

james clifford the predicament of culture

James Clifford and The Predicament of Culture: Exploring Identity, Representation, and Power

james clifford the predicament of culture serves as a pivotal reference point in contemporary cultural studies and anthropology, inviting us to rethink how culture is understood, represented, and negotiated in an increasingly interconnected world. Clifford's work, particularly his influential book **The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art**, challenges conventional ideas about culture as a fixed, bounded entity and instead presents it as dynamic, contested, and deeply intertwined with issues of power and identity.

Understanding James Clifford's perspective on culture offers valuable insights into the complexities of cultural representation, especially in the context of globalization, postcolonialism, and the politics of identity. In this article, we'll explore the key themes and arguments in **The Predicament of Culture**, unpack Clifford's contributions to cultural theory, and consider why his work remains relevant for scholars, artists, and anyone interested in cultural dynamics today.

The Core Ideas in James Clifford's The Predicament of Culture

James Clifford's **The Predicament of Culture** is not just another academic text; it's a critical intervention that disrupts how we think about culture and ethnography. At its heart, Clifford contests the traditional anthropological view of culture as something "out there" to be objectively studied, documented, and preserved. Instead, he posits culture as a fluid, hybrid process shaped by histories of colonization, migration, and cross-cultural encounters.

Culture as a Site of Negotiation and Contestation

One of Clifford's central arguments is that culture is always in a state of flux. It is not a neatly packaged set of customs or traditions but a living, evolving phenomenon. This perspective highlights how cultural identities are negotiated through power relations and historical circumstances. Rather than assuming cultures as homogeneous and pure, Clifford encourages us to see them as products of ongoing dialogue, conflict, and transformation.

This understanding is particularly important in the context of indigenous cultures and diasporic communities, where issues of representation and authenticity are deeply entangled with colonial histories and contemporary struggles for recognition. Clifford's critique pushes anthropologists and cultural critics to question their own positionality and the authority they claim when representing "the other."

Ethnography and the Question of Authority

Another significant contribution in **The Predicament of Culture** is Clifford's interrogation of

ethnography—the traditional method of cultural study in anthropology. He draws attention to the power dynamics inherent in the ethnographic process, particularly the asymmetry between the observer and the observed.

Clifford argues that ethnographers inevitably bring their own perspectives, biases, and cultural frameworks to their work, which shapes the way they interpret and present cultural phenomena. This reflexive approach encourages a more critical and self-aware ethnography, one that acknowledges its own limitations and the partial nature of cultural representation.

The Impact of James Clifford's Work on Cultural Studies and Anthropology

The insights offered by **The Predicament of Culture** have had a profound influence on multiple disciplines, reshaping debates around identity, representation, and power.

Hybrid Identities and Cultural Mixing

Clifford's emphasis on cultural hybridity has paved the way for new understandings of identity that move beyond rigid categories like race, ethnicity, or nationality. By recognizing the interconnectedness and intermingling of cultures, he opens up space to appreciate how identities are constructed in complex and layered ways.

This approach resonates strongly in today's globalized societies, where migration and digital communication continually blur the lines between "inside" and "outside" cultures. Clifford's framework helps us make sense of these cultural mixtures and the challenges they pose to traditional notions of belonging.

Influence on Postcolonial Theory

The Predicament of Culture also intersects with postcolonial studies by addressing how colonial histories have shaped cultural representations and power imbalances. Clifford's work critiques the legacy of colonial anthropology, which often exoticized and marginalized colonized peoples, and calls for more equitable and dialogical approaches.

His ideas encourage scholars and activists to rethink how cultural knowledge is produced and who gets to tell their stories. This has important implications for fields like museum studies, literature, and visual arts, where questions of representation and cultural authority are central.

Applying Clifford's Ideas in Contemporary Contexts

The relevance of **The Predicament of Culture** extends well beyond academia. Its themes resonate in various real-world contexts where culture, identity, and power intersect.

In Museums and Cultural Institutions

Museums have historically been spaces where cultural artifacts are displayed, often removed from their original contexts and meanings. Clifford's critique urges museums to reconsider how they curate and interpret collections, especially those related to indigenous and marginalized communities.

Many contemporary museums now engage in collaborative curation, involving source communities in decision-making processes to ensure respectful and accurate representation. This shift aligns closely with Clifford's call for more dialogic and ethical cultural practices.

In Media and Representation

In the world of media, film, and literature, James Clifford's ideas about cultural hybridity and the politics of representation encourage creators to embrace complexity and resist stereotypes. Storytellers who acknowledge the fluidity of culture can offer more nuanced and authentic portrayals that reflect real-world diversity.

Moreover, Clifford's emphasis on reflexivity reminds us to question who controls cultural narratives and to amplify voices that have been historically silenced or marginalized.

Key Takeaways from James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture*

To distill some of the essential lessons from Clifford's work:

- **Culture is dynamic:** It cannot be pinned down to fixed traits or boundaries but is always evolving through interaction.
- **Representation is political:** Who tells a story matters, as cultural narratives are shaped by power relations and historical contexts.
- **Ethnography must be reflexive:** Researchers need to critically examine their own role and acknowledge their limitations.
- **Hybrid identities challenge binaries:** Cultural identity is often layered and mixed, resisting simple categorization.
- **Collaboration matters:** Engaging with communities and valuing multiple perspectives leads to richer cultural understanding.

These principles continue to inspire ongoing discussions about culture in the 21st century, especially as societies confront questions about migration, nationalism, and globalization.

James Clifford's **The Predicament of Culture** remains a touchstone for anyone seeking to grasp the complexities of culture beyond stereotypes and simplistic definitions. It reminds us that culture is not a static relic but a vibrant, contested process that shapes—and is shaped by—our shared human experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main argument in James Clifford's 'The Predicament of Culture'?

In 'The Predicament of Culture,' James Clifford argues that cultures are not fixed or bounded entities but are constantly in flux, shaped by historical contexts, power dynamics, and cross-cultural exchanges.

How does James Clifford challenge traditional views of culture in 'The Predicament of Culture'?

Clifford challenges traditional views by rejecting the idea of culture as static and homogeneous; instead, he emphasizes hybridity, fragmentation, and the complexities of cultural identity.

What role does power play in Clifford's analysis in 'The Predicament of Culture'?

Power is central to Clifford's analysis, as he explores how colonialism, representation, and authority influence cultural narratives and the production of knowledge about cultures.

How does 'The Predicament of Culture' relate to the concept of cultural hybridity?

The book highlights cultural hybridity as a key concept, showing how cultures intermingle and transform through contact, challenging purity and fixed boundaries.

What methodological approaches does James Clifford use in 'The Predicament of Culture'?

Clifford employs interdisciplinary approaches, combining anthropology, history, literary theory, and postcolonial studies to analyze culture and representation.

Why is 'The Predicament of Culture' considered influential in anthropology?

It is influential because it shifts the understanding of culture from essentialist perspectives to more dynamic and contested processes, influencing contemporary cultural and postcolonial studies.

How does James Clifford address the issue of representation in 'The Predicament of Culture'?

Clifford critiques how cultures are represented in ethnography and museums, emphasizing the constructed nature of these representations and the importance of reflexivity in cultural interpretation.

Additional Resources

James Clifford and The Predicament of Culture: An Analytical Review

james clifford the predicament of culture stands as a pivotal reference point in the study of cultural identity, representation, and the complexities embedded within anthropological discourse. Clifford's seminal work, **The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art**, published in 1988, critically examines the intersections of culture, history, and power, challenging traditional notions of ethnography and cultural authenticity. His insights have significantly influenced contemporary debates about cultural hybridity, the politics of representation, and the dynamics of globalization.

Contextualizing James Clifford's Contribution

James Clifford, an American anthropologist and cultural theorist, emerged as a key figure in the postmodern critique of ethnography. **The Predicament of Culture** is a collection of essays that interrogate the ways cultures are depicted and constructed within academic and artistic mediums. Clifford's approach destabilizes the idea of culture as a fixed, bounded entity, emphasizing instead its fluid, contested nature. This perspective resonates deeply with the postcolonial discourse that critiques Western-centric narratives and the authority of ethnographic knowledge.

In this work, Clifford scrutinizes the role of the ethnographer and the inherent challenges of representation. He questions the objectivity often claimed by anthropologists, highlighting the subjective and interpretive processes involved in cultural documentation. By doing so, he foregrounds the ethical and epistemological dilemmas faced by scholars when engaging with cultures different from their own.

Core Themes in The Predicament of Culture

Culture as a Constructed and Contested Space

One of the central themes in **The Predicament of Culture** is the constructed nature of culture. Clifford argues that culture should not be viewed as a static or homogeneous entity but rather as a dynamic and negotiated process. This idea challenges earlier anthropological models that treated cultures as isolated, coherent wholes. Instead, Clifford presents culture as a site of encounter, exchange, and hybridity.

This conceptualization aligns with the increasing recognition of cultural hybridity in a globalized world, where identities are layered and influenced by multiple histories and contexts. For instance, Clifford's analysis draws attention to diasporic communities and indigenous populations whose cultural expressions resist simple categorization and reflect complex historical trajectories.

Ethnography and the Problem of Representation

Clifford's examination of ethnography addresses the predicament faced by anthropologists in representing 'the other.' He critiques the assumption that ethnographic writing can offer an unmediated, truthful account of cultural realities. Instead, he emphasizes that ethnographies are narratives shaped by the positionality of the author, the power relations involved, and the interpretive frameworks employed.

This critical stance has encouraged a more reflexive methodology within anthropology, where scholars acknowledge their influence on the production of knowledge. It also opened the door for incorporating multiple voices and perspectives, fostering a more dialogic and polyvocal approach to cultural representation.

The Politics of Cultural Authenticity

Another significant aspect explored by Clifford is the politics surrounding cultural authenticity. In **The Predicament of Culture**, he interrogates the desire to locate 'authentic' cultural expressions, often driven by nationalist or colonialist agendas. Clifford highlights how such quests can essentialize cultures, reducing them to fixed traditions devoid of change or external influence.

He problematizes the commodification of culture in contexts such as tourism, museum exhibitions, and popular media, where cultural elements are often appropriated and recontextualized. This commodification can distort meanings and perpetuate stereotypes, complicating efforts toward genuine cultural understanding and respect.

Implications of Clifford's Work in Contemporary Discourse

James Clifford's **The Predicament of Culture** remains highly relevant in today's academic and cultural landscapes. The rise of digital media, transnational migration, and multicultural societies has intensified questions about identity, representation, and cultural boundaries. Clifford's insights provide valuable tools for navigating these complexities.

For example, in media studies, his critique of ethnographic authority informs debates about who has the right to represent marginalized groups and how such representations should be handled responsibly. In museology, Clifford's work underpins efforts to decolonize museum narratives and recognize indigenous curatorial practices.

Comparative Perspectives: Clifford and Contemporary Thinkers

Clifford's ideas intersect with those of other influential theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Edward Said. Like Bhabha, Clifford emphasizes hybridity and the fluidity of cultural identities. His analysis complements Hall's work on cultural identity and diaspora by underscoring the performative and negotiated aspects of culture.

Unlike traditional ethnographers who privileged field immersion and participant observation as the gold standard, Clifford's approach encourages a critical interrogation of ethnographic texts themselves. This reflexivity aligns with Said's critique of Orientalism and the power dynamics embedded in knowledge production.

Key Features and Impact of *The Predicament of Culture*

- **Interdisciplinary Reach:** Clifford's work bridges anthropology, literature, art, and cultural studies, making it influential across multiple fields.
- **Postmodern Critique:** Challenges grand narratives and emphasizes fragmentation, multiplicity, and subjectivity in cultural analysis.
- **Reflexivity in Ethnography:** Pioneers a self-aware approach to ethnographic writing that acknowledges the researcher's positionality.
- **Focus on Hybridity:** Highlights the blending and interaction of cultures, moving beyond rigid boundaries.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Raises awareness about the consequences of cultural representation and appropriation.

These features have made *The Predicament of Culture* a foundational text, frequently cited in scholarly discussions about the challenges inherent in studying and portraying culture.

Potential Limitations and Critiques

Despite its widespread acclaim, some critics argue that Clifford's postmodern stance may lead to excessive relativism, complicating efforts to make definitive cultural claims or engage in political activism. Others suggest that the dense theoretical language can be inaccessible to practitioners outside academia.

Additionally, while Clifford emphasizes hybridity and fluidity, some scholars feel this focus might underplay the material realities and structural inequalities that shape cultural experiences. Balancing theoretical nuance with practical considerations remains an ongoing challenge inspired by

Clifford's work.

James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* continues to provoke thoughtful reflection on the nature of culture and representation. Its enduring influence is evident in how scholars, curators, and artists approach cultural difference, identity, and the ethics of storytelling in an increasingly interconnected world. Through its critical interrogation of ethnographic practice and cultural authenticity, Clifford's work invites ongoing dialogue about the complexities facing cultures in the twenty-first century.

James Clifford The Predicament Of Culture

james clifford the predicament of culture: *The Predicament of Culture* James Clifford, 1988-05-18 Clifford offers a critical ethnography of the West in its changing relations with other societies. Analyzing cultural practices such as anthropology, travel writing, collecting, and museum displays of tribal art, Clifford shows authoritative accounts of other ways of life to be contingent fictions, now actively contested in postcolonial contexts.

james clifford the predicament of culture: The Predicament of Culture James Clifford, 1988

james clifford the predicament of culture: THE PREDICAMENT OF CULTURE - TWENTIETH-CENTURY ETHNOGRAPHY, LITERATURE, AND ART (INTERLOAN 327215). ,

james clifford the predicament of culture: Predicament of Culture James Clifford, 1999

james clifford the predicament of culture: Frontiers of Historical Imagination Kerwin Lee Klein, 2023-11-15 The American frontier, a potent symbol since Europeans first stepped ashore on North America, serves as the touchstone for Kerwin Klein's analysis of the narrating of history. Klein explores the traditions through which historians, philosophers, anthropologists, and literary critics have understood the story of America's origin and the way those understandings have shaped and been shaped by changing conceptions of history. The American West was once the frontier space where migrating Europe collided with Native America, where the historical civilizations of the Old World met the nonhistorical wilds of the New. It was not only the cultural combat zone where American democracy was forged but also the ragged edge of History itself, where historical and nonhistorical defied and defined each other. Klein maintains that the idea of a collision between people with and without history still dominates public memory. But the collision, he believes, resounds even more powerfully in the historical imagination, which creates conflicts between narration and knowledge and carries them into the language used to describe the American frontier. In Klein's words, We remain obscurely entangled in philosophies of history we no longer profess, and the very idea of 'America' balances on history's shifting frontiers. The American frontier, a potent symbol since Europeans first stepped ashore on North America, serves as the touchstone for Kerwin Klein's analysis of the narrating of history. Klein explores the traditions through which historians, philosophers, anthropol

james clifford the predicament of culture: Museums in Motion Edward P. Alexander, Mary Alexander, 2008 In 1979, Edward P. Alexander's *Museums in Motion* was hailed as a much-needed addition to the museum literature. In combining the history of museums since the eighteenth century with a detailed examination of the function of museums and museum workers in modern society, it served as an essential resource for those seeking to enter to the museum profession and for established professionals looking for an expanded understanding of their own discipline. Now, Mary Alexander has produced a newly revised edition of the classic text, bringing it the twenty-first

century with coverage of emerging trends, resources, and challenges. New material also includes a discussion of the children's museum as a distinct type of institution and an exploration of the role computers play in both outreach and traditional in-person visits.

james clifford the predicament of culture: The Booker Prize and the Legacy of Empire

Luke Strongman, 2002 This book is about the Booker Prize - the London-based literary award made annually to the best novel written in English by a writer from one of those countries belonging to, or formerly part of, the British Commonwealth. The approach to the Prize is thematically historical and spans the award period to 1999. The novels that have won or shared the Prize in this period are examined within a theoretical framework mapping the literary terrain of the fiction. Individual chapters explore themes that occur within the larger narrative formed by this body of novels - collectively invoked cultures, social trends and movements spanning the stages of imperial heyday and decline as perceived over the past three decades. Individually and collectively, the novels mirror, often in terms of more than a single static image, British imperial culture after empire, contesting and reinterpreting perceptions of the historical moment of the British Empire and its legacy in contemporary culture. The body of Booker novels narrates the demise of empire and the emergence of different cultural formations in its aftermath. The novels are grouped for discussion according to the way in which they deal with aspects of the transition from empire to a post-imperial culture - from early imperial expansion, through colonization, retrenchment, decolonization and postcolonial pessimism, to the emergence of tribal nationalisms and post-imperial nation-states. The focus throughout is primarily literary and contingently cultural.

james clifford the predicament of culture: The Ethnopoetics of Shamanism M. Santos,

2016-04-30 Over the last century, Western portrayals of shamanism have changed radically toward an ethnopoetics of shamanism. While shamanic practices had long been indirectly registered by Westerners, it is only since the late nineteenth century that they have taken on symbolic import within discourses of primitivism and debates over magic and rationality.

james clifford the predicament of culture: Decolonizing the Stage Christopher B. Balme,

1999 A study of post-colonial drama and theatre. It examines how dramatists from various societies have attempted to fuse the performance idioms of their traditions with the Western dramatic form, demonstrating how the dynamics of syncretic theatrical texts function in performance.

james clifford the predicament of culture: Boundary Writing Lynette Russell, 2006-06-30

Have globalization and the emergence of virtual cultures reduced cultural diversity? Will the world become homogenized or Americanized? Boundary Writing sets out to demonstrate that this oversimplification denies the reality that today there is greater space for cultural diversity than ever before. It explores the desire to categorize individuals and collectivities into racial, ethnic, gender, and sexuality categories (black and white, men and women, gay and straight), which is a feature of most Western societies. More specifically, it analyzes the boundaries and edges of these categories and concepts. Across nine chapters, contributors reveal that such binaries are often too restrictive. Through a series of case studies they consider how these various concepts overlap, coincide, and at times conflict. They investigate the tension between these classifications that in turn produce individual speaking positions. Many people—indigenous, native, Anglo-settler, recent migrants of diverse ethnic backgrounds, gay, transgender, queer—occupy an in between position that is strategically shifting with the social, political, and economic circumstances of the individual. In Boundary Writing, the reader will journey through various complex permutations of identity and in particular the ways in which indigeneity, race, sex, and gender interact and even counter-act one another. Contributors: Erez Cohen, Aaron Corn, Bruno David, Neparrna Gumbula, Michele Grossman, Myfanwy McDonald, Clive Moore, Stephen Pritchard, Liz Reed, Lynette Russell.

james clifford the predicament of culture: Shadows in the Field Gregory F. Barz, Timothy J.

Cooley, 1996-11-21 This work, written by ethnomusicologists, considers fieldwork as an issue-laden practice, rather than as a methodology requiring a prescriptive manual. The contributors to this volume challenge the notion of fieldwork: its goals, the nature of knowledge gained in fieldwork and the place of fieldwork in historical studies. The book ranges widely through the history of the

discipline of ethnomusicology and the key theoretical issues to be addressed including ethics, politics, gender and relations with the people studied in the contemporary fieldwork environment. It represents the most significant aspects of the new ethnography, shifting the balance away from the data-collecting model of fieldwork toward an approach that is reflexive, humanistic and experiential.

james clifford the predicament of culture: *Tradition through Modernity* Pertti J. Anttonen, 2005-02-06 In their study of social practices deemed traditional, scholars tend to use the concept and idea of tradition as an element of meaning in the practices under investigation. But just whose meaning is it? Is it a meaning generated by those who study tradition or those whose traditions are being studied? In both cases, particular criteria for traditionality are employed, whether these are explicated or not. Individuals and groups will no doubt continue to uphold their traditional practices or refer to their practices as traditional. While they are in no way obliged to explicate in analytical terms their criteria for traditionality, the same cannot be said for those who make the study of traditions their profession. In scholarly analysis, traditions need to be explained instead of used as explanations for apparent repetitions and replications or symbolic linking in social practice, values, history, and heritage politics. This book takes a closer look at 'tradition' and 'folklore' in order to conceptualize them within discourses on modernity and modernism. The first section discusses 'modern' and 'traditional' as modern concepts and the study of folklore as a modern trajectory. The underlying tenet here is that non-modernity cannot be represented without modern mediation, which therefore makes the representations of non-modernity epistemologically modern. The second section focuses on the nation-state of Finland and the nationalistic use of folk traditions in the discursive production of Finnish modernity and its Others. The insights are applicable worldwide in discussions on cultural representation.

james clifford the predicament of culture: *British Colonial Realism in Africa* Deborah Shapple Spillman, 2012-05-04 What role do objects play in realist narratives as they move between societies and their different systems of value as commodities, as charms, as gifts, as trophies, or as curses? This book explores how the struggle to represent objects in British colonial realism corresponded with historical struggles over the material world and its significance.

james clifford the predicament of culture: *Comparative Theology and the Problem of Religious Rivalry* Hugh Nicholson, 2011-04-08 A model of interreligious theology that seeks to reconcile the ideal of religious tolerance with an acknowledgement of the extent to which religious communities construct identity on the basis of religious differences.

james clifford the predicament of culture: *Inventing the American Primitive* Helen Carr, 1996-07 *Inventing the American Primitive* examines a body of work, both literary and anthropological, that describes, inscribes, translates and transforms Native American myths and poetry. Drawing on post-colonial and feminist theory, as well as ethnography's recent textual turn, Carr reveals the conflicts and ambivalence in these texts. Through their writings, the writers and anthropologists studied were attempting to preserve a culture which their country, with their help or connivance, sought to destroy. The contradictions and tensions of this position run throughout their work. Although there is no simple narrative of progress in this story as it moves from the eighteenth-century primitivism to twentieth-century modernism, the book shows the process by which the richness and complexity of Native American traditions came to be acknowledged.

james clifford the predicament of culture: *Philosophy and History of Education* Antoinette Errante, Jackie Blount, Bruce A. Kimball, 2017-02-10 The studies of philosophy and history of education are under siege. These studies do not attract large grant funds and, to many, do not seem useful, even while much of educational research is dismissed as inconsequential or self-evident and the crisis in American education deepens. Philosophy and history of education have therefore been pushed to the margin--or beyond--in colleges and schools of education, commensurate with the decline of the humanities in higher education generally. *Philosophy and History of Education* examines the complex relationship between these studies, and the value of these related studies for improving educational knowledge, policy, and practice. From diverse perspectives, the philosophers and historians in this volume explore how bringing these disciplines

together yields insights about unacknowledged or occult aspects of education problems that neither could achieve on their own.

james clifford the predicament of culture: The Migrant's Time Saloni Mathur, 2011-09-27
The conditions of alienation and exclusion are inextricably linked to the experience of the migrant. This ground-breaking volume explores both the increasing emergence of the theme of migration as a dominant subject matter in art as well as the ways in which the varied mobilities of a globalized world have radically reshaped art's conditions of production, reception, and display. In a wide-ranging selection of essays, fourteen distinguished scholars in the fields of visual studies, art history, literary studies, global studies, and art criticism explore the universality of conditions of global migration and interdependence, inviting a rethinking of existing perspectives in postcolonial, transnational, and diaspora studies, and laying the foundation for empirical and theoretical directions beyond the terms of these traditional frameworks.

james clifford the predicament of culture: Transatlantic Travels in Nineteenth-Century Latin America Adriana Méndez Rodenas, 2013-12-12
Transatlantic Travels in Nineteenth-Century Latin America: European Women Pilgrims retraces the steps of five intrepid "lady travelers" who ventured into the geography of the New World—Mexico, the Southern Cone, Brazil, and the Caribbean—at a crucial historical juncture, the period of political anarchy following the break from Spain and the rise of modernity at the turn of the twentieth century. Traveling as historians, social critics, ethnographers, and artists, Frances Erskine Inglis (1806–82), Maria Graham (1785–1842), Flora Tristan (1803–44), Fredrika Bremer (1801–65), and Adela Breton (1849–1923) reshaped the map of nineteenth-century Latin America. Organized by themes rather than by individual authors, this book examines European women's travels as a spectrum of narrative discourses, ranging from natural history, history, and ethnography. Women's social condition becomes a focal point of their travels. By combining diverse genres and perspectives, women's travel writing ushers a new vision of post-independence societies. The trope of pilgrimage conditions the female travel experience, which suggests both the meta-end of the journey as well as the broader cultural frame shaping their individual itineraries.

james clifford the predicament of culture: Sámi Musical Performance and the Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe Thomas Hilder, 2014-10-16
The Sámi are Europe's only recognized indigenous people living across regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola peninsula. The subjects of a history of Christianization, land dispossession, and cultural assimilation, the Sámi have through their self-organization since World War II worked towards Sámi political self-determination across the Nordic states and helped forge a global indigenous community. Accompanying this process was the emergence of a Sámi music scene, in which the revival of the distinct and formerly suppressed unaccompanied vocal tradition of joik was central. Through joiking with instrumental accompaniment, incorporating joik into forms of popular music, performing on stage and releasing recordings, Sámi musicians have played a key role in articulating a Sámi identity, strengthening Sámi languages, and reviving a nature-based cosmology. Thomas Hilder offers the first book-length study of this diverse and dynamic music scene and its intersection with the politics of indigeneity. Based on extensive ethnographic research, Hilder provides portraits of numerous Sámi musicians, studies the significance of Sámi festivals, analyzes the emergence of a Sámi recording industry, and examines musical projects and cultural institutions that have sought to strengthen the transmission of Sámi music. Through his engaging narrative, Hilder discusses a wide range of issues—revival, sovereignty, time, environment, repatriation and cosmopolitanism—to highlight the myriad ways in which Sámi musical performance helps shape notions of national belonging, transnational activism, and processes of democracy in the Nordic peninsula. *Sámi Musical Performance and the Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe* will not only appeal to enthusiasts of Nordic music, but, by drawing on current interdisciplinary debates, will also speak to a wider audience interested in the interplay of music and politics. Unearthing the challenges, contradictions and potentials presented by international indigenous politics, Hilder demonstrates the significance of this unique musical scene for the wider cultural and political transformations in

twenty-first-century Europe and global modernity.

james clifford the predicament of culture: Culture Adam Kuper, 2000-11-15 Suddenly culture seems to explain everything, from civil wars to financial crises and divorce rates. But when we speak of culture, what, precisely, do we mean? Adam Kuper pursues the concept of culture from the early twentieth century debates to its adoption by American social science under the tutelage of Talcott Parsons. What follows is the story of how the idea fared within American anthropology, the discipline that took on culture as its special subject. Here we see the influence of such prominent thinkers as Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, Marshall Sahlins, and their successors, who represent the mainstream of American cultural anthropology in the second half of the twentieth century--the leading tradition in world anthropology in our day. These anthropologists put the idea of culture to the ultimate test--in detailed, empirical ethnographic studies--and Kuper's account shows how the results raise more questions than they answer about the possibilities and validity of cultural analysis. Written with passion and wit, *Culture* clarifies a crucial chapter in recent intellectual history. Adam Kuper makes the case against cultural determinism and argues that political and economic forces, social institutions, and biological processes must take their place in any complete explanation of why people think and behave as they do.

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