



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

Culture Is Not an Environment of the Mind

The Culture of Education by Jerome S. Bruner; Computers and Classroom Culture by Janet Schofield

Review by: Ray McDermott

The Journal of the Learning Sciences, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1999), pp. 157-169

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1466710>

Accessed: 15/07/2012 13:48

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Taylor & Francis, Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Culture Is Not an Environment of the Mind

Jerome S. Bruner. *The Culture of Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996, 224 pp. ISBN No. 0-674-17953-6 (paper).

Janet Schofield. *Computers and Classroom Culture*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 200 pp. ISBN No. 0521-47924x (paper).

Commentary by Ray McDermott
School of Education
Stanford University
Institute for Research on Learning
Menlo Park, California

There is good news: It is increasingly difficult to say anything about children in school without using the term *culture*, a move hopefully signaling the end of a myopic focus on individual children as if they were responsible for creating the world arranged before their birth. There is also bad news: It is equally difficult to know what anyone intends to accomplish with the term. In a wonderful compilation at midcentury, two leading anthropologists, Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1953), listed hundreds of definitions and uses of the term culture, and it would be easy to point to hundreds of new twists further complicating the present life of the word. As if education did not have enough trouble with key words like teaching, learning, aptitude, discipline, and community, we can now move from confusion to mayhem by adding culture to the semantic melting pot in which we prepare recognizable identifications of our children.

In their different ways, the two volumes under discussion struggle to break through to an appreciation of the connections between culture and learning, and in the process, they confront the enormous forces against realizing how we, in our concerted activities, are the source of the very terms we use to address, work on, and reproduce our problems. The effort of this brief article is not so much to evaluate the two books but to use their struggles to initiate a consideration of the role of the term culture in the use of the term *learning*.

I offer a discussion in three stages: First, a brief example of different understandings of the relation between culture and learning in varying political circumstances, specifically in traditional and colonial Egypt; second, a description of received conceptual barriers to talking about culture and learning in ways that will not make things worse for American education; and third, from within the context of confronting the received idiom, a simple recasting of the Schofield and Bruner books in more cultural terms.

AN INTEGRAL VIEW OF CULTURE AND LEARNING

In his historical analysis of *Colonizing Egypt*, Timothy Mitchell (1988) gives an intriguing account of the meaning of the term culture in the work of a 14th-century Muslim scholar, Ibn-Khuldun. The excitement is in how much the word points to practice and participation. Culture (*'umran*) is neither an aside, nor a surround, nor a vague, generalized environment for the mind, as is often the case in current educational writing; rather, for Ibn-Khuldun, culture is constructed from a root term for "to build" (*'amar*), and, together, they offer the sense of "activity, bustling life, fullness (of a market well-stocked with goods, for example, or a harbor frequented by ships and merchants), prosperity, building" (p. 53). What would learning look like in a world conceived in these terms? Mitchell offers the following summary of learning in precolonial Cairo:

Learning occurred as a relationship that, as in every craft, might be found between any individuals at almost any point. Beginners learned from one another, according to their different aptitudes, as much as from those who were masters; and even masters continued to learn from those who possessed other skills, who had mastered other texts. The method was one of argumentation and dispute, not lecturing. The individual was to be deferent where appropriate, but never passive. (p. 84)

From that base, under colonial prescriptions, inscriptions, and conscriptions, Egyptian education moved to a more Western style in which a teacher occupies all the time and most of the space in a room full of regimented and well-disciplined students. In the late 19th century, the word for "to breed or to cultivate" (*tarbiya*) was joined with the word for "organisation, discipline, rule, regulation (hence even gov-

ernment)" (*tartib*), and together, they become the modern term for education. Both culture and learning were brought into a new reign of discipline backed by guns and market power, of course, but no less so by maps, census lists, sewers, schools, new literacies, and altered sensibilities. Culture and learning were cast asunder and thrown into a hostile relation to everyday life. For the colonialist's thrill and kill, Egyptian children were offered drill and skill.

The nicely nuanced version of the relation between words for culture and learning in traditional Egypt may not be possible in contemporary English, at least not as that language has been nurtured by American education and psychology.¹ The colonialist models that served the West so richly around the world have been found no less useful at home, and we have been saddled with a view of both culture and learning adrift from, and consequently a burden on, the practices of daily life. People in American culture have the debilitating habit of making factual and consequential the arbitrary and reality constraining categories that identify minds inside the head as the site of learning, skills as the content of learning, and multiple choice tests as the measure of learning. These are all identifications that lead continually to accounts of the poor and minority as psychologically inadequate to the tasks of modern life (Varenne & McDermott, 1998). How are we to get out of this mess, and might a concept of culture be of assistance?

The 19th-century colonialist looked out at Egypt through a tiny and well-organized spy glass that delivered reports of disorder, laziness, and the need for an institutionalization of more recognizable forms of discipline. Maps were drawn, censuses taken, armies conscripted, police trained, classrooms organized, knowledge redefined, and elites sent off to Europe for socialization. A century later, that same lens has been the focus of a theory of reality as cognition. By the dictates of modern cognitive psychology, the world is organized from inside the head, and the more knowledge and skill put into heads, the better the world. Committed both conceptually and methodologically to understanding life inside the head, psychology now needs to account for the world out there, to account for the world—and here is the bad phrasing—that is the environment for the realities harbored in the mind. By this phrasing, the ultimate test of reality is inside the head and not in developments in the world, as if change involved only changing one's mind, rather than having to change the conditions with which minds have to work. By a more powerful phrasing, reality would be in the active spaces built by persons in interaction with each other across time. Instead of asking about the world that fills the mind, inquiry would be directed to activities with which people concertedly make realities for each other in homes, markets, and schools. Such an

¹Mitchell's (1988) Egyptian version of learning is used by Lave (1996) to explore a theory of learning for present circumstances, and the Egyptian account of culture could similarly stand as a base for contemporary theories of culture that emphasize the interaction of what has already been built (a market, a harbor) and what members of culture actively do with it (e.g., Varenne & McDermott, 1998).

account would even include a description of the social uses of bad ideas like the isolated mind. On the way to such a transition, culture has become an object of focus, but which version of culture, why, and with what purpose and consequence?

CULTURE AND LEARNING AMONG RECEIVED DICHOTOMIES

A few years ago, Thomas Rohlen, Mizuko Ito, and I opened a course on Culture and Learning with an elicitation of what the word culture did not mean. We thought it would take a few minutes, but over the course of an hour, we filled a board with suggestions. We had met the enemy. The word was so well defined in terms of what it does not mean that it became difficult to imagine how we might ever use the term to address what goes on in the world. A similar chart on what the term did mean netted us many fewer terms and a much less enthusiastic discussion.

Primarily, the word culture existed in three contrast sets that did more to define the term's use than the good intentions of any theory. First off, and way off at that, culture stood in contrast to anything natural or biological. Although everyone could understand that nature and culture were interactive, they nonetheless thought the two terms marked separate realities that, when mixed in different proportions, made a thing more one and less the other, more natural and less cultural (granola) or more cultural and less natural (corn flakes). The granola–corn flakes example should be silly enough to indicate the theoretical finesse denied by the popular contrast between nature and culture. To the argument there was nothing more natural to the human situation than that all persons are born into and must immediately deal with culture as the condition of survival, there was only a reluctant and short-lived acknowledgment.

Second off, and no less way off, culture stood in contrast to anything individual or personal; although everyone could understand that individual and culture were interactive, they nonetheless thought the two terms marked off separate realities that, when mixed in different proportions, made things more one and less the other, more personal and less cultural (neurosis) or more cultural and less personal (neurosis). The neurosis–neurosis example should be confusing enough to indicate the theoretical finesse denied by the popular contrast between what might arbitrarily be called cultural and what might arbitrarily be called personal. To the argument that the terms simply marked off different perspectives on the same realities, perspectives made useful for apprehending different dimensions of the same phenomena, there was only a silent resistance. In addition, to the argument, there was nothing more cultural than our idea of the individual, there was agreement for the proposition as stated but little idea of how we might investigate culture as anything other than a source of permutations (many of them distorting or mistaken) on categories more naturally given, for example, categories like the individual.

It is not the case these dichotomies do not gloss important divisions in our experience. Quite the opposite, the problem is that they make sense too easily. They make immediate sense in spite of, or because, they do not come to us complete with a description of the perspective or level at which they are designed to be meaningful. It is the purpose of analytic terms not just to identify vaguely “things” in the world but to specify the relations among things by specifying the procedures that helped to bring them into focus. James Joyce (1939) once offered a profound counter to any demand to choose sides in a dichotomy war: He would prefer “one aneither” (p. 101) and so should we. The students were amused by this argument, but it did not redirect their sense of how the term culture might reorganize their thinking about learning.

Then came the third contrast set, perhaps most way off and difficult to work with: Culture, by everyone’s account arbitrary and socially constructed, stands in contrast to what is real, necessary, and true. By this third contrast set, culture was not a term for the real and consequential mental and material work people do in organizing a life with each other but a term for the make believe put over on what is natural and individual. Culture is not only collusional but illusional and even delusional. By this account, we have to deal with culture in our educational work with children but only until we get things straight. If we could just slap that culture into conformity with the natural and real demands of individual growth, everything would work properly as a matter of course.

In this semantic whirlwind, what is the possibility the term culture can help us achieve any clarity in the already rough and tumble confusions we call theories of learning and education? Without a theory of culture, it would be extremely difficult to make progress, but it is not easy with one either. Reformers beware: Culture is not an add-on or in any way a static environment that can be studied by its effect on what is not cultural. Culture is not a new variable to be taken into account in an inquiry into what is natural, individual, and real. The mind is never an isolated entity dragged out to deal with the particularities of an equally autonomous cultural environment. There is never a time, or a place, to watch either of them on its own. The only choice is to work with them in action, each constituting the other in the practices of real people making their lives under each other’s influence. Almost a century ago, George Herbert Mead (1909) warned against a mode of research that kept the mind a separate analytical entity against which to study the influence of the social and cultural “in the same manner one might investigate the psychology of mountain tribes because they are subject to the influence of high altitudes and rugged landscape,” as if sociability is “no fundamental feature of human consciousness, no determining form of its structure” (p. 401). Culture is not an environment of the mind.

Moving beyond a preliminary appreciation of the fact of sociability has been a definitional and methodological nightmare. To talk of mind as sociocultural and simultaneously natural, individual, and real requires a redefinition of all base pairs

of categories that can misguide such a discussion: subject–object, structure–agency, mental–material, theory–practice, competence–performance, and so on. Key analytic terms must be carefully reshaped to fit the new theoretical environment: kinds of identity (Hall, 1973), kinds of function (Silverstein, 1980), kinds of context (McDermott, 1993), and kinds of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) must be inventoried and respecified.² We have a long road ahead.

BEYOND RECEIVED DICHOTOMIES

American education is a difficult topic for books with culture in the title to deliver a consistent and helpful analysis. The volumes under discussion contribute on other fronts. Schofield shows a social world that waits ever ready to overwhelm any new technological advance in pedagogical materials for classrooms, a finding that, although it should not surprise, needs constant restatement in the face of the latest techno-enthusiasm. Bruner's book takes on the larger task of understanding education and the forming of the individual mind as necessarily requiring a sense of culture, a message of great consequence to those who have been studying the mind as if it existed independently of the hands-on work people do with the sign systems that make up a cultural context. It is good to see Bruner almost make a version of Mead's point: "Rather than thinking of culture being 'added' to mind or as somehow interfering with the mind's elementary processes, we do better to think of culture as *in* the mind" (p. 170). Rhetorical flourish aside, negotiating details of a theory of culture and learning is not the strength of either book.

Schofield's book does not suffer internally for not contributing to a theory of culture, for the term does not figure in her analysis. Culture appears in the title but not in the index. It is also not a source for an analytic move or substantive claim. The bibliography makes reference to almost no cultural analysis. The term culture in the title seems to refer to general background expectations about schools, schedules, machines, and minds that resist any sensible social change in classrooms. Culture refers to something of an educational white noise of misunderstandings that mask the efforts of intelligent individuals to set things straight. Although it is definitely hard to make social change, and culture is likely a nasty culprit on the

²Efforts to overcome dichotomies that allow easy reception of a theory are notoriously convoluted. Perhaps Bourdieu (1977) is the champion of bombastic phrasings of the mind.

The mind born of the world of objects does not rise as a subjectivity confronting an objectivity: The objective universe is made up of objects that are the product of objectifying operations structured according to the very structures which the mind applies to it. The mind is a metaphor of the world of objects which is itself but an endless circle of mutually reflecting metaphors. (p. 91)

side of the status quo, it is also the case any analysis of cultural constraints on making change would be horribly incomplete without an account of how the goals and even the details of the design of any proposed change, and indeed, the very thought processes of those calling for the change, are all part and parcel of the culture to be described, accused, and reformed. Schofield's sense of culture is not meant to go this deep, and the book would be more accurately named "Constraints on Educational Change with New Technologies in Classrooms." Rather than complain about what Schofield did not intend by using culture in the title, it is more interesting to make use of what she did accomplish, namely, a description, by way of interview and observation, of the troubles anyone introducing a computerized tutor into school classes might encounter and identify as a matter of course. A cultural formulation of her data would raise different questions than she has raised, but we can thank her for supplying a platform.

A more cultural analysis would reexamine Schofield's conclusions and wonder about the categories guiding the analysis. The gender chapter is an example. Schofield reports the usual suspects: Girls do not participate with computers much, and, when they do, they have to put up with domineering technomales. It is easy to find agreement that this is not an inherent biological fact anymore than sewing is considered a male trait among Navajo and female in traditional America. However, it is not much of a cultural fact either, at least not until we locate the organizational details of what makes people identify just about everything (boats, cars, chicken soup, beef soup, etc.) as gendered, makes them place computers at a nexus in gender arrangements, and makes access to computer education a national problem to which researchers can address attention (Broughton, 1991). Yes, boys seem to dominate, but how do boys get arranged to do that? Where did they learn it, and how do they ply their learning? How many people are involved? And just what is face-to-face domination anyway, and might it be nothing but display, mere peacocking with nothing under the feathers? Gender is a complex arrangement, and it takes more than men and women to create troubles for computers being introduced into schools. It takes a culture to make such a mess.

Karen Cole (1995) has reported male dominance in mouse use in group work at a computer and shown this to be the best way for boys to accept the directions of girls who do not often seek mouse control. She has complicated the scene with a description of a girl who, after expertly telling the mouse-master boy what to do, later reports to the class that she did not help much in getting the work done. Which piece of the child's behavior can be called gendered, with whose help, by way of what interpretative categories, and in what contexts applied? The cultural question is not what do boys and girls do, but when are the categories male and female made relevant, in what circumstances, by virtue of what work? To answer such questions, analysts must deliver both the details of face-to-face interaction and accounts of context that might include the behavior of millions of others, all busy constructing the constraints on how men and women are done, where, when, and

with what consequences. An analysis is cultural to the extent it delivers a description of the materials people make available to each other in their work of constructing the world available to common sense. Gender is involved, of course, but it is not a reality unto itself. Mind is involved, of course, but it is not a reality unto itself. We might just as well say that mind, like gender, or other classroom events like disability (McDermott, 1993), success, and failure (Varenne & McDermott, 1998), or cooperation (Goldman, 1996) is simply a word we use to notice individual points of order in concerted activities involving millions of others. How to think about the ties between culture and the developing mind is the problem taken up by Bruner.

Any book by Jerome Bruner marks a serious moment in American letters (Geertz, 1997). For 40 years he has had a knack for pointing the way, and this book points to the concept of culture for relief from the disappointments of the cognitive revolution. Bruner, of course, was an architect of the cognitive revolution (see the essays collected in Bruner, 1973), but he was never content to leave the mind in the laboratory. From the beginning, he wanted a theory of education and for that a theory of culture. Putting the world back into the mind behind the eyes certainly was an advance over thinking of children as another set of responses to contingencies of reinforcement, but the application of the cognitive revolution to accounts of children's learning, and particularly to the apparent failure of some to learn, invited conceptual and political distortions. If life is in the mind, those who did not do well in school (i.e., those who did not do well on school-like tasks), obviously did not have the right stuff in their heads. They were called cognitively and linguistically deprived, and, because all things American are neatly packaged by race and class, members of the White middle class found themselves describing poor and minority students as collectively and culturally deprived. It was apparently difficult to avoid the trap, and, for a brief enthusiastic moment, even Bruner (Greenfield & Bruner, 1969) could be found calculating what was missing from an incomplete cultural environment, in this case, in Africa:

Specifically, in a conservation problem, a child might be asked: "Why do you say that this glass has more water than this one?" But this type of question would meet with uncomprehending silence when addressed to the unschooled children. If, however, the same questions were changed in form to "Why is thus and thus true?" it could often be answered quite easily. It would seem that the unschooled Wolof children lack Western self-consciousness: they do not distinguish between their own thought or statement about something and the thing itself. (p. 637)

Quite aside from wondering how any Wolof might get around the world without distinguishing statements and their things, what we need to see is, by this way of theorizing, culture is understood as an environment for the mind, and, because some environments are impoverished and offer less culture than others, in short,

because there are culturally deprived cultures, individuals can differentially develop cognitive and ego strength.³ Unfortunate dichotomies—can and cannot and we and they—are taken for granted, and they turn ugly when combined: We can, and they cannot. Nineteenth century Egyptian children were no doubt dismissed by the same assumptions—colonialist culture can, and Egyptian culture cannot. The term culture still performs such service in much educational research. We can now, 30 years later, turn to Bruner for both a critique of such reasoning—including an excellent description (pp. 71–2) of what is wrong with a theory of cultural deprivation—and a sincere search for a different way of conceiving of the relation of culture to the development of mind.

Developing a theory of culture that would help education and not simply work within its stereotypes is no easy task.⁴ If culture is understood in antithesis to nature, the individual, and the real, then the mind comes into the world on its own terms and is operated on by cultural peculiarities, for better (Euroamerican, middle class mores) or for worse (African Wolof and African American minority), for richer or for poorer, and in ways to be manipulated and remediated by educators. If, on the other hand, mind is understood in cultural and historical terms (Vygotsky, 1987; M. Cole, 1996; M. Cole, Engestrom, & Vasquez, 1997), as a fast action nexus in the flow of historically constituted practices across persons and political circumstances (Lave & Wenger, 1991), then descriptions and evaluations of minds, and plans for educating minds, must always go through a cultural analysis focusing on native theories of culture as possibly constitutive of the very problems

³It is a treacherous analytic road from grammatical nuance to a description of cognitive abilities. A language and its speakers are always more flexible and cunning than any effort to describe their limits. For a critical account of how speakers of grammatical Japanese should be unable to tell the time, see Miller (1975).

⁴Insistence on the individual as the unit and measure of reality has allowed much Western, particularly Anglo American, psychology and philosophy to proceed without reference to the complexities of living an individual's life in a society organized by others (for a sophisticated treatment, see Manicas, 1987). Correctives can seem terribly naive. For a minimalist program, consider Herbert Simon's (1976; for a current version, see Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996; for a reply, see Greeno, 1997) suggestion we discover and enhance how people solve cognitive problems as the way to fix the world. Philosophy has so suffered from a preoccupation with life behind the eyes that a common-sense truism—that dialogue precedes monologue—has become a publishable realization. John Searle's (1995) latest book announces the importance of the social world given that any speaker has to take into account other speakers. Many have not had the luxury of being confused about this, and, to keep the embarrassment in tact, he ignores all social theory and leaves us with a social world made up of one individual after another with an intention to say something. Bruner shares with Searle a reaching out to culture from inside a head, and, although he manages to get much farther, his starting point limits him to a world without complex sociability at the level of either interactional or institutional politics. His version of culture is interesting as an environment for things psychologists traditionally study, and, for most cognitive and educational psychology, this represents an advance. He does not fully consider the possibility that, if culture is taken seriously as the very fabric of life, a focus on culture might reorganize what psychologists study.

to be solved. For example, any account of culture in the problem of school failure in the United States usually focuses on what children from different minority groups can or cannot do and often delivers the same cultural pap, namely, more minorities and more measures of their failure. In a more complete cultural analysis, questions would focus on when and how dichotomies like we and they and can and cannot are allowed to dominate discourse and to pin school failure on minority mores without forcing a confrontation with how the rest of American culture constitutes a series of well-rewarded traps for making minorities look like they have failing children.

Bruner is not immune to this problem to the extent he is interested in culture as it influences the workings of the mind, to the extent he writes of "culture as in the mind." A more cultural and less cognitive analysis might show how a focus on the mind as a whetstone of reality is part of the same cultural materials Americans use in maintaining an institutional fabric for relentlessly locating, describing, measuring, and explaining one half the children doing less well than the other half. Americans have not made schools an equal medium through which children from different groups are sorted by skill levels along a continuum of failure and success. Rather, the people of America routinely create the cultural materials from which each new generation of school failures is identified, and these materials include the very ideas of success and failure, the very idea of cognitive skills, and the assumed measurable relation between school performance and cognitive skills. A cultural analysis of education must confront the internal colonialism that has researchers examining the mind as the site of school failure instead of examining the activities of everyone in America keeping school failure an ever-present possibility for all.

In his account of tensions in any act called educational, Bruner complains about dichotomies that distort any discussion of culture and learning (he calls them antinomies—two contrary positions for which there are equally good arguments): "the individual realization versus the culture preserving antinomy; the talent centered versus the tool-centered antinomy, and the particularism versus universalism antinomy" (p. 69). These are the dichotomies that face anyone organizing an educational institution. They force us to ask: Should the emphasis be on individual potential or social reproduction, individual ability or the good of all, one set of rules and standards or sensitivity to the moment? These are not good questions. We should take "one aneithor." Emphasize one side of the divide, and everyone complains about the absence of the other. It is easy to see how the prevalence of such either/or choices constitute a limiting environment for education. And where do the dichotomies come from? From us all, of course. Most of the world's cultures—traditional Egypt, for example—have done their business without turning such antinomies into gaps that swallow the next generation, but we seem to create them at every turn.

A cultural analysis would require an account of the work people do in deriving, stating, and maintaining these dichotomies. Bruner is aware that the two sides of an antinomy cannot be balanced, that there is no “splitting the difference” in honoring both sides, but he offers a program of social change based on the possibility we can, if vigilant, create the following:

School cultures that operate as mutual communities of learners, involved jointly in solving problems with all contributing to the process of educating one another. Such groups provide not only a locus for instruction, but a focus for identity and mutual work. . . . The balance between individuality and group effectiveness gets worked out within the culture of the group. . . . And since school cultures of mutual learners naturally form a division of labor, the balance between cultivating native talent and enabling all to move ahead gets expressed internally in the group in the more humane form of “from each according to his or her ability.” In such school cultures . . . being natively good at something implies among other things, helping others get better at that something. (p. 81–82)

Yes again, and of course, this is what we should all be doing. This is where we must start, but we must be ready for disappointment and starting again, perhaps in a new place. Analytically, we must worry about why it has been so difficult to organize, nearly a century after Dewey, Montessori, and Steiner, a proper culture of education? Might the very formulation of problem and solution harbor cultural traps that construct tomorrow as another version of yesterday? What are we to do with a call for “mutual learners” in communities ripped by race and class divisions? What are we to do with another mention of “ability,” a term so effective in validating a “division of labor” growing “naturally” along arbitrary lines defined by race and class? Can we really ask teachers and students to strike a “balance between individuality and group effectiveness” when the schools keep individualized records—and norm referenced ones—for the rest of society to use at mobility relevant moments? Will vigilance be enough? Or will we have to insist on a more radical theory of culture to question all terms that come easily to the tongue.

Education’s next reform and “psychology’s next chapter” may be more sensitive to the workings of culture, but it will not be an easy transition. The dichotomies that constrain American educational discourse are arbitrary, limiting, and even destructive, and vigilance will not steer a middle course between their distortions. It is better to seek a cultural analysis that confronts the work we all do in making our dichotomies so common sense and routine. This is not an easy road. Methodologically, there is little place to stand without we and they, can and cannot, enabled and disabled, individual and social, nature and nurture, smart and dumb. The center will not hold, and neither will the sides. A focus on the work we, the people, do to put the dichotomies back together, we can call a cultural analysis. Confrontation with that work we can call the beginning of culture change.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This review was conceived while participating in a seminar with Jean Lave, Seth Chaiklin, Mariane Hedegaard, and a handful of dedicated students. I can thankfully report having heard their voices as I wrote. Our mad romp through Marx, Simmel, Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, Hall, Bourdieu, and Mitchell offered a remarkably alternative view of the relations between culture and education than is available from most contemporary theorizing in psychology. Eric Bredo, Shelley Goldman, James Greeno, and Mizuko Ito also offered helpful comments.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, J., Reder, L., & Simon, H. (1996). Situated learning and education. *Educational Researcher*, 25, 5–11.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Broughton, J. (1991). Machine dreams: Computers in the fantasies of young adults. In R. Rieber (Ed.), *The Individual, communication, and society* (pp. 191–244). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1973). *Beyond the information given*. New York: Norton.
- Cole, K. (1995). Equity issues in computer-based collaboration: Looking beyond surface indicators. In J. L. Schnase & E. L. Cunniss (Eds.), *Proceedings of Computer Supported Collaborative Learning* 95 (pp. 67–74). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Cole, M. (1996). *Cultural psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cole, M., Engestrom, Y., & Vasquez, O. (Eds.). (1997). *Mind, culture, and activity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Geertz, C. (1997). Learning with Bruner. *New York Review of Books*, 44(6), 22–24.
- Goldman, S. (1996). Mediating micro-worlds. In T. Koschmann (Ed.), *CSCL: Theory and practice of an emerging paradigm* (pp. 38–82). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Greenfield, P., & Bruner, J. (1969). Culture and cognitive growth. In D. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research* (pp. 633–657). Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Greeno, J. G. (1997). On claims that answer the wrong questions. *Educational Researcher*, 25, 5–17.
- Hall, S. (1973). A “reading” of Marx’s 1857 introduction to the *Grundrisse*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Birmingham, England, Centre for Cultural Studies.
- Joyce, J. (1939). *Finnegans wake*. New York: Viking.
- Kroeber, A. L., & Kluckhohn, C. (1953). *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. New York: Random House.
- Lave, J. (1996). Teaching, as learning, as practice. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 3, 165–184.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Manicas, P. (1987). *A history and philosophy of the social sciences*. New York: Blackwell.
- McDermott, R. (1993). The acquisition of a child by a learning disability. In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.), *Understanding practice* (pp. 269–305). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mead, G. H. (1909). Social psychology as a counterpart to physiological psychology. *Psychological Bulletin*, 6, 401–408.
- Mead, G. H. (1932). *The philosophy of the present*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Miller, R. A. (1975). Do the Japanese know how to tell time? *Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, 11, 1–18.

- Mitchell, T. (1988). *Colonizing Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J. (1995). *The construction of social reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Silverstein, M. (1980). The three faces of "function": Preliminaries to a psychology of language. In M. Hickman (Ed.), *Proceedings of a working conference on the social foundations of language and thought* (pp. 1–13). Chicago: Center for Psychosocial Studies.
- Simon, H. (1976). Cognition and social behavior. In J. S. Carroll & J. W. Payne (Eds.), *Cognition and social behavior* (pp. 253–267). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America makes*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Vygotsky, L. (1987). *The collected works, Vol. 1. Thinking and speech and lectures on psychology*. New York: Plenum.