Excerpt from:

Bradd Shore. Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning. New York: Oxford University Press. 1998.

- *Context markers,* which frame spaces as distinctive behavioral contexts (sports fields, play frames, and performance frames are all examples of spatial context markers)

Temporal Models

Temporal models orchestrate culturally specific time frames. Important kinds of temporal model include the following:

Incremental models, which show the progress of time, sometimes as measured from a beginning point. All manner of watches, stopwatches, some calendars, and oral counting schemes model the forward movement of time. A special kind of incremental temporal model measures the passage of time either from a significant past event or in relation to a significant future event. These temporal schemes often model time in religious traditions by providing mythical orientational points toward which or away from which time is understood to flow.

Decremental models structure the counting-down of time. Many games are temporally organized by decremental models. The count-down NASA uses for its space launches is a familiar decremental model of time. As with incremental models, decremental models may use digital or analog coding (such as an hourglass or, in basketball, a shot-clock). Radioactive dating techniques in paleoanthropology employ decremental time models based on the half-lives of particular radioactive elements.

Cyclical models provide a punctuated view of time viewed as cycles. Javanese and Balinese gamelan music employs a complex cyclical framework of sound (McPhee 1966), which has its analogues in Balinese calendars, kin terms, and cycles of personal names (Geertz, 1973e). Like the walkabout schema of the Murngin, these complex cultural models all function to shape the perception of various spans of time as cycles.

Rhythmic models break up the flow of time into rhythmic segments for the purpose of framing musical or verbal expression. Metronomes, baton movements, clapping, body movements, and percussion instruments all aid in the conventional keeping of time.

Biographical models are conventional models for conceptualizing people's life cycles. Our biographical models tend to be incremental, focusing on aging or getting older. In some cultures, however, biographical models stress the cyclical nature of the human life cycle or the replacement of one personality by another.

Context-framing devices mark off special time frames in the same sense as spatial models frame places. Time is segmented into special spaces, such as sacred time, secular time, or game time.