



## Natural Histories of Discourse

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Is culture simply a more or less set text we can learn to read? Since the early 1970s, the notion of culture-as-text has animated anthropologists and other analysts of culture. Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban present this stunning collection of cutting-edge ethnographies arguing that the divide between fleeting discursive practice and formed text is a constructed one, and that the constructional process reveals "culture" to those who can interpret it.

Eleven original essays of "natural history" range in focus from nuptial poetry of insult among Wolof griots to case-based teaching methods in first-year law-school classrooms. Stage by stage, they give an idea of the cultural processes of "entextualization" and "contextualization" of discourse that they so richly illustrate. The contributors' varied backgrounds include anthropology, psychiatry, education, literary criticism, and law, making this collection invaluable not only to anthropologists and linguists, but to all analysts of culture.

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## Editorial Review

About the Author

**Michael Silverstein** is the Samuel N. Harper Professor in the Departments of Anthropology, Linguistics, and Psychology at the University of Chicago. **Greg Urban** is professor of anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania.

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