

Social Scripts and the Three Theoretical Approaches to Culture

Robert N. St. Clair, University of Louisville

In attempting to investigate the cultural sciences, researchers have developed frameworks of which Ratner's three categories are most informative. The three categories: symbolic, activity theory and individualistic approaches are discussed in this article. Also, social script theory as a promising path in the integration of symbolic and activity theory models is described.

There have been many attempts at integrating the cultural sciences. Habermas (1985) addressed this question and developed a framework that involved speech act theory (Habermas, 1981) and Praxis Theory (Habermas, 1953). Lakoff and Johnson (1999) have invoked the embodied mind concept in order to account for the biological constructs responsible for the development of cognitive categories used in language. Palmer (1996) has developed a model of cultural linguistics that is based on a theory of cognitive grammar (Langacker, 1987) and a framework of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, 1987). All of these models are entrenched in a psychological approach to culture. They argue that culture exists in the mind of the individual. As a consequence, they cannot begin to explain how culture is a social phenomenon. In other words, what is missing from these models is model of social praxis. This is what Marx (1971) argued for was an approach to history that was based on social practice. His doctoral dissertation was a reaction to the ideal model of history proposed by Hegel (1977). For Hegel, historical change and cultural change were a matter of *Theoria*. For Marx, on the other hand, historical change had to do with *Praxis*.

An interesting approach to the role that culture plays in the social sciences can be found in Activity Theory. What makes this approach to the cultural sciences different is that it brings into play the importance of the work of Vygotsky (1962, 1978), Leontiev (1978, 1979), and Ratner (1993, 1999). What all of these have in common is activity theory. According to this theory, psychological phenomena are formed as people engaged in socially organized activity. Since these activities are socially formed, they provide a social and cultural influence on cognition. In this essay, it is argued that activity theory should be treated as a major kind of investigation into the cultural sciences.

The Classification of the Cultural Sciences

Ratner (1999), a cultural psychologist, is an advocate of activity theory and he has proposed an informative way of investigating the cultural sciences. He has placed these theories into three categories:

- **The symbolic approach** in which cultural is socially constructed by individuals in concert.
- **Activity theory approach** in which psychological phenomena are formed as people engage in socially organized activity.

- **The individualistic approach** in which emphasis is on the individual who partakes of culture selectively and assimilates or negotiates his own model of a personal culture.

Each of these approaches will be discussed in detail throughout the book and their strengths and weaknesses will be discussed.

The Three Approaches to Cultural Psychology

The Symbolic Approach

Although Ratner (1999) mentioned the work of Schweder (1996) as his prime example of the symbolic approach, a better example would be that of the school of symbolic interactionism. This school has its roots in the work of George Herbert Mead (1934), Charles Horton Cooley (1902, 1909), and William Isaac Thomas (1923), among the first generation of symbolic Interactionists and Charles Blumer (1969), Norman K. Denzin (1992) and Tatsumo Shibutani (1955, 1961, and 1970) among the most recent leading proponents of symbolic interactionism. Practitioners of symbolic interactionism operate within the symbolic approach discussed by Ratner (1999). In this approach to cultural psychology, culture is defined by its shared symbols that are socially constructed by individuals in concert. These symbols function as organizing phenomena because they label and categorize information that enables them to define the context of a situation. In anthropology, Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983) holds to this view that reality is composed of values. Schweder (1996) is a cultural psychologist who also fosters views concomitant with the symbolic interactionism in that he discounts material and institutional constraints as being important cultural factors influencing socialization. This purely mental view of culture has its shortcomings. It treats culture as symbols, concepts, and meanings. They have been hypostasized and de-contextualized. Ratner (1999, p. 7) argues that “concepts, symbols, and meanings are regarded as having a life of their own, independent of material and institutional consideration.” The way in which people manage their lives and the conditions under which they exist do not play a significant part in this symbolic account of language and culture. Hence, this theory is not connected to Praxis. It fails to specify the processes by which people socially construct symbols. It lacks a theory of action or schemas that function as social scripts. Furthermore, since symbols, concepts, and meanings are socially constructed by consensus, this model cannot adequately account for the heterogeneity of culture (Ratner, 1997). Before leaving the symbolic world of the Chicago School of Sociology, it is important to consider the role of self within this theoretical framework.

It is argued within this context that the study of the self is an important part of symbolic interactionism. The reason for this is readily understood. People develop a sense of self from interacting with others through symbols. A child is born and first develops the concept of self that he refers to as “I.” Later, he comes to have a social self and has a sense of “me.” It is this self-concept that sustains that child throughout his adult life. He will learn to add new roles to his behavior and expand his understanding of his social self. He will come to wear many social masks or personae. Most of these social masks will be developed in highly contextualized situations. They are socially contained and a person will learn to employ one role at work, another at home, and many other diverse roles for other social situations. These

Concept of Self	Etiology
"I" "is the ego, the personal self"	Psychological foundation , egocentric speech
"Me" is the social object, the social self	Sociological foundation, social speech

roles will create horizons for the individual. How he sees himself will determine what he will attempt to do with his own life. If he feels that he is not talented in certain cognitive tasks, he will avoid them. The information that he carries within him will make it possible for him to recognize and define the social situations around him. He will perceive reality from a certain perspective and he may never attempt to expand his horizons through new experience nor expand his understanding of life through greater knowledge. His sense of self will dictate his consciousness. He may limit his symbolic interaction with others.

In addition to articulating the concept of self, it is also argued that symbols also provide a powerful code for representing and dealing with the world of objects and events. Events take place and they are reported to others as representations. Many of these are highly abstract. Similarly, people find things to be important and they relate this information to others in general terms. What is most important about these symbols is that they are social; they provide the basis for interacting with others. Language is important to Symbolic Interactionists because people use language to socially interact with each other. Language becomes a system of social symbols. It provides the medium for symbolic interaction. It enables one individual to share his own mental states with others. It is through language that people are able to designate things, refer to them, or act towards things. Consequently, within this theoretical framework, human beings do not live in a world of physical things, they live in a world of mental objects. They respond to objects that have social significance. Objects can be endowed with goals, purposes, and values, things cannot.

The Activity Theory Approach

According to Activity Theory, psychological phenomena are formed as people engaged in socially organized activity. Since these activities are socially formed, they provide a social and cultural influence on cognition. It should be noted that this concept of Praxis (German *Tätigkeit*; Russian *deyatelnost*) has a long intellectual tradition. The focus on Praxis in this essay, however, is not about that long tradition of pragmatism and Praxis, but on Activity Theory which is connected with the Vygotsky (Kozulin, 1990) his students, Leontiev (1979). Sergei Rubinstein and A. R. Luria (Kozulin, 1990, Chapter 7) are also among the avatars of Activity Theory. The rationale for this theory in Russian philosophy goes back to the works of Marx and Engels (Kozulin, 1990) who wanted to restore the position that Ludwig Feuerbach took against Hegel, the idealist. For Feuerbach, ideas were a reflection of the material world and he considered it to be ludicrous that Hegel believed that ideas could determine the world (<http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/d/i.htm>). Friederich Engels reversed this focus from Theoria to Praxis. In his *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels (1940, p. 40) argued that the material world represents products of human labor. What this meant was that the Dialectics was not something imposed on the world from the outside by acts of Pure Reason, but was a product of human labor. It was human labor and human activity that changed the world. Hence, this process could only be understood not by thought, but by Praxis (Leontiev, web source). For Leontiev, the division of labor provided the fundamental

historical process behind the evolution of mental functions and these were mediated by tools such as signs and symbols as well as physical artifacts. Work, he argued, is performed in conditions of joint, collective activity. What this meant is that the human mind comes to exist, develops, and can only be understood within the context of meaningful, goal-oriented activity, and social determined interaction between significant others and their material environments.

The basic components of Activity theory are concerned with tool mediation, the hierarchical structure of activity, object-orientedness, and the dual concepts of externalization and internalization. It was argued, for example, that internal activities could not be understood as if they were analyzed separately and in isolation from external social activities. Hence, this theory emphasizes social factors and the interaction between agents and their environments. It argues that tools shape the way in which human beings interact with reality and that the shaping of external activities eventually results in shaping internal ones. Tools reflect the experiences of other people who have tried to solve similar problems. Tools reflect the experiences that these people had in negotiating social reality. These experiences are manifested in the structure and the functions of these tools. Most importantly, language is one of those tools that is responsible for the accumulation and transmission of social knowledge. It not only influences the external behavior of human beings, but the mental functioning of individuals. Human beings mediate their activities by artifacts such as tools, signs, and symbols. What Vygotsky and his colleagues are saying is that culture is far more than the mere use of symbols. Symbols, it turns out, provide the very tools through which they interact with reality. These artifacts (tools, signs, and symbols) are part of a system of psychological tools (Kozulin, 1998). Language is one of those culturally established instruments. Vygotsky was also concerned with activities in the form of procedures or schemas, but he did not elaborate on them. Social Script theory provides a resolution and accounts for this omission.

According to Activity Theory, actions are undertaken by human agents who are motivated towards the solution of some problem. Agency comes from working with others in a community, but this coloration is constrained by cultural factors such as conventions and rules and by way in which a society is stratified according to its own division of labor. This idea of a division of labor brings into play the concept of mentors or experts who assist others in achieving higher mental functions. Where they are along this path and where to want to be is known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The exploration of this change from lower mental functions to higher mental functions played a significant role in Vygotsky's theory (Kozulin, 1990). These actions are developed through operations which are made into routines and performed automatically. Within Social Script Theory, these routines are broken down into smaller operations that form chains of action, such as the Restaurant Schema (St. Clair, Thomé-Williams & Su, 2005). It is now time to consider a similar model of Activity Theory operating within Existential Sociology and Ethnomethodology (Douglas & Johnson, 1977; Mehan & Wood, 1975).

The Individualistic Approach to Culture

There is an interesting emergence in culture theory that comes mainly from the literary and artistic world and it claims individuals are creative in selecting and assimilating into their own personal cultures. Culture, in this model, appears to be something that is outside of the individual which he uses and reconstructs as he deems to be of interest. Each individual, it is

claimed, constructs a personal culture out of his own experience. Social life, in this framework, is nothing more than a tool kit that provides individuals with the means to select what they prefer in the system and to reject what they do not want to be a part of their cultural consciousness. Wikan (1996, p. 15), a cultural anthropologist, makes such a claim. She argues that individuals create their own cultural psychology. Valsiner also makes this claim with regard to the co-construction of human development in parenting (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992, pp. 393-414; Valsiner, Branco, & Dantas, 1997, pp. 283-304). In this model, social influences are regarded as collective cultural viruses. They are value-laden symbols that infect or penetrate the personal belief system of a child. This model seems to deny the process of secondary socialization in which a child has to learn to work with others in a communal setting. Furthermore, it denies the very nature of the study of cultural psychology and the role of education as an instrument of acquiring higher mental functions. In this model, the individual is supposed to be empowered to develop his own personal culture and his agency is used to construct idiosyncratic behaviors and meanings (Hochschild, 1979). This model has a strange concept of self. It does not realize that self is a recent cognitive concept that developed in Europe (Taylor, 1989). Prior to the Self, there was the Soul, another social concept. As Western Europe became de-secularized, the concept of the Self replaced the concept of the Soul.

There is an irony in all of this. In the arts, for example, scholars quote Bakhtin favorably because he argued that literature is the means by which one acquires higher mental functions (Kozulin, 1990, Chapter 7). Vygotsky (1978), on the other hand, argued that formal education and scientific study provided this mechanism. Upon closer examination of these two Russian philosophers, one will note that they overlap in the belief that all language is dialogue. They differ in how the personal mental self and the social self interact to advent the personal self further along a zone of proximal development. These scholars differ, however, in another way. They come from different philosophical traditions. Bakhtin and his Circle were interested in the philosophy of culture. They were heavily influenced by the Marburg School in Germany and such scholars as Hermann Cohen (1842-1918), Paul Natorp (1854-1924), Nicolai Hartmann (1882-1950), the German phenomenologist Max Scheler (1874-1924), and Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936). Their influence came through Matvei Kagan studied with these scholars and returned to Russia from Germany at the end of the First World War. What Kagan brought back to Russia was a Kantian philosophy that provided the catalyst for many discussions about aesthetic activity. Kant was concerned with aesthetic judgment, whereas Bakhtin was more concerned with aesthetic activity. Hence, Bakhtin's model is drawn from a Kantian model of an individual consciousness which bears a-priori categories that encountered and gave form to a manifold of sense impressions. Bakhtin was also influenced by the work of Ernst Cassirer (1981; 1923) and his connection to Wilhelm von Humboldt (Cassirer, 1923). Cassirer sought to overcome the Kantian model and its sole focus on rational thought processes. He did this by advocating the Humboldtian view of associating thought and meaning in which language played a strong symbolic function. This act alone moves Bakhtin away from the activity theory models of Leontiev, Rubenstein, and Vygotsky. He is closer to the other scholars influenced by von Humboldt, viz., Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and Karl Vossler (1872-1942). His own work was on the novel as a symbolic form. This matter merits its own separate discussion in another investigative essay. Hence, one could argue that Bakhtin advocates an individualistic approach to culture. He is an advocate of a

personal culture, but his stance on how individuals partake and interact within those structures differs substantially from that of Vygotsky. It is no surprise that Bakhtin is known among literary circles as a Postmodernist. This is a group in search of a more literary paradigm. They define themselves differently from many other groups and are trying to redefine their own perspectives on just what a personal culture is and how it comes into conflict with other personal cultures, especially those of an economic nature (Harris, 1999).

There are many interesting and wonderful ideas to be found in Postmodernism and how some of them can be incorporated into social script theory will be discussed later. It is now time to investigate the precursor of social script theory in the theoretical insights of Schank and Abelson (1977) and the investigative genius of Marvin Minsky (1975).

The Integration of Theoria and Praxis

Scholars from several disciplines (psychology, neurology, linguistics, artificial intelligence, and anthropology) joined in a common effort of using the computer to model language and human cognition. Because these models were attempts to build a model of human activity and thought processes, it provides an interesting integration of the integration of theory (culture as symbols) and praxis (culture as activity). They called this newly emerging field of investigation the cognitive sciences (Gardner, 1987). Just as a computer makes use of plans that are imbedded in the machine as software, so it was argued that the human mind has plans that are represented in the form of goals, and cognitive functions. If programs exist in the mind and if they designate and articulate human behavior, then what are they? One of the earliest attempts to model this ability came from research on protocol statements by Schank and Abelson (1977). They argued that knowledge structures must be built into computer programs as part of an a priori data-base. These canonical set of events were called *scripts*. They used the concept of eating at a restaurant as a content area that could be readily scripted¹. The vocabulary that can be associated with the restaurant can be designated. Restaurants have *menus*, *waiters*, *bus boys*, *utensils*, *serving ware*, *tables*, *chairs*, *cashiers*, and other related items. Furthermore, there are certain kinds of protocol statements or designated requests that can be effortlessly associated with restaurants. One asks for a menu, one orders a meal, one may ask for a dessert cart, and one asks for the check before going to the cashier to pay for the meal and exiting the culinary place of business. This structured framework of knowledge was significant because it enabled the computer understand the context of the situation based on the language used in that situation. This approach to creating background knowledge is known as *expert systems* and has met with great success in the realms of artificial intelligence.

¹ Scripts are particular types of schemas. Scripts are memory representations for often performed action sequences. These sequences are linked and hierarchical. Frames are constituted by slots which have default categories. Linguistic frames can be found at the sentential level; combinations of frames can be organized into discourse scripts, symbolic interaction recipes, and even literary plot structures. It should be noted that Schank and Abelson (1977) used scripts to represent senses: frames and scripts.

The Restaurant Schema as Structured Social Activity	
Event Frame	Dining at a restaurant
Social Roles	Waiter, customer, cashier, busboy, manager, cook
Lexicon	Waiter, customer, table, main meal, deserts, tip, cashier, restaurant, the bill, the check, the menu, etc.
Script ²	Eat a meal at a restaurant.

Marvin Minsky (1975) also worked on a top-down (deductive) approach to computer processing³. His contribution came from the creation of frames, expected structures of knowledge. In lieu of lexical domains and protocol statements, Minsky developed frames that modeled an event or location in the form of slots. Hence, in his attempt to create a robot that could navigate the parameters of a building, he built in the frame of a room and one of the slots in that construction was a *doorway*. What Minsky wanted to do was to create a robot that would recognize a doorway when it came upon it. He also wanted the robot to have prior knowledge of what constitutes a room. Hence, he created a system in which the recognition of a doorway by the robot would simultaneously activate the whole *room frame*, a metonymic concept. Minsky (1985) went on to argue for a theory of mind that is constituted by numerous mental agents which can handle different types of knowledge. Even though he did not mention this in his model as a *Society of Mind*, Minsky incorporated the concept of metonymy into his robotic models. By invoking a part of the room, the computer program was able to associate that part for the whole. What constitutes metonymy is interesting because it is related to how one sees the event. For Minsky, his entrance to the room and all of its constituents comes from the door. The door invokes the room. His rationale for this is obvious. He is operating with a model of a robot that travels on the floor of a building and envisions only the door as the significant context of the door.

What is significant about the work of these early cognitive scientists is that they argued for a deeper understanding of language in artificial intelligence programs. Schank and Abelson (1977), for example, noted that scripts, protocols, and vocabularies were about language. So they naturally asked not only about how computers code human behavior, but also about how languages are used to negotiate social reality. Minsky (1985) noted that in addition to using language to structure frames, scripts, metaphors, and the society of mind, one needs to look at the mind as a parallel processor, one capable of handling several scripts simultaneously, a situation comparable to how human languages function within social

² The significance of social frames and how they constitute episodic interactions is a major area of investigation by St. Clair, Thom -Williams, and Su (2005). It is argued that humans interact in terms of social recipes, scenarios, and frames and this insight is the basis upon which they are developing a cognitive model of social theory.

³ Computer scientists refer to memory storage in terms of top-down and bottom-up approaches. There is another sense in which this term is used, viz., top-down is deductive (beginning to pre-programmed information) and bottom-up is inductive (ascertaining inferences from general statements). The second sense of top-down is being used here, viz. deductive memory set.

contexts. Understandably, linguistics became one of the central disciplines within the cognitive sciences.

Social Script Theory

Unfortunately, these earlier cognitive scientists did not articulate the structure of these social scripts in sufficient detail. The reason for this is simply the fact that they assumed that words would evoke links to other concept, event, or actions. What is missing from their account of the social script theory? To answer this question, one must first look into the concept of “social recipes.” Within existential sociology, for example, it is argued that most human beings are not able to envision themselves in terms of grand theories or models of social thought. All that they know are their day to day existences and these are always highly contextualized (Douglas, et al., 1980). This is because for them, life is situated (Douglas & Johnson, 1977; Kotarba & Fontana, 1984). Things may occur from one moment to the next and they must learn how to deal with these exigencies. How do they deal with these problems? Where did they learn how to cope with these problems? They learned them as mini-dramas and social acts (Lyman & Scott, 1976, 1978). They learned them by observing and experiencing similar problems in natural situations. What is a natural situation? It is one that is not dictated by the kinds of laboratory conditions found in psychological testing. It is not a situation that is taken out of context. By natural, they mean the situations that are common to everyday life. These are situations in which individuals meet each other in face-to-face encounters. It is a common sense world in which meanings refer to feelings, perceptions, emotions, moods, thoughts, values, and ideas shared with other members of society. It is that internal connection with others that is referred to as the meanings of life. Natural means that one is able to analyze and understand social situations from the standpoint of the members of a group or community. Natural situations depend on actual situations and circumstances. It involves being-in-the-situation.

From these actual situations, one is able to develop social scripts of the events and the actions. These are best described as episodic events. One does not just enter a restaurant; one must follow a script. That script already exists. It is one that he has seen many times as a child and has participated in. These scripts refer to social functions. They dictate what one should be doing at a particular time and in a particular place if one is to play the role characteristically associated with that script. There may be several people involved in the same situation, but they may differ in the roles that they have been given or have chosen to enact. Hence, the following is a revision of the Restaurant Schema under Social Script Theory.

Before leaving the concept of social scripts, it is important to note that Vygotsky was concerned with the process of psychological internalization. He found that the cognitive abilities of children and those of adults appear to evolve linearly, but he claims that this is an illusion. There is a cognitive leap between the cognitive world of a child and one of an adult in such higher functions as reading, perception, writing, memory, and learning. How did these significant changes occur between the higher mental functions of children and adults? He argues that the higher mental functions of the adults were constructed through social activity. He refers to these mediating factors as tools. There are two kinds of social tools that function in the process of internalization (or socialization). One of them is instrumental tools and the other is symbolic acts. In the modeling being espoused in this essay, the authors differentiate

The Restaurant Schema under Social Script Theory	
Event Frame	Dinning at a restaurant
Social Roles	Waiter, customer, cashier, busboy, manager, cook
Episodic Functions	Enter a restaurant Approach the host Have someone direct the customer to a table Have someone bring a menu to the customer The customer peruses the menu Have the waiter approach the customer and ask for an order The customer puts in his order The waiter leave and eventually returns with the food The waiter signals the end of the main meal by asking about deserts. The waiter customer signals the end of the meal by asking for the bill The waiter brings the bill or the check The customer either pays the waiter or pays the cashier The customer pays the cashier The customer may leave a tip The customer leaves the restaurant
Lexicon	Waiter, customer, table, main meal, deserts, tip, cashier, restaurant, the bill, the check, the menu, etc.
Script ⁴	Enter a restaurant, approach the cashier, get assigned to a waiter, go to your assigned table, accept the menus, read them, make an order, wait for the meal, eat your meal, discuss the topic of conversation during the meal, wait for the waiter to ask if you want to have a dessert, order the dessert (Optional), receive the bill, leave a tip, pay the cashier, leave the establishment.

between the use of tools in externalization and internalization. In the case of the latter, such tools are used in socialization, the focus of Vygotsky's model. What he does not account for is the use of tools that enable one to function within a cultural environment as evidenced in the tools are used in socialization, the focus of Vygotsky's model. What he does not account for is the use of tools that enable one to function within a cultural environment as evidenced in the case of externalization. Berger and Luckmann's model (1966) of language adds a new dimension to activity theory. It brings a deeper meaning to the concept of artifacts. They are forms of culture, reified language and activities in the form of social script. There is one more point that needs to be elaborated in this model and that is the difference between the psychological self and the social self. It is due to the disparity between the two that the cognitive leap to higher functions occurs. One reassesses this disparity and re-evaluates his psychological being in the form of a cognitive leap. Vygotsky (1962) refers to this leap as

⁴ It is argued that humans interact in terms of social recipes, scenarios, and frames and this insight is the basis upon which they are developing a cognitive model of social theory.

scaffolding and he argues that there is a mentor that assists the child in moving up into a higher level of mental processes. The child is aware of the zone of proximal distance (ZPD) because he or she notices the disparity between his psychological self and his social self. This child makes the effort to emulate the adult and revises or remodels the psychological self to fit the social self.

One of the weaknesses in Vygotsky's model that he was not able to articulate how actions and objects mediated the cognitive leap or transition from the higher mental functions of the child to that of the adult. He was able to discuss cultural entities, but not social functions. Activity theory (Ratner, 1997) and social script theory explain how psychological is grounded in cultural activities. As a matter of fact, cognitive linguistics suffers from the same weakness. It can construct a personal model of culture within the individual, but it cannot explain how this model is socially constructed. A child learns by doing things, by following others, by trying to emulate them, by trying to make his world similar to their world. There is agency involved in these events. The agency comes from the child, but it is an attempt to emulate the social world and the cultural world that he is immersed in. He uses social scripts and language as learning tools and experiential devices to navigate within that milieu. Co-constructionist models of cultural psychology separate the production of social relations from the ways in which individuals utilize and consume them. One learns a social script by participating in that socially constructed event. In many cultures (Hicks & Gwynne, 1996) a child is not considered to be a human until they have mastered a certain level of secondary socialization. In these cultures, this transition is marked by a rite of passage (van Gennep, 1961). At this point in their lives, they have mastered the major social scripts demanded of them by their culture. They leave the world and the mentality of a child and enter into a world that is cognitively different, the world of the adult.

Conclusion

There are several problems inherent in creating a cultural model for the social sciences. First there is the psychology versus sociology dichotomy. Each of these individuals brings a certain focus of concern into the investigation of the cultural sciences and these concerns emerge as limitations of their own cultural approach. Psychology, for example, sees everything happening from the perspective of the individual. It cannot explain the concept of a social group as an entity. A group, in this framework, consists of an aggregate of individuals in a social context. Sociology, on the other hand, sees groups but it cannot really explain how individuals function within a group. It can explain the social self but not how the ego also functions as a part of the social self. Script Theory allows one to overcome this problem. It is a mental model that is meant to function as an activity. People do things in social space. They perform and interact with each other. Individuals are no longer isolated monads (Leibniz, 1909).

The Symbolic Approach and the Activity Theory Approach both have much to offer for a theory of the cultural sciences. The Personal Approach, on the other hand, lacks much in the way of explanatory power. It cannot account for social or group behavior. It explains how individuals see themselves in the world, but it cannot explain how individuals undergo similar psychological processes. However, when this postmodernist approach to culture is moved out of the literary and artistic realm and into the hands of social theorists such as Foucault (1966,

1969, 1971), Baudrillard (1973), and Debord (1967), the theory overcomes many of its limitations. These theorists advocate a social model of culture. The activity articulated in this model, however, is limited to the socialization processes associated with the culture of mass media.

Are the three approaches of culture espoused by Ratner (1999) really two models of culture theory: symbols and social activity? Can the personal approach to culture even be considered a viable model for the cultural sciences? It appears that the personal approach to culture espoused by postmodernists is not a viable model of culture. When this model is articulated by social philosophers such as Foucault, Baudrillard, and Debord, the theory still lacks explanatory power as it is not able to account for activity theory. What constitutes activity in this model is a passive embodiment of the signs and symbols of mass media and mass culture. The most promising path consists in the integration of symbolic models with activity theory models. This is exactly what social script theory has done.

References

- Baudrillard, J. (1973). *The mirror of production*. St. Louis, MO: Telos Press.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspectives and methodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Cassirer, E. (1923). Die Kantischen Elemente in Wilhelm von Humboldts Sprachphilosophie, in von Julius Binder, Ed. *Festschrift für Paul Hensel*. Greiz i. V., Ohag., pp. 105-127.
- Cassirer, E. (1981). *Kant's life and thought*. New Haven, CO: Yale University Press.
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). *Human nature and social order*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Cooley, C. H. (1909). *Social organization*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Debord, G. (1967). *La société de la spectacle*. Champs libre.
- Denzin, N. K. (1992). *Symbolic interactionism and cultural studies*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.
- Douglas, J. D., Adler, P. A., Adler, P., Fontana, A., Freeman, C. R., & Kotarba, J. A. (1980). *Introduction to the sociologies of everyday life*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Douglas, J. D., & Johnson, J. (Eds.). (1977). *Existential sociology*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Engels, F. (1940). *Dialectics of nature*. NY: International Publishers. Paris, France: Editions Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1966). *Les mots et les choses* [The Order of Things]. Paris, France: Editions Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1969). *L'Archéologie du Savoir*. Paris, France: Editions Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1971). *L'Ordre du Discours*. Paris, France: Editions Gallimard.
- Gardner, H. (1987). *The mind's new science: A study of the cognitive revolution*. New York, NY: Basic Books, A Division of HarperCollins.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books.
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge: Further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York, NY: Harper Colophon Books.

- Habermas, J. (1953). *Theorie und Praxis*. (Sozialphilosophische Studien) Neuwied / Berlin: Luchterhand.
- Habermas, J. (1981). *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, Band 1: Handlungsrationalität und geschäftliche Rationalisierung. Band 2: Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Habermas, J. (1985). *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Harris, M. (1999). *Theories of culture in Postmodern times*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *The phenomenology of spirit*. (Phänomenologie der Geist). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Hicks, D. & Gwynne, M. (1996). *Cultural anthropology*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Hochschild, A. (1979). Emotion work, feeling rules, and social structure. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85, 551-575.
- Kotarba, J. A. & Fontana, A. (Eds.). (1984). *The existential self in society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kozulin, A. (1990). *Vygotsky's psychology: A biography of ideas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kozulin, A. (1998). *Psychological tools: A sociocultural approach to education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, & dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Langacker, R. W. (1987). *Foundations of cognitive grammar: Volume I. Theoretical perspectives*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Leontyev, A. (1977). *Activity and consciousness: Philosophy in the USSR, problems of dialectical materialism*. Progress Publishers. Retrieved from <http://www.marxists.org/archive/leontev/works/1977/leon1977.htm>.
- Leontiev, A. (1978). *Activity, consciousness, and personality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Leontiev, A. (1979). The problem of activity in psychology. In J. Wetsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Publishers. p. 37-71.
- Lightfoot, C. & Valsiner, J. (1992). Parental belief systems under the influence: Social guidance of the construction of personal cultures. In I. Sigel, A. McGillicuddy-Delisi, & J. Goodnow (Eds.), *Parental belief systems: The psychological consequences for children*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum and Associates.
- Lyman, S. & Scott, M. B. (1976). *The drama of social reality*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century Crofts.
- Lyman, S. M. & Scott, M. B. (1978). *A sociology of the absurd*. Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing.
- Marx, K. (1971). *Die Grundrisse*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self and society*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mehan, H. & Wood, H. (1975). *The reality of ethno-methodology*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
- Minsky, M. (1975). A framework for representing knowledge. In P. H. Winston, Ed. *The psychology of computer vision*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Minsky, M. (1985). *The society of mind*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Palmer, G. B. (1996). *Toward a theory of cultural linguistics*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Ratner, C. (1993). Review of the article *Human motives and cultural models*. *Journal of Mind and Behavior*, 14(1), 89-94.
- Ratner, C. (1997). In Defense of Activity Theory. *Culture and Psychology*, 3, 211-223. Retrieved from <http://www.humboldt1.com/~cr2/reply.htm>.
- Ratner, C. (1999). Three approaches to cultural psychology: A critique. *Cultural Dynamics* 11, 7-31.
- Schank, R. & Abelson, R. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals, and understanding: An inquiry into human knowledge*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Shibutani, T. (1955). Reference groups as perspectives. *American Journal of Sociology*, 60, 562-569.
- Shibutani, T. (1961). *Society and personality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Shibutani, T. (Ed.). (1970). *Human nature and collective behavior*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Shweder, R. (1996). True ethnography: The lore, the law, and the lure. In R. Jessa, A. Colby & R. Shweder (Eds.), *Ethnography and human development* (pp. 15-52). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- St. Clair, R. N., Thomé-Williams, A. C., & Su, L. (2005). The role of Social Script Theory in cognitive blending. Paper presented at the IAICS Congreso Internacional X. Guadalajara, México. July 14-16, 2004.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of modern identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thomas, W. I. (1923). *The unadjusted girl: With cases and standpoint for behavior analysis*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company.
- Valsiner, J., Branco, A. & Dantas, C. (1997). Co-construction of human development: Heterogeneity within parental belief systems. In J. Grusec & L. Kuczynski (Eds.), *Parenting and children's internalization of values*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Van Gennep, A. (1961). *The rites of passage*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Von Leibniz, G. W. F. (1909). *La monadologie*. Open Court Publications.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wikan, U. (1996). *Tomorrow, God willing: Self-made destinies in Cairo*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.