

## Defining Culture: The Meaning of ‘Person’ as Carrier of Cultural Meaning

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### ABSTRACT

*In this paper a methodology built on the foundations of Peirce and Whitehead is used to assert that ‘persons’ – as distinguished from ‘individuals’ – are the true vehicles of culture. This, because they are the uniquely social actors who extend, in and through time, new or preexisting artifacts. In short, the individual-as-person either acts out a cultural trait thus becoming a living artifact, or otherwise creates material artifacts. Alfred Kroeber’s remarks are used as an anthropological backdrop to the discussions.*

**Keywords:** Culture, Methodology, Person, Personhood, Individual, Society and Paradigm

### INTRODUCTION

Few have done as much to clarify the meaning of culture as Alfred Kroeber (1876-1960). Ruth Bunzel (1960, p.477), cites ‘certain recurrent themes’ in his work:

One of these is the concept of the super organic – the idea that culture is a reality of a different order from the particular habits of the individual composing a society. Another is that culture areas are realities, not merely abstract classification devices and where considered in relation to geographical areas can be analyzed in terms of concepts borrowed from ecology. Another is the idea of periodicity in cultural development, the small swings in fashion, and the large swings in the rise and fall of cultures.

We can mention in addition his treatment (1948, pp.292-296) of form and content, eidos and ethos, material and immaterial approaches to culture, as well as his interpretations of pattern and style in cultural expression (from here on out, only the page numbers will be given for this reference unless otherwise indicated). This paper focuses on those parts of his work that exemplify or otherwise help to clarify the application of the methodology herein articulated. That methodology builds on the principles first adumbrated by Charles S. Peirce and Alfred North Whitehead.

The following propositions will be advanced and defended:

- What is cultural implies the widespread adoption of select artifacts
- Culture consists of both the products of a cultural process, and the gestalt of all such products
- Culture is mediated not by ‘individuals’ but by ‘persons’
- The definition of culture is obtained by first defining: individual, actor, society and person
- Culture is the context for a metaphysical function including artifacts, tradition and heritage, from which the definition of culture is obtained.

The definition of culture arrived at is as follows: Culture – the artifacts (individual and collective) whose meaning derives from social significance carried by individuals who, becoming social actors, become persons mediating and/or expressing tradition in the context of heritage.

This paper does not treat generally of ‘high culture’, nor of culture as “simply a way of talking about collective identities” (Kuper, 1999, p. 3). It also avoids difficulties that the word has made more evident, in areas such as racism, nationalism, relativism and identity (though admittedly a better definition of culture should make these problems less severe). The

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concern here is with the terms and implications of the definition just recited. It is more about ‘culture qua culture’, if that be possible.

### METHODOLOGY

Because this paper is essentially about methodology as applied to the process of definition, and because the methodology being introduced is not only new to the reader for the most part, but also occasionally involved, more time will be spent here than would be customary. This material will advance the reader to a point at which section 3.3 can be presented just before tackling the actual definitions.

This methodology, as with its precursors, is paradigmatic: that is, its arguments are structured by a backbone and its connected parts, together called a ‘paradigm’. A slice of DNA or a rib cage will do equally well as models illustrating the point. Still better, because conforming to a need to interchange variables is that provided by Kluckhohn (1949, p.180):

The facts are the scaffolding, while perspective is the structure itself. The structure may persist when most of the facts have been forgotten, and

continue to provide a framework into which a new fact may be fitted when acquired.<sup>1</sup>

Here the scaffolding begins with a four-part ‘function’. The four ‘facts’ are the archetypal elements in the plane of the paper. Of crucial importance is the choice of these components as determined by a few basic rules (Herrman, 2010, p.12), and which are often collectively labeled by the first and fourth components. A *primary* archetypal function is one in which each archetype must be mirrored or otherwise expressed by any element (of any function in a vertical array) occupying the same position (Whitehead calls these elements ‘analogues’). A *secondary* archetype is a branch sufficiently close to the primary to handle a class of functions. In Figure (1) the Aristotelian formal-final is a secondary function. It is also the only one in which the flow of events is counter-clockwise (Aristotle assumed a material which would be acted upon).

A comparison of Peirce, Weiss, Aristotle and this paper’s method, called ‘paradigmatics’, shows these relationships.

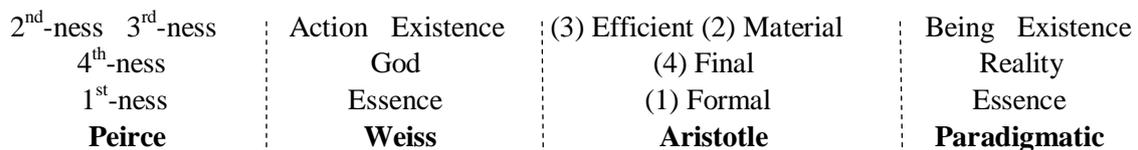


Fig1.

In the 1<sup>st</sup>-ness – 4<sup>th</sup>-ness function (Peircean pattern) an entity is introduced to a two-stage process of reality-testing to determine if the sign presented at 1<sup>st</sup>-ness is correct for the actual referent. At 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness the reality of the referent is tested for; if it is actually real, then the 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness ascertains whether the reality is the same as that of the referent.<sup>2</sup> The best known of Peirce’s secondary archetypes is: Sign, Object, Interpretant. He felt no need for a fourthness, which we have added to correct his deficiency; a three-part system worked well enough for reality-testing but was not good for much beyond that. In all of the patterns Essence (1<sup>st</sup>-ness) is initially distributed between 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness and 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness, but the actual work of the function is determined by the flow clockwise or counter-clockwise. The ‘magic’, what makes the function what it is, occurs between 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness and 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness.

Weiss (1947) had a system similar to paradigmatics but his Action was not as archetypal as Being, and the use of God at 4<sup>th</sup>-ness seriously flawed the application of the method for scientific purposes. Only if god is tantamount to reality can it function broadly, but Weiss would have to have been a dyed-in-the-wool pantheist. Whitehead illustrated a system of two inter functional binaries (1958) and applied (1957) his general principles (1961, 1979) to both three and four-part analysands. A White headean primary archetypal function is examined elsewhere (Herrman, 2010, p.26). Kuper (1999, p.137) uses language that is directly paradigmatic down to the label: “The paradigmatic kinship relationships combine the two principles of law and nature.” Each is coupled with a code of conduct, of marriage and sex respectively, creating a four-part function of two dynamically interacting pairs – a complete parallel to the theory and practice of paradigmatic.

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In this methodology context is everything, for the entire edifice stands or falls on semantic relevance and significance. One can start the process by naming 1<sup>st</sup>-ness and 4<sup>th</sup>-ness or alternatively with 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness and 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness. Attending to the semantic flow in the context of the rules provides the other pair. Figure (2) offers an example of the principle using an example from Kroeber (p.292-3) – The content of a culture is the sum of the items of which it is composed: things present in it... may be a rearrangement....[1] Thus education [content]

can be in clerical or in lay hands [forms]; [2] schools [content] may be parochial or public [forms]....In brackets we give the classificatory schema Kroeber was exemplifying; yet the plain sense of these two examples seems better explained not by form and content but by mode and manner. Figures 2(a and b) illustrate the examples; (c) is for comparison purposes (far left and right columns are analogues of paradigmatic archetypes at 1<sup>st</sup>-ness and 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness).

|               |                    |                   |                    |                  |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| <b>Being</b>  | Education Clerical | Parochial Schools | Learning Parochial | <b>Existence</b> |
| Doing         | Lay                | Public            | Public             | Stasis           |
| Motion        | Knowledge          | Institutions      | Schools            | Stillness        |
| <b>Manner</b> | Learning           | Teaching/Learning | Knowledge          | <b>Mode</b>      |
| Quality       | <b>a.</b>          | <b>b.</b>         | <b>c.</b>          | Trait            |
| Property      |                    |                   |                    | Character        |
| Content       |                    |                   |                    | Form             |

Fig2.

The semantic rendition for each expression is both necessary and useful: (2.a.) The *manner* [education] of learning yields knowledge by means of *modalities* (clerical and lay); (2.b.) The manner of teaching/learning concludes with institutions of which schools are modalities, and (2.c.) Learning is a manner of obtaining knowledge culminating in schools of which parochial and public varieties are modalities.

We build these relationships based on the data given us. In (2.a.) we receive only ‘education’ along with ‘clerical’ and ‘lay’. Semantically, the latter two are the means of the first, and this rules what follows: modalities are means of which manner is a canopy idea shared by both. Modalities are 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness and ‘education’ can be viewed also as the verbal ‘educating’, which meets the ‘being’, ‘doing’, ‘motion’ and ‘manner’ aspects for 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness. In (2.b.), schools are more truly 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness for being static brick and mortar; parochial and public now represent manners of approach to educational institutions and so are showing affinity for 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness.

Had we been offered only ‘learning’ as a content with forms of ‘parochial’ and ‘public’, we note learning as conformable with 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness characteristics and we see parochial and public as means or modalities by which learning is a manner of knowledge accretion in the context of schools. In each example we add the 1<sup>st</sup>-ness and 4<sup>th</sup>-ness elements so as to conform to the semantics of the first two while obeying the formal rules of the paradigmatic process. Context and semantics rule the roost.

Context and semantics also dictate relations of form and content in the system. Kroeber (p.304, n.11) was aware, correctly, of two modalities of form: “Obviously, ‘form’ as used here is that aspect of the *elements* of culture which has to do with their *sensory* appearance; whereas [earlier on] ‘form’ means the *organization* of the contents into a *whole* culture. A more discriminating terminology will presumably come into usage someday [his emphasis]....” It was Whitehead who saw the method as accounting for part-whole and unity-plurality relations across 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness and 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness.<sup>3</sup>

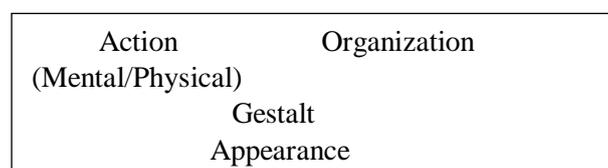


Fig3.

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Figure (3) illustrates the dual form-content relationships from Kroeber’s vantage. In the figure 1<sup>st</sup>-ness and 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness are form; the other two are manners of content. When we mix red, green and blue we obtain a gestalt, an emergent property called white. Kroeber will call this form, but clearly the semantic context will always vote white as content – as for all gestalts and emergent realities. 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness is content because it typically manifests; and what manifests as motion and movement or the actions of making and doing are just as usually viewed as content.

Kroeber offers examples (pp.304-305) in which he tries to establish links between his notion of content and form and others, including use,

meaning and function. As with all careful thinkers and writers, he hews closely to the paradigmatic schemas, if with minor inconsistencies. Figures (4) and (5) examine these.

The form of the ballot would comprise its material, size, shape, columns, arrangement of offices and candidates. Its meaning might be said to be popular freedom and sovereignty; its use, to elect officials; its functions, democratic and representative.

The use of an ax...is to chop wood; its function, to keep members of the society warm by providing fuel, and to make carpentry possible by providing logs.

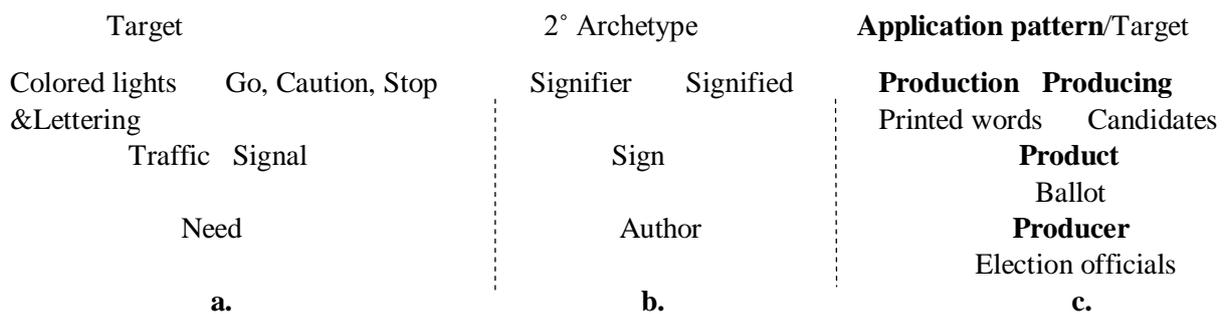


Fig4.

The functions delivering a given application are ‘target’ functions. In Figures (4) and (5) the ‘c’ variant is the target explicating Kroeber. The first two are background with at least one secondary archetype. Peirce’s secondary archetype appears (4.b.) as a four-fold pattern. The reason this is done to the ‘sign function’ is that a sign communicates, implying thereby an author who is no less a part of the logic than what he creates. He is naturally at 1<sup>st</sup>-ness and what he creates, that is to say the sign, is at 4<sup>th</sup>-ness (for a full discussion see Herrman, 2009b). But in this figure the pattern is modified still

further to accommodate Saussure’s (1965) terminology.

A classic example of a ‘sign function’ is that of a traffic signal, in (4.a). Need corresponds to authorial intent; lights are signaling and are thus the signifier; the form which the words take is at 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness and is what the sign signifies, and the meaning together with the gestalt expression is at 4<sup>th</sup>-ness. This duality of 4<sup>th</sup>-ness expression was identified by Weiss (1995, pp. 32-33): “There are two ultimate’s – the Rational and the Dunamis....The rational is intelligible and structuralizing; the Dunamis is pulsating and vitalizing.”<sup>4</sup>

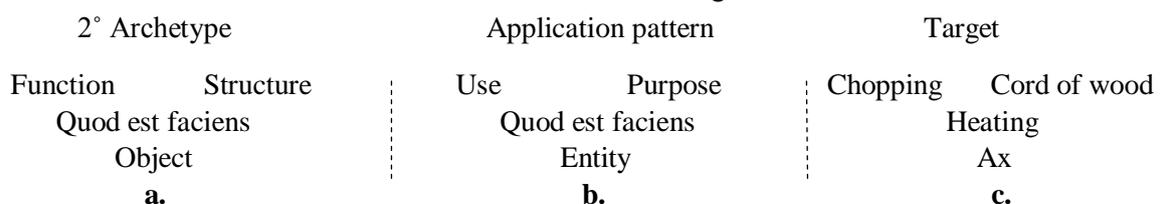


Fig5.

The parent structure-function pattern is given in (5.a.); in (b) its application pattern is given, of which (c) counts as an example. These are the ‘logical’ grounds behind Kroeber’s statement of

the ax functionality and purpose. The object in terms of the application for (a) is the cord of wood as in (c). (*Quod est faciens* = that which is to be done.)

### ARGUMENTS

#### What is Cultural Implies the Widespread Adoption of Select Artifacts

We can discuss this proposition under two heads:

- The nature of adopted artifacts and their selection
- The make-up of the public assessing cultural artifacts

The matter at hand in this proposition does not tell us what culture is, but rather how it comes to be what it is. As Kroeber (p.253) mused aloud, "So perhaps *how it comes to be* is really more distinctive of culture than what it *is*" [his emphasis].

The ever careful and considerate Kroeber nonetheless takes an overly expansive approach (p.253):

Culture might be defined as all the activities and non-physiological products of human personalities that are not automatically reflex or instinctive. That in turn means, in biological and psychological parlance, that culture consists of conditioned or learned activities (plus the manufactured results of these); and the idea of learning brings us back again to what is socially transmitted, what is received from tradition....

A group very concerned with culture is UNESCO (2003), which takes effectively the same position as Kroeber:

Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

Out of context, the fact that criteria must delimit what may be transmitted as heritage or tradition appears to be of no concern to these authors, leaving the (false) impression that everything is culture except for our dreams. Or wait, I seem to be mistaken on that (Spindler and Spindler, 1971). As between the two excerpts we can make a discriminating observation: what qualifies as artifactual belongs to the cultural heritage listing, but not to Kroeber's, who mentions or implies rather a lot that cannot

seriously be identified as a cultural artifact by any objective observer. For example, the actions of an assembly worker making cars; it is a learned activity, passed on to other such assembly workers. Neither (nor both together) constitutes cultural traits without something more. Thus artifacts are, if intangible, made noticeable; tangible or not, they must meet criteria in order that they be considered 'cultural'. The question, then, is *why* artifacts are what we say they are. What makes them, and not other things, cultural?

Kroeber (1952, p. 136) appreciates the fact and necessity of selection: "A culture is a way of habitual acting, feeling, and thinking channeled by a society out of an infinite number and variety of potential ways of living."<sup>5</sup> Here again we see the problem with what is art factual, but certainly there are criteria that delimit what is 'channeled'. He approaches (1952, p.402) the topic more directly in his remarks on style:

A style, in turn, is a self-consistent way of behaving or doing things. It is selected from out from among alternatively possible ways of doing. And it is selective with reference to values; that is, *the things style does and the way it does them are felt by the doers as intrinsically valuable – they are good, right, beautiful, pleasing, or desirable in themselves* [my stress].

We now have a much better feel for why the assembly worker produces what is a cultural artifact but in the *process* of the making does *not* manifest such an artifact. After all, no one cares, nor receives this knowledge, except those who require it to hold down a job (though the assembly line itself is assuredly cultural). In short, *artifacts carry traits<sup>6</sup> into society or are themselves carried there by human actions*.

Having defined them thus, their classification becomes fairly benign and straightforward. Artifacts can be 1) the expression of cultural traits (styles, symbols, emblems, icons); 2) embodied within humans, who partake in the artifact when expressing it (rites, rituals, mythic recitations) or 3) the result of manufacture (arts and crafts) or construction (teepees, airplanes, political systems, symbols).<sup>7</sup> From a different perspective, intangible traits must be mediated, carried, by humans, who are their 'living expression', possibly the most common artifact. Tangible traits have either been manufactured,

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constructed, or result from these processes (styles, etc.).

UNESCO (2003) is explicit about who can assess and determine what is cultural and what is not (what applies to 'intangibles' certainly applies to tangibles, and both apply to culture at large as well as specifically to heritage):

[I]ntangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it – without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage.

While there is truth to that assertion, it is hardly absolute. If we could go back in history and ask the *philosophes* if their work merited recognition as a cultural upheaval, they would doubtless affirm this (Gay, 1966) and history has since proven them correct. But would it have been appropriate, at the time, just to take their word for it?<sup>8</sup> Suppose a religious cult (not intended pejoratively) has met the basic criteria to constitute a true 'religion': does that fact alone grant them the status they seek? No, it doesn't. Such status requires generalized public acceptance. In short, it requires that the candidate demonstrate evidence of a *tradition recognized as such* (Herrman, 2009a, p.19) by the larger society. Those within their select tradition may certainly consider their belief system and rituals as a subculture, or simply as 'cultural'. They cannot assign their cultural artifacts to society at large.

Kroeber (p.362) seems to agree: "We may lay it down as a definition that, anthropologically, sociologically, and historically, an invention is not an invention until it is accepted in a culture. Until then it exists merely individually or mechanically; it actualizes historically only with its social acceptance."

### **Culture Consists of Both the Products of a Cultural Process, and the Gestalt of all Such Products**

"Big or little, then," writes Kroeber (p.254), "culture affects human action." To a nominalist, these are fighting words. Does 'philosophical realism' exist as a valid interpretation of reality? This question variously impacts the present efforts. The methodology itself requires the concept for its existence. Absent 'realism', the typological background is static instead of dynamic, the latter necessary to serve in a

normative methodology. The system it builds from is likewise dependent on 'realism', as Peirce took pains to argue despite living through a time sympathetic to nominalists, many of whom were notable in their respective fields (Ogden and Richards, 1946).

It was never the realist's position, said Peirce (1931, 1.27, n.1), "that any 'universal' itself is real, but [rather] in holding that what the word signifies, in contradistinction to what it can be truly said of, is real." For our example, this means that 'culture' need not invade our minds and direct our actions in order to be validly real for practical purposes; rather, it is what culture itself signifies that is real (presuming a real connection can be had between the concept's meaning and the results claimed). This becomes central to the reality of any gestalt or emergent property, such as, for example, Kroeber's (p.293, 254) super individual and super organic ideas of culture:

Theoretically, one might conceive of two cultures whose itemized content was identical, and which yet differed in the form or arrangement or system or pattern of this content. ... This is well recognized in 'Gestalt' or configurationally psychology. The 'form' of a culture may therefore be regarded as the pattern of interrelations of the contents that constitute it.

[C]ulture is super organic and super individual in that, although carried, participated in, and produced by organic individuals, it is acquired; and it is acquired by learning. What is learned is the existent culture. The content of this is transmitted between individuals without becoming a part of their inherent endowment.

We presume a known content and posit distinctions in form that differentiate one content from the other in regard of that form. It could be any gestalt or emergent property. If we take it as 'culture', then as a configuration of form its referent is the modified content as being differently arranged by the gestalt. The influence of the form on perceived content is valid; the concept's referent is real for being defined, and we presume the influence of the form as long as the arrangement associated therewith is real, which here we presume. The argument is valid even though we take a gestalt as content (4<sup>th</sup>-ness) rather than its form alone (completed at 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness but given meaning at 4<sup>th</sup>-ness).

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Consider how, for example, an American conceives the evidence of ethnicity supposing the following backdrop (Greeley and McCready, 1972, p.4, n.2): “The ethnic group as a self-conscious collectivity is the result of the American experience....” Their self-consciousness is augmented by the comparison with American culture, just as the American’s perception of another’s ethnicity rests on the same contrast in reverse.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, quite a lot that transforms the organization of our cultural content comes from without (Kroeber, 286): “Every culture...is the end product of a long series of events occurring mostly in other cultures, accidents from its own point of view, but ultimately of influence upon it.” None of this makes logical sense without philosophical realism.

### Culture is Mediated Not by ‘Individuals’ but by ‘Persons’

“Sometimes shrewd common sense,” notes Kluckhohn (1949, p.17), “has an answer that is close to that of the anthropologist.” It has been asserted above that careful thinkers are broadly modeled with the paradigmatic system. It is also broadly true, we believe, that careful thinkers and writers use difficult words more often correctly than the usual reader. Take, for example, the distinction between emblem and symbol. Careful writers use ‘emblematic’ to refer to specific corresponding characteristics between the emblem and its referent, whereas a symbol requires no correspondence to its referents. All emblems can be symbols but not the other way around.<sup>10</sup> Honigmann (1963, p.14) correctly combines them: “So a flag that symbolizes a group cements individuals who rally around the emblem.”

Careful writers also frequently make a distinction between the words ‘individual’ and ‘person’. Watson (2008 [1924], p.247), at the end of *Behaviorism* distinguishes them within these locutions:

But in spite of all the difficulties in the way, individuals can and do change their personalities. Friends, teachers, the theatres, the movies all help to make, remake and unmake our personalities. The man who never exposes himself to such stimuli will never change his personality for a better one.

In social contexts, the individual exposes via person-ality; absent these contacts there is no transition from the individual to a person-ality. Kroeber hints at the trend; “A society,” he notes (p. 7) “is a group of interrelated *individuals*.” A little later, he says that culture “presupposes bodies [individuals] and *personalities*, as it presupposes men associated in groups and it rests upon them...” [my notes and emphasis]. Kuper (1999, p.236) is more direct and to the point: “An individual may not be willing to accept a stereotypical role, or to follow a party line. ...[A] person may find that he is expected to conform to strict expectations....” One reasonable way of reading this is that the *individual* can think thus in private, away from the action; the *person* is in the action and can only avert, cope, or adapt. Whitehead (1961, p.208) might have the truest perspective in this fragment: “a personal society [a person], itself living and dominantly influencing a living society wider than itself....” This is essentially the creator and/or carrier of cultural material. The social actor is the *individual-as-person*.

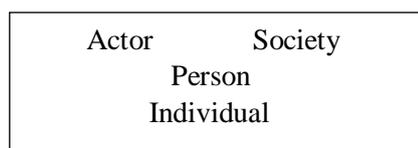
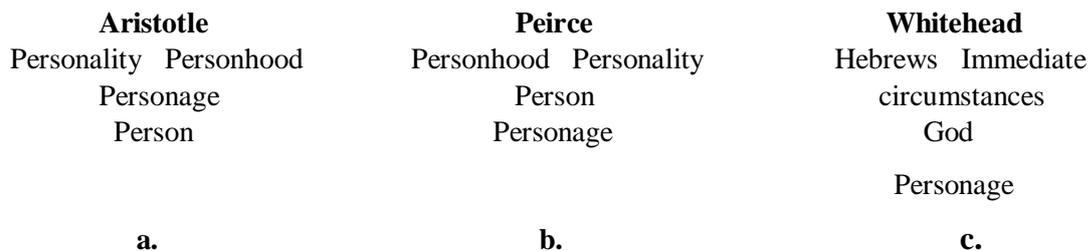


Fig6.

Paradigmatically these interpretations play out as in Figure (6). Here an individual – identified (2<sup>nd</sup>-ness) as either the recipient of spiritual universals (dignity, e.g.) and/or as an actor in society – is at once a ‘person’.

In Figures (8) and (9) we are examining the words person, personality, personhood and personage. Given the notion (Figure 8) that the person presupposes being known socially, the word ‘personage’ is intended in the meaning of ‘household name’.

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**Fig7.**

In these examples the suffixes carry important nuances: ‘-hood’ implies a demographically defined area and the culture associated therewith;<sup>11</sup> ‘-ality’ has a 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness indication of being, doing. It is similar to ‘-ship’ except that this latter maintains a specialized context suggesting mastery or technique combined with obligations by way of quality and/or protection.<sup>12</sup> Person-ship is not so distant from citizenship. We will later prefer this usage because notability goes with offices (interfaces of private and public), of which both personship and citizenship are examples. For the present examples ‘-ality’ is preferred for linking persons with the manifested qualities from their inner traits.

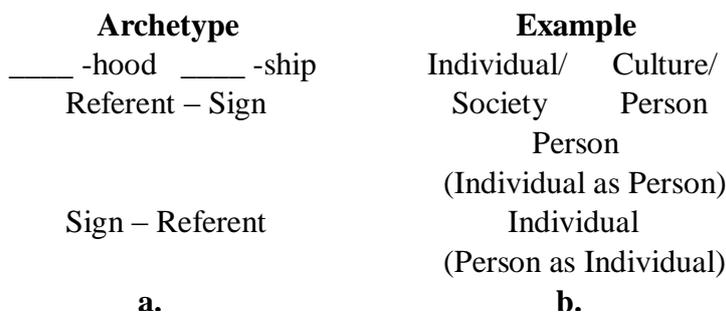
We read the Aristotelean function (Figure 8.a.) counterclockwise as follows: The person of 1<sup>st</sup>-ness is the ‘form’ or ‘mental image’ of an individual joining and participating in a group. In the position of material causation (3<sup>rd</sup>-ness in a Peircean function) personhood is like an art-space but filled with other persons rather than artworks. It is the realm in which a person manifests personality. The actual manifestations of personality (2<sup>nd</sup>-ness) are an ‘efficient’ means of influencing the person-space, the conclusion of which is the final cause, the teleological endpoint of the process after sufficient

iterations. The personage is a simulacrum and sign for the referent of an ordinary person who has yet to leave cultural artifacts or join therein.

The Peircean function (Figure 9.b.) goes like this: A personage of unknown definition (essentially an individual) is tested at 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness for properties suggesting membership in the personhood; at 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness this is further tested on the cultural (coloration) level. If both inspections work satisfactorily, the 4<sup>th</sup>-ness is a person (determined by the ‘interpreter’) who is a valid simulacrum for the personage (the referent).<sup>13</sup>

The Whiteheadian function (Figure 8.c.) diagrams the following statement (1961, p. 81) and flows counterclockwise with Aristotelian syntax: “For the early Hebrews, their God was a personage whose aims were expressible in terms of the immediate political and social circumstances.”

In Figure (10) we show the archetype in terms of the suffixes and the expected 1<sup>st</sup>-ness – 4<sup>th</sup>-ness sign-referent relation. In (b.) the equivalent of personhood is the individual in society.<sup>14</sup> Personship corresponds to culture ‘in terms of’ the *person* carrying artifactual content. We are reminded of Benedict’s (1934, forward) pithy account: “Culture is personality writ large”.



**Fig8.**

Chester I. Barnard (1968, pp.9-16), who along with Weber is the founder of organizational studies, bases much of his theory of the organization on the distinction between the individual and the person. “A first step should

be to set forth the position or understanding or postulates especially concerning the man, the ‘individual’, and the ‘person’....” Specifically – The individual possesses certain properties which are comprehended in the word ‘person.’

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Usually it will be most convenient if we use the noun 'individual' to mean 'one person' and reserve the adjectival form 'personal' to indicate the emphasis on properties. These are (a) activities or behavior, arising from (b) psychological factors, to which are added (c) the limited power of choice, which results in (d) purpose. It is necessary to impress upon the reader the importance of this statement of the properties of persons. They are the fundamental postulates of this book. Persons as *participants in specific cooperative systems* are regarded in their purely functional aspects, as phases of cooperation.

### DISCUSSION

By way of perspective, the definition of culture has remained amazingly constant ever since Tylor, in 1871, first treated the subject as a science in its own right. "Culture," he says in the opening words of *Primitive Culture*, "is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Though not specifically mentioned, we should assume that Tylor refers to artifacts significant to the culture: "[M]an is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun," says Geertz (1973, p.5); "I take culture to be those webs...." Tylor's list consists of the intangible aspects, of course, and we do require to add the material elements (see Kroeber, p. 253) that are frequently connected in particular to heritage such as monuments and architectural styles. Durkheim originally added what Kroeber labels his 'super individual and super organic' element: White (1949, p. 89) quite reasonably believes Durkheim spoke directly of culture in writing of - ...collective ways of acting or thinking [that] have a reality outside the individuals who, at every moment of time, conform to it. These ways of thinking and acting exist in their own right. Collective representations are the result of an immense cooperation, which stretches out not only into space but into time as well; to make them, a multitude of minds have associated, untied and combined their ideas and sentiments; for them, long generations have accumulated their experience and knowledge.

Kroeber has added much to the methodology of examination, and perhaps to the received definition.<sup>15</sup> The present effort (only slightly modified from that in Table 2) defines culture as the artefacts (individual and collective) whose

meaning derives from social significance carried by individuals who, being social actors, become persons mediating and/or expressing tradition in the context of heritage.

This is hardly a sea-change, but does qualify in many respects the usual definition, not least by providing a methodology of definition that compels a more critical and specific result. Thus we deal with *artifacts* as the general term for the tangible and intangible components of culture (or material and immaterial, a classification disapproved by Kroeber, p.103). We define traits in terms of artifacts, not the other way around. We mention both individual and collective contributions, as well as the distinct but interrelated tradition and heritage components of culture. We take pains to stress social acceptance as a presupposed component, while holding out respect for carefully considered etically derived assessments. Finally, and not least in importance, we identify the person as distinct from the individual as the carrier, via the personhood implied of society constituted of otherwise individual actors. It is instructive to compare Weber's (Schroeder, 1992, p.6) definition of culture with our own: "the endowment of a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of events in the world with meaning and significance from the standpoint of human beings." This nicely summarizes our definitions of 'person' and 'society'.

It should be noted that some recent writers have taken culture to be specific to man. Kroeber (p.8) is explicit: "Culture is the special and exclusive product of men, and is their distinctive quality in the cosmos." White (1949, p. 116) claims that, "It is *culture*, not society, that is the distinctive feature of man." Based on the findings of the paradigmatic methodology this position should be more closely scrutinized.

Many advanced animals have a social order and manifest collective development of individuals sufficient to qualify the reality of persons and personhood whereby through self-conscious striving, imitation or a mass drift response to the environment with appropriate widely-practiced responses we can entertain the notion of cultural phenomena, however limited or restricted. I see no reason to deny whales and higher primates their cultural capabilities.<sup>16</sup> At a bare minimum it seems that languages and hunting techniques would easily qualify. Speaking of dolphins, White (2007, p. ix) writes, "Using a traditional definition of 'personhood' I...argue that

dolphins are nonhuman persons...."Part of the argument raised herein is that philosophical realism is a necessary handmaiden to any study of culture (or the ideal methodology to analyze it?). The nominalist-realist issue has often focused on culture. "[O]pposition to the science of culture expresses itself variously," notes White (1949, p.142-143), "but one theme runs fairly consistently through most if not all of it. This is the objection that it is not *culture* but *people* who do things." To a nominalist the easiest way by which to introduce manifold errors of reasoning is to postulate sources of action outside of physical man. Kroeber quickly comes to mind with Geertz (1973, p.11) stating the problem, imagining "that culture is a self-contained 'super organic' reality with forces and purposes of its own; that is, to reify it." Of course Kroeber intends no such thing as reification, but you can imagine the nominalist retort when reading (p.10, n.5) this –

In short, specific human societies are more determined by culture than the reverse, even though some kind of social life is a precondition of culture. And there with social forms become part of culture!

Kroeber is arguing that 'progress' relies like culture on philosophical realism, and that it is as a rule a function of culture to provide what is necessary to it. It in no way denies persons their roles, but suggests that it is many persons acting typically indirectly and often without contact with one another who make for progress as also culture.

It is what Geertz says next that is the more interesting part: "Another is to claim that it [culture] consists in the brute pattern of behavioral events we observe in fact to occur in some identifiable community or another; that is, to reduce it." His objection may well apply to some of the definitions we have been citing. We should like to note that part of our effort here has been to avoid precisely this issue.

Another idea discussed and which also has something of a history within anthropology is the requirement of social acceptance in order to establish artifacts as cultural. But the specific requirement to obtain the culture's possessors for confirmation seems a recent addition and should never be taken to absurd lengths.<sup>17</sup> We needn't ask the Dolphin's permission to establish cultural inclinations throughout that species; the same often enough applies to humans. Thus, from Harris (2001, p.47), "Cultural materialists do not have to know

whether the members of a particular human population think of themselves as a "people" or group in order to identify them as a social group." The wisdom is to discriminate between the emic and etic methods of assessment.<sup>18</sup>

Acceptance and tradition also have their place in respecting common and current forms. No one is here suggesting that Linton (1938, p.248) be chastised for asserting that "it is the *individual* who is responsible, in the last analysis, for all additions to culture." At the core, it is true in any case, for the aspect of person need not be the first element. Many of the functions we introduced began with the individual. All this paper asks of the reader is to be mindful of the relation that a person holds to the social acceptance of ideas thereby communicated (or the products of individual industry brought to bear).<sup>19</sup> Linton's actual excerpt ends with this: "Every new idea must originate with some *person*" [my emphasis in both]. Is this owing to common vernacular or the apperception of the distinction we have argued above? Here it is impossible to tell, but nice to see in any case.

Some may balk at my broad use of 'artifacts'. In archaeology the artifact is a portable object manufactured, modified, or used by humans.<sup>20</sup> For our purposes 'portable' must be allowed to be metaphorical, and 'object' must be allowed from a 'realist' perspective (Peirce's 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness e.g.). Artifacts, as the word is used here, are the form of traits once taken, emically or etically, as 'cultural'. For those cultural traits passed on, be it in or through time,<sup>21</sup> the traits-as-artifacts move from person to person, so are in that sense portable.

Metaphysically, we hold that *traits* are the inward source of outward *characteristics*, whereas *qualities* are the outward presence of inward *properties*, both being 'real' and encompassing ideas, values and styles in the cultural context. Traits generally reveal tendencies, disposition or reliance; qualities reveal abilities, capacities or utilities. Colors (qualities) express the *property* of being *able* to reflect and absorb light wavelengths. The disposition to avoid 'closure' is a *trait* manifested through the *characteristic* of leaving patterns unfinished (Kluckhohn, 1949, p.33). But for ease of use, we will consider traits as a category encompassing the qualities; they and their carriers (artifacts) constitute the 'cultural materials' that can have real consequences in cultural practice as they are carried and applied

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by humans, whence the need for a realist vantage.

Because traits are always 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness, and qualities usually 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness, we can go to the same positions of any other function for paralleling features. For example, 'mode' is always at 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness and manner at 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness. Thus the *manner* of weaving baskets reflects the *property* (~ *ability*) of a material to flex; the *mode* of transport [horse] reflects their *characteristic* (~ *reliance* on) use in hunting bison. This helps avoid confusion (Kluckhohn, 1949, p.23): "It has been customary in lists of 'culture traits' to include such things as watches or lawbooks." To us they are *not* traits but rather the artifacts representing the manners or modalities [styles] of telling time and knowing law (alternatively, they represent the utility (quality, capacity) of watches to tell time and of law books to elaborate law).

The term 'artifacts' is also preferred over 'symbols' because the latter communicate so much that they communicate little that is truly worthwhile. "There is a legitimate objection," notes Kluckhohn (1949, p.42), "in making culture explain too much." A definition requires to say the most by way of detail in the most compact statement. 'Artifacts' accomplish much more of this than does 'symbols'.<sup>22</sup>

The metaphysical definition of artifacts is covertly offered by Harris (2001, p.47), who speaks of "sociocultural systems, denoting the conjunction of a population, society, and a culture, and constituting a bounded arrangement of people, thoughts and activities." It is represented just as he expressed it: Population, Society, Culture, Cultural materials = artifacts at 4<sup>th</sup>-ness. It builds in the Peircean direction: Individuals constituting a people, to which are added the criteria for a society ["a maximal social group consisting of both sexes and all ages and exhibiting a wide range of interactive behavior" *ibid.*] and which is then compared with the criteria for culture. We differ only in requiring material as well as immaterial artifacts. Again, careful thinkers think paradigmatically.

### CONCLUSION

Kuper (1999, p.1) reflecting on the modern popular interest in culture, reflected:

'We tried to sell "semiotics," but we found it a bit difficult,' Reported a London company called Semiotic Solutions, 'so now we sell "culture." They know that one. You don't have to explain it.'

But it may well be advisable to have a good definition to rely on. At least we cannot say, with Geertz (1973, p.87-88), that "virtually no one ever thinks of looking elsewhere – to philosophy, history, law, literature or the 'harder' sciences – for analytical ideas." Plenty have inquired of Peirce and Whitehead, only to turn away dumbfounded.

As a methodology, paradigmatic fails pretty well in meeting the requirements Harris establishes (2001, p.77) –

Only the capacity of a research strategy's theories to penetrate beneath the surface of phenomena, to reveal new and unexpected relationships, to tell us why and how things are as they are, can justify its existence.

Paradigmatic is structural from start to finish and admits of no apologies. This system treats the methodology as ethic and the dependent variables as nature's emic substance. The agreement between these two constitutes validity of the hypotheses advanced. It is broadly operational from the standpoint that we can derive logical semantic output that in turn frames hypotheses as well as offering points of agreement with empirical findings.

It seems appropriate to phrase the theoretical object of this paper in terms of Whitehead (1961, p.63): "The environment which the occasion inherits is imminent in it, and conversely it is imminent in the environment which it helps to transmit." It is adapted to present utility thus: The culture inherited by *individual* activity is imminent in such activity (2<sup>nd</sup>-ness), and conversely *personal* activity is imminent in the culture which it helps to transmit (3<sup>rd</sup>-ness). The reader may judge whether Whitehead would approve.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, a function can be deleted from or added to an existing vertical array; alternatively, one

or more elements may be replaced by others in a function.

<sup>2</sup> Thus there was a distinction between choosing the wrong sign, which implied a miscomprehension of reality, and misusing a sign, implying that one's meaning was less than clear and distinct. The first of his two-tiered test was to assay the reality; the second, the correct understanding of it.

<sup>3</sup> Whitehead (1961, p.19) offers an example combining part-whole and unity-plurality aspects. Speaking of the epoch (1<sup>st</sup>-ness) of 'Reason and the Rights of Man', he places England (via Bacon, Newton and Locke) at 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness (specialized notions) where he describes their contributions as 'insularity'. At 3<sup>rd</sup>-ness he places the French, who "broadened, clarified, and universalized. Thus they made worldwide, ideas [3<sup>rd</sup>-ness] which such a man as Edmund Burke could only grasp in their application to one race, even at times to one island." His 4<sup>th</sup>-ness can be presumed to reflect, e.g., 'final contentment' or 'spiritual independence' (experiences). The Peircean system could entertain precisely none of this.

<sup>4</sup> The role of 'action' occurs therefore both at 2<sup>nd</sup>-ness and 4<sup>th</sup>-ness. For another source arguing basically the same fact of action at (or as) completion (=4<sup>th</sup>-ness), see Dewey (1916) where he says, simply, "For the doing is the *actual* choice. It is the completed reflection."

<sup>5</sup> Kluckhohn (1949, p.26) is still more specific: "The essence of the cultural process is selectivity."

<sup>6</sup> We use the term 'trait' somewhat as does Honigsmann (1963, p.2): The Kaska Indian culture "includes substantial log cabins with glass windows and stoves. Though the Indians themselves make only the cabins, buying the windows and stoves, *all three elements are traits* of Kaska culture" [my stress]. The *fact* of cabins and the *fact* of *purchase* of windows and stoves are the traits; the building methods of the cabin as well as the final product are the artifacts. Windows and stoves are not in and of themselves artifacts, since there is nothing that necessarily suggests anything unique in their presence; but that they were purchased *is* a unique characteristic trait.

<sup>7</sup> In reaction to Talcott Parson's proposal that anthropology become specifically the 'science of culture', Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) wrote an extensive review on the state of culture within their discipline. They urged that the system of ideas aback culture could be scientifically observed, if indirectly, in "their expressions, embodiments, or results". This is the triad that has been filled out from the definition of artifact offered here, and differs significantly from the two authors, who saw culture expressed in symbols and embodied in art and religion. For another worker using 'artifact' largely in the same way, see Dipert (1993). Ricoeur (1971) is also a

source to the extent that acted texts serve the role of artifacts.

<sup>8</sup> Gay states (1966, p.21) that "the French philosophes liked to speak of a *siècle des lumières* and were sure that they were the men who were bringing light to others...."

<sup>9</sup> In his Presidential Address to the Royal Anthropological Institute, Radcliffe-Brown (1999, p. xiv) used much the same idea and language: "What is happening in a Transkeian tribe, for example, can only be described by recognizing that the tribe has been incorporated into a wide political and economic structural system."

<sup>10</sup> For example, Schneider (In Kuper, 1999, p.133) amongst many others including philosophers, says that the symbol is "something which stands for something else, where there is no necessary or intrinsic relationship between the symbol and that which it symbolizes."

<sup>11</sup> In the context of the puzzle pattern of Figures 8 (a. and b.), puzzle-hood would denote a framework in which the piece outlines are given so there are spatial relationships between any two pieces; the coloration comparisons and contrasts carry the connotation of a cultural metaphor.

<sup>12</sup> The idea of 'workmanship' (Veblen, 1964) is a stewardship of the workplace.

<sup>13</sup> Apart from vol.1 of the collection edited by Hartshorne and Weiss, a popular publication with of his metaphysics is Buchler (1955, esp. 74-119).

<sup>14</sup> A structural (or static) definition of 'society' would be an aggregate of *individuals*; a functional (or dynamic) definition would have *persons* as social actors. Much ink has been spilled on the relationship of culture with society. To the extent that culture's business is generating and transmitting cultural materials, Wolf's definition (In Kuper, p. 246) is better suited to 'society' than 'culture': "A culture [society] is thus better seen as a series of processes that construct, reconstruct, and dismantle cultural materials, in response to identifiable determinants."

<sup>15</sup> There may be a historical reason why Tylor was short on tangibles: Kuper (1999, p.26): "Initially, the German notion of culture was very similar to the French idea of civilization, but in time a distinction came to be drawn between the external wrappings of civilization and the inward, spiritual reality of culture." It should be stressed that humans (as *persons*) become artifacts when actually expressing cultural traits (Kroeber, 1948, p.8): "Now the mass of learned and transmitted motor reactions, habits, techniques, ideas and values – and the behavior they induce – is what constitutes *culture*." Material artifacts are mentioned parenthetically, suggesting that Kroeber is risking something here, something new (NoC): "[C]ulture consists of conditioned or

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learned activities (plus the manufactured results of these)...” In fact, it was in a 1924 paper that Edward Sapir stated (p. 402) the matter forthrightly, saying that culture embraces “any socially inherited element in the life of man, material and spiritual.” Even so, this is not original to him since he claimed he was using generally received notions of the word ‘culture’.

<sup>16</sup> Harris (2001, p.122) goes further: “There is nothing hypothetical or mysterious about culture. ... [I]t emerged as a byproduct of the evolution of complex neural circuitry, and it exists in rudimentary form among many vertebrate species.”

<sup>17</sup> Sapir (1929, p.120) warns the objective outside observer that “Forms and significances which seem obvious to an outsider will be denied outright by those who carry out the patterns; outlines and implications that are perfectly clear to these may be absent to the eye of the onlooker.”

<sup>18</sup> From *Wikipedia*: “In anthropology, folkloristics, and the social and behavioral sciences, emic and etic refer to two kinds of field research done and viewpoints obtained: emic, from within the social group (from the perspective of the subject) and etic, from outside (from the perspective of the observer).” For anthropologists in particular, Harris (2001, p.viii, 32-41) gives the official descriptions. He also offers an operational distinction (pp. 55-56): “The etic behavioral modes of production and reproduction probabilistically determine the etic behavioral domestic and political economy, which in turn probabilistically determine the behavioral and mental emic superstructures.”

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<sup>19</sup> The distinctions we make between ‘individual’ and ‘person’ are not inherent but are instead modes of evaluation based on circumstances. Sapir (1929, p.118) introduces the caveat thus: “This is not to say that it may not be infinitely more useful to apply the social mode of analysis of human conduct to certain cases and the individual mode of analysis to others. But we do maintain that such differences of analysis are merely imposed by the nature of the interest of the observer and are not inherent in the phenomena themselves.” We simply say that the ‘person’ is the subject from the social vantage, the individual from all others.

<sup>20</sup> Taken from <https://www.archaeological.org/education/glossary>.

<sup>21</sup> A common misconception is that traits must be ‘passed on’ in order to be ‘cultural’. But there are instances in which this need not be the case, such as fads. The fact of them is cultural, and different fads may spring up unannounced yet either disappear or fail to be translated across generations. They are ‘cultural’ despite the fact that their larger cultural milieu might disaccept them as such, whereas to the objective outsider they represent something unique about the culture and are shared by a significant number of people, and are at least known of throughout the larger culture.

<sup>22</sup> The relation of language to symbology requires no introduction. Since most of culture involves language at some point, so also symbolic use, and vice versa. This led Harris (2001, p.54) to exclude language entirely from his listing of ‘universal patterns’; for much the same reason we delimit symbols to the results of selective cultural behaviors.