superstitions argue in favor of the continued superstitiousness of at least some people. Moreover, the reluctance of Thomas Brattle, John Foster, and Nathaniel Ames to include the superstitions in their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century almanacs attests the early quarrel between the people who demanded some form of knowledge and the people who were content to depend on conventional theology (Sagendorph, 1970:42, 57).
12. Indeed, Lomax likens this style to the ritual music of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and the Orient. From contemporary descriptions it seems that New England psalmody was probably harsher,

proceeded with a greater number of varied tempi, and showed greater variousness in entrance and egress.

13. I have used the term "delocalization" to express the state of political relations among the "churches of Christ" during this period. In 1705 the Boston-Cambridge Ministerial Association set out a list of Proposals which had the effect of reducing the local pastor's dependence on the congregation. He would have been responsible to his professional colleagues in a pattern of shared power and would have been separated from his congregation, professionalized. Thus, he would have been required to bring local questions to the collective expertise of the clergy. The Proposals of 1705 were never formally accepted, but ministers throughout the colony gradually came to depend on a cooperative system, in moder terms, a pluralistic system. Many historians have interpreted this as a move toward the destruction of local "liberty," but, indeed, the ministers' plan was actually a move toward the sharing of power on a broader basis. In short, the Proposals, far from destroying "liberty" were a first step in the emergence of the "civic culture" of Anglo-American democracy. Thus, from my perspective, the rustics were not freedom-loving yeomen but conservative and parochial "peasants" whose orientation centered in their separation from an emerging cosmopolitanism (Turner, forthcoming). They did not object to hierarchy, but to hierarchy they viewed as imposed from outside the community. As I point out below, this very antagonism has ceremonial qualities that help ensure the continued definition of the rustics. Persistent male dominance in a peculiar form has been part of isolated American communities (Weller, 1965:75, 162). In New England during this period patriarchal dominance was giving way to the shared power of the ministers and the polity. In the church, at least, this was a move "forward" for women, that is, toward the more benign male dominance of the modern age.
14. To reformers this change in authority was very important. Josiah Dwight of Woodstock Massachusetts used Acts 17.6 when he defended the new style, and he used a metaphor of brotherhood: "These that have turned the World upside down, are come hither also." The brotherhood, Paul and Silas, he wrote, were on a mission to change old customs among a people who, like the old-style singers, refused to give up their "old superstitions, corrupt customs, and idolatries" (Dwight, 1725:4-6). Nathaniel Chauncey accused the old-style singers of being "unreasonable & unmanly," and of lashing out at ministers who simply performed their duty by advancing reform (Chauncey, 1728:8, 5-6). Thus, the ministers asserted that the old-style singers undermined the new spirit of brotherhood and the new style of smooth, extended professional power.

15. The Cambridge Platform was the constitution for the congregational churches. Adopted in 1648, it set out the church officers—elders, deacons, minister, and teacher—as well as the pattern for church business—excommunication, discussion, conduct of elections, and the application for membership. Defending this document, Wise wrote what he called a "satyre" in which he juxtaposed humor and seriousness. The Proposals of 1705 were aimed at changing these practices at the local level, delocalizing church ceremonies, thus creating institutions and destroying ceremonies. Reformers inadvertently issued the Proposals on November fifth, the anniversary of the Gun-Powder Plot, an incident in which a group of Roman Catholics, led by Guy Fawkes, attempted to kill James I by blowing up Parliament on November 5, 1605. Wise's rhetorical comments make clear that he has in mind both a whimsical and a serious purpose. On the one hand, he wants the educated to laugh with him at his use of "astrological remarks." On the other hand, he knew that the peasants took such correspondence of dates seriously because they were tuned to astrology in their farming practices. I hardly need add that Wise here supported the brethren's protestantism and referred reformers and reforms to "Catholic" conspiracies (Wise, 1715:106-107).

In his extended reflection of the peasants' social vision, Wise also referred to song, and, in this regard, it is important to remember that when he thought about music, he probably thought about old-style singing. In fact, Wise used song not only in *Churches Quarrel* but also in his equally famous *Vindication of the Government of the New England Churches*. Wise warned peasants and ministers alike that reform damaged their "settlement." Speaking to the "Fraternity" Wise remarked, "and when we are thus wasted, should you call us in once more to sing one of the Songs of Sion, all our Notes must be Elegie & Detristibus, yet the Broken Accents, and lowely Murmours of our Sorrow will serve the Elahs and Sweet Diapasans, in the Conquerours Song of Triumph" (Wise, 1715:110). Warning his colleagues about their own mistaken perception of the New England peasants, Wise appended to his *Vindication* the influential but antiquated *Testimony of the Order of the Gospel*. This tract was also a defense of the Cambridge Platform, and it included a description of the singing that had accompanied the birth of New England's church polity: "they did with an Extraordinary Elevation of Soul and Voice, then Sing together, the *Song of Moses* . . . God forbid, that in the loss of that Holy *Discipline*, There should be hereafter occasion to Sing about breaking down the Carved work of the Houses of God with Axes and Hammers" (Wise, 1717:Appendix). Metaphorically, at least Wise referred his and the rustics' patriarchal ideal of authority and a mosaic of economic and mystical concern to the practice of making music, hence to the aesthetic that it supported.

16. In his famous essay defending the new style psalmody, Symmes wrote of the old-fashioned singers that they were like the "miserable Hot-tentots (pardon the Comparison!) who think to adorn themselves with the *Guts of Beasts*, with all the Garbage in them." Furthermore, he wrote, if the old-style singers were right about music, "all the Civiliz'd & Polite part of the World are deceiv'd and those Dregs of Mankind are in the right of it." In the same essay he wrote that he would not confine his criticism to the lower classes but "(Let the Man make what Figure he will, and let his Coat be of what Fashion or Colour, or other Quality it will) I profess I'll not affix those *Honourary Epithets* (Wise & Learned) to his Name that won't readily own, that whoever will dispute these points [that singing by rule was better and more mathematical], may also Dispute *Whether Two & Two make Four*" (Symmes, 1721:18, 28). Of course, this disclaimer only focuses the social nature of the dispute and locates the two aesthetics, the art aesthetic among the "superior" class, the rustic among the "inferior" class.
17. At this point I want to explain what I mean by "accumulated" ceremonies. Performance and artifact (music or even daily living with everyday items) combine to provide a ceremonial situation. This arises from veneration for the texture of song or object. This texture is "old," or is encoded to indicate age, hence, timelessness and to be associated with the past. The past is not historical but allegorical—the good old days, a golden age, and so forth. Hence, the "oldness" of the artifact is a catalyst for ceremony because it illustrates the interpenetration of time and space or matter and space, that is, it displays the rustic aesthetic. This vision accumulates in the aesthetic qualities and allows participants to "see" ceremonies in artifacts, to hear them in song. I should add that artifacts need have no specific relation to a specific past, merely the aesthetic. With it, they project ceremonial veneration into the circumstances. Weller in his *Yesterday's People* describes the effect of this aesthetic and ties it to "homey" ceremonies that center on the past through the locale of the hearth or the front porch (Weller, 1965:34-35).

During the music quarrels in colonial New England, the elderly and middle-aged people were often accused of being especially opposed to change. This is not surprising, I suppose, but it does associate what was a veneration for age in seventeenth-century New England with the old culture, and it does associate an increasingly young population with the new. This aspect of age is important in another way as well. Time is an intruder into ceremonial life. In this regard I think that the timelessness (*tempo rubato*) or rhythmlessness that accompanies much ceremonial music is an important indicator of what Geertz calls the "immobilization of time," (Geertz, 1973:400) and

- that the accumulated ceremonies in music represent a degree of religious timelessness, possibly ecstasy, certainly allegory. Thus, old style singing is a recapitulation of allegory or of ecstasy. Furthermore, I would contrast such recapitulation with the *recapture* of ecstasy or reentry into a past that is associated with rhythmic chant.
18. Some readers will find galling the amorphousness of this group, the rustics. I think that they are not now and probably have never been identifiable as individuals. People are more or less tuned to the aesthetic that I describe. In the occident, at least, probably everywhere, people exhibit mixed culture most of the time. Nevertheless, practices and customs are and have been culturally identifiable, and the aesthetic seems to me to be a good marker. It is pervasive among "country" people in general. In part, as I have noted, this culture has been identified by antagonism to a developing and dominant culture with a changing aesthetic and an emphasis on institutional conformity. The rustics seem to prefer face-to-face contact, formal structures in a parochial setting, predictability, and clear behavioral directives also in a parochial setting (Weller, 1965), or at least that is the anecdotal description of them. Wherever land use patterns have left isolated pockets of settlers, mostly along the Appalachian chain from Maine to northern Georgia, folklorists have found some form of this culture. In many places it has been associated with immigrants from Scotland or Northern Ireland who would have brought with them the same religious orientation, the same patriarchal dominance, and the same cultural roots. In this regard, Alan Lomax has found independence of tone, high pitch, and nasal vocalization to be characteristic of western folk song and has tied these to farming communities and to male dominance (Lomax, 1968:197).
19. For example, the names of quilts are replete with rustic experience and with metaphors of spirit: log cabin (which perhaps better than any other quilting style exhibits the aesthetic that I have described), Star of Bethlehem, Star Cross, Tree of Life, Joseph's Coat, Tree Everlasting. Such Christian metaphors exist side by side with the traditional florid symbols that have persisted in folk culture since the late middle ages—trees, tulips, vines, tendrils, and so forth (Cooper and Bufferd, 1977:14, 66, 88; Holstein, 1973:Plate 9, Plate 24; Lipman and Winchester, 1974: Plate 403).
20. At least in the eye of one observer they are sources of unnecessary problems for the people who accept them, and they are bound up with the mysteries of a peculiar religious orientation (Weller, 1965: 83-86, 102-120, 128-133). Do these aspects of life represent an integrated ceremonial set which also reflects and gives cultural meaning to the rustic aesthetic?

Mountain feuds and other aspects of this culture have been used metaphorically to portray the extra-legal independence of the people. One nineteenth-century collector noted the family ties and animistic portraits of death among the New England rustics (Drake, 1884:vii) and another analyst suggests similar ceremonial ties along with a faith in dreams and so forth (Johnson, 1963). But in the South the culture has survived into the twentieth century. Superstitions are obviously held in varying degrees. I think that even the oral assertion of superstition is a ceremonial part of daily life that sets such beliefs outside dominant institutions. In this regard, even established denominational religion takes on a magical quality (Weller, 1965:130-131). Snake handling and other more formal rituals that have emerged in the twentieth century suggest the embattlement of these people. For some insights in this regard see (Weller, 1970).

21. Such textures persist in other areas of the music. In performance itself, for example, musicologists have puzzled over the preference for modal scales or numerous semitones and dissonances. These are obviously very old, persistent and preferred practices, musical behaviors, that resist reform (Cobb, Jr., 1978:45-46). Are the tamed, structured and predictable scales and harmonies of "modern" music simply too flat for these singers? too unmysterious? Does country music, from primitive psalms and hymnody through the instrumentation of "country and western" music, play to an audience that in some degree needs this mystery or freedom or change in the music? I am not sure that these are answerable questions, but they are questions that musicologists, historians, and social scientists can think about when they try to understand the social implications of this music.

An interesting approach to the historical changes in "country and western" music and its fertilization by "popular" song provides some further insight into the lyrics and the music and possible approaches to such study (Wilgus, 1971:152-158). A respondent to Wilgus (McCulloh, 1971:160-162) raises some very provocative questions. One difficulty, however, is the location of the musical source—the South—while another is the assumption that this is a music which is tied to a southern culture. I think it is tied instead to ceremonial remnants and to a rustic culture through the aesthetic that I have described. Nevertheless, Judith McCulloh raises some interesting musical issues in her response.

22. I cannot enter the longstanding quarrel among the interpreters of folk art, that is, what constitutes true folk art and what is merely bad painting (Vlach, 1981:145-146). Some paintings interpreted by Alice Ford certainly lack the qualities that I associate with the

rustic culture. Furthermore, they seem to be simply bad examples of the contemporary "art motive," that is, to accept the dynamic of fashion (Ford, 1949:100). I would say that the aesthetic that I describe belongs to a very narrow range of truly "rustic" artistic production. Henry Glassie has provided a sensible concept, an acceptance that an aesthetic exists, more or less, in all material production. Yet, he avoids the idea of an aesthetic function which I think is central (Glassie, 1970:109-111). Ford suggests avoiding aesthetic questions in relation to this art. But the work of Joseph Picket, "Coryell's Ferry," (Whitney Museum of Fine Arts) exhibits just the qualities that I would look for. Such qualities also exist in the Shaker spirit work which deliberately combines text and symbol (Ford, 1949:144). Indeed, the Shakers are an anomaly in this aesthetic pattern, emphasizing the plain and functional in crafts and the florid, spiritual aesthetic in music, dance, and pictorial art (Chase, 1953:230). In twentieth-century work the same qualities seem to appear. Hence, the assertion that "folk" art is simply a product of bad or little training seems absurd. It is a matter of choice for the artist. The concept of icon fits my interpretation of the importance of ceremony, and it comes from Marshall Fishwick's analysis of popular culture (Fishwick, 1970:1-11).

23. What, for example, is behind the florid trees that line the horizon of Joseph Picket's "Coryell's Ferry" and that literally bend in a beckoning gesture? More pertinent, what ceremonial function has Hattie Brunner depicted when she paints an antique sale and thereby selects a past for herself and her community? Indeed, talking about her "Country Auction," she blends metaphor and the process of aging into accumulated ceremony: "That's me. I'm the one looking at the tilt-top table. That's Joe Kindig near the high-backed chair. Everybody knew him. He had long hair and a long beard turned from dirty yellowish to totally white" (Horwitz, 1975:54). For the artist and her rustic neighbors, is there here some iconographic function based on a stylized vision, a ceremony that continues into the past?
24. Does curing warts become possible or does the burden of poverty or weather or disease or some other affliction become bearable through the ceremony of referring them to this epistemology, that is, rendering them part of a body of supernatural knowledge? Is this a "real" form of more traditional theological or ecclesiastical comfort?

This is a very sensitive issue, and it is almost inseparable from theoretical hearsay. Rural people tend to see themselves as more religious than others (Larson, 1978:100), and the tendency is pervasive to lump together "fundamentalism" and unthinking patriotism. In early New

England the patriotism of the "rustics" included suspicions that governors were in league with their enemies, the Catholics and the heathen Indians (Turner, forthcoming). In nineteenth-century America nativism was widespread and has been attached to religious evangelicalism (Marty, 1970:130). Fundamentalism was a post-Civil War development, and the connection between this faith and extreme patriotism is difficult to determine. One history of fundamentalism which takes a favorable perspective makes clear that the religion has a patriotic component (Dollar, 1973:193, 196).

25. Indeed, if one returns to country and folk music, it seems to voice such a preference. Country lyrics often praise allegorical and symbolic anti-exchange values such as the triumph of love over wealth, the discovery of personal love and fulfillment in social and economic failure, the passing of the good old days, or the redemption that comes magically from the love of a good woman, a good man, or a good God, not to mention the enspiriting topic of drink, its joys and its tragedies (DiMaggio, Peterson, and Esco, Jr., 1972:40-43). Do these lyrics represent the aesthetic of country social forms and of private and public country ceremonies? Is there in these and in the art forms some resonance with the aesthetic as an emotional and intellectual construct that leads the rustics to demand artistic, religious, social, and political correspondence to their aesthetic?
26. Portions of Part I and Part II of this paper are from a paper, "Usual Singing and Cultural Change: The Continuance of 'Rustic' Culture in Early Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," that I delivered at the Mid-Continent American Studies Association Meeting in 1982. A musicological treatment of some of these ideas will appear in another journal at a later date.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, J.W.  
1981 "Consensus, Community and Exoticism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXI, 2 (Autumn).
- Benes, P. (ed.)  
Proceedings of the Dublin Seminar on New England Folklife (Boston: Boston University Press).  
1976 Puritan Gravestone Art  
1978 Puritan Gravestone Art II  
1981 The Bay and the River, 1600-1900.
- Bercovitch, S.  
1975 *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- 1978 *The American Jeremiad*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bouwsma, W.J.  
1981 "From History of Ideas to History of Meaning." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XII, 2 (Autumn).
- Burke, P.  
1978 *Popular Culture and Early Modern Europe*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Butler, J.  
1978 "Magic, Astrology, and the Early American Religious Heritage," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2 (April).
- Chase, G.  
1953 *America's Music from the Pilgrims to the Present*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Chauncey, N.  
1728 *Regular Singing Defended*. New London, Conn.
- Cobb, B.T., Jr.  
1978 *The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and its Music*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Cooper, P. and Bradley, N.B.  
1977 *The Quilters: Women and Domestic Art*. Garden City, New York: Double Day and Co., Inc.
- DiMaggio, P. Peterson, R.A. and Esco, J., Jr.  
1972 "Country Music: Ballad of the Silent Majority," in Richard A. Peterson, ed., *The Sounds of Social Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dollar, G.W.  
1973 *A History of Fundamentalism in America*. Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press.
- Drake, S.A.  
1884 *A Book of New England Legends and Folk Lore in Prose and Poetry*. Boston: Roberts Brothers.
- Dwight, J.  
1725 *An Essay to Silence the Outcry...* (Boston).
- Elliott, E.  
1975 *Power and the Pulpit in Puritan New England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fishwick, M.  
1970 "Entrance," in Marshall Fishwick and Roy B. Brown, eds., *Icons of Popular Culture*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press.
- Ford, L.A.  
1949 *Pictorial Folk Art: New England to California*. New York: Studio Publishers.
- Geertz, C.  
1973 *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

- Glassie, H.  
1968 *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.  
1970 "Artifacts: Folk, Popular, Imaginary and Real," in Marshall Fishwick and Roy B. Browne, *Icons of Popular Culture*. Bowling Green Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press.
- Gombrich, E.H.  
1979 "In Search of Cultural History," in Gombrich, ed., *Ideals and Idols*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Gowans, A.  
1964 *Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture in Cultural Expression*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lipincott.
- Hembrick-Stowe, C.E.  
1982 *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Discipline in Seventeenth-Century New England*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Higham, J. and Conkin, P. (eds.)  
1979 *New Directions in American Intellectual History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hofstadter, R.  
1963 *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. New York: Random House.
- Holstein, J.  
1973 *The Pieced Quilt: An American Design Tradition*. New York: Graphic Society, Ltd.
- Hood, G.  
1846 *A History of Music in New England*. Boston: Wilkins, Carter and Co.
- Horwitz, E.L.  
1975 *Contemporary American Folk Artists*. New York: J.B. Lippincott.
- Johnson, C.  
1963 *What they Say in New England*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Larson, O.F.  
1978 "Values and Beliefs of Rural People," in Thomas R. Ford, ed., *Rural U.S.A.* Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Leventhal, H.  
1976 *In the Shadow of the Enlightenment: Occultism and Renaissance Science in Eighteenth-Century America*. New York: New York University Press.
- Lipman, J. and Winchester, A.  
1974 *The Flowering of American Folk Art, 1776-1876*. New York: The Viking Press.

- Lockridge, K.  
1970 *A New England Town: Dedham, the First Hundred Years*. New York: Norton and Norton.
- Lomax, A.  
n.d. "The Gospel Ship: Baptist Hymns and White Spirituals from the Southern Mountains," on *New World Records*, 294.  
1959: "Folk Song Style," *American Anthropologist*, LXI, No. 6 (December).  
1968 *Folk Song Style and Culture*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- Lukacs, G.  
1971 *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectic*. Trans. by Rodney Livingston. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lyon, I.W.  
1977 [1891] *The Colonial Furniture of New England*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Malone, B.E.  
1968 *Country Music U.S.A.: A Fifty Year History*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Mannheim, K.  
1971 *From Karl Mannheim*. Kurt H. Wolff, ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Margolis, J.  
1976 "Works of Art are Physically Embodied and Culturally Emergent Entities," in Lars Aagaard-Mogensen, ed., *Culture and Art*. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey.
- Marty, M.E.  
1970 *The Protestant Experience in America*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Mayo, S.C.  
1970 "The Appalachian Urban Crisis," in Max E. Glenn, ed., *Appalachia in Transition*. St. Louis Missouri: The Bethany Press.
- McClellan, E.  
1977 [1904] *Historic Dress in America, 1607-1870*. New York: Arno Press.
- McCulloh, J.  
1971 "Prepared Comments," in Americo Paredes and Ellen J. Stekert, eds., *The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- McManis, D.R.  
1975 *Colonial New England: A Historical Geography*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Miles, E.B.  
1975 [1905] *The Spirit of the Mountain*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Miner, R.G.  
1977 [1928] *Early Homes of New England*. New York: Arno Press.

## Mid-American Review of Sociology

- Moe, J.F.  
n.d. "Concepts of Shelter: The Folk Poetics of Space, Change and Continuity," in Susan S. Tamke and William H. Cohn, eds., *In-Depth History and Popular Culture* (N.P.: N.P).
- Paine, Thomas  
1721 *A Discourse Shewing that the real. . .* (Boston).
- Paludin, P.S.  
1981 *Victims: A True Story of the Civil War*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Sagendorph, R.  
1970 *America and her Almanacs: Wit Wisdom and Weather, 1639-1970*. Dublin, New Hampshire: Yankee Press.
- Schumpeter, E.B.  
1960 *English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697-1808*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Seeger, C.  
1951 "Systematic Musicology: Viewpoints, Orientation and Methods," *Journal of the American Musicology Society*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (Fall).
- Skorupski, J.  
1976 *Symbol and Theory: A Philosophical Study of Theories of Religion of Social Anthropology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Symmes, T.  
1723 *Utile-Dulci; or a Jaco-Serious Dialogue*. Boston.
- Tashjian, D. and A. Tashjian  
1974 *Memorials of Children of Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- Thatcher, P., et al.  
1723 *Cases of Conscience*. Boston.
- Trent, R. (ed.)  
n.d. *Pilgrim Century Furniture: An Historical Survey*. New York: n.p.
- Turner, E.  
Forthcoming: "Peasants and Parsons: Readers and the Intellectual Location of John Wise's *Churches Quarrel Espoused*," *Early American Literature*.
- Vlach, J.M.  
1981 "Quaker Tradition and the Painting of Edward Hicks: A Strategy for the Study of Folk Art," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 94, (April-June).
- Weller, J.E.  
1965 *Yesterday's People: Life in Contemporary Appalachia*. N.P.: University of Kentucky Press.
- Wigglesworth, Edward  
1721 *A Vindication of the Remarks. . .* (Boston).

## The Rustic Aesthetic in Social Perspective

- Wilgus, D.K.  
1971 "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," in Americo Paredes and Ellen J. Stekert, eds., *The Urban Experience and Folk Tradition*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Wise, J.  
1715 *The Churches Quarrel Espoused*. (Boston).  
1717 *A Vindication of the Government of the New England Churches* (Boston).
- Wolff, J.  
1975 *Hermeneutic Philosophy and the Socialy of Art: An Approach to Some of the Epistemological Problems of the Sociology of Knowledge and the Sociology of Art and Literature*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Worrell, E.A.  
1980 *Children's Costume in America, 1607-1910*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Youngs, G.W.T.  
1976 *God's Messengers: Religious Leadership in Colonial New England, 1700-1750*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Zuckerman, M.  
1970 *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Knopf.