5  It Takes a Village

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“…using the “virtual arrowhead” experimental task. In this task, participants played a computer game in which they designed a technological artifact (an arrowhead) either by individual trial-and-error learning or by copying successful fellow participants… allowing participants to preferentially copy the designs of successful models resulted in significantly improved performance relative to individual learning controls, suggesting that this copy-successful-individuals cultural learning strategy is significantly more adaptive than individual learning.” (p. 351)…It is predicted that making cultural learning periodic through the season will favour the emergence of “information scroungers”—participants who forego lengthy and costly individual learning and instead consistently free-ride on the individual learning efforts of other participants (“information producers”) in the group.” (p. 353)

“…Kameda and Nakanishi (2002) found experimentally that participants divided themselves into information producers and information scroungers in the manner suggested above, and that these two groups coexisted at equilibrium.” (p. 353) Kameda, T.

“…at least amongst non-kin, successful or attractive models might set an “access cost” that others must pay in order to gain access to their knowledge…In the present experiment, cultural learners pooled their individually acquired knowledge to produce artifacts that were, under certain conditions, functionally better than artifacts produced by individual controls, indicative of cumulative cultural evolution.” (p. 353)

“Some theoretical models suggest that cultural learning would be hampered by the emergence of free-riding information scroungers, the present study suggests that people avoid this by flexibly switching between individual and cultural learning, only copying others when they are doing poorly.” (p. 361)


“If a child wants to stay up late there is usually no objection from the parents, and at the shadow plays the children sit all night in front of the screen, watching and napping alternately.” (p. 103)


“When children have gained motor control, their world gradually widens. They are no longer guarded by child tenders wherever they go, and their trips away from the home become longer…”
small bands of youngsters roam about inland, visiting adults working on the swiddens…Children seem content to sit around adults when the latter are working. The children sit quietly, just watching, for an hour or so.” (p. 72)

Exploration and play with objects


“Children who are not yet able to swim well are not allowed to paddle a dugout canoe in deep water. Children usually learn to swim around the age of five. Because the beach cannot be seen
from the village, young children are not allowed to bathe except in the company of older caretakers.” (Broch 1990:60)

“…dangerous to children younger than approximately six years is collecting coconuts. Children of this age are not allowed to climb the palms. When kepala lingkung one day saw a four-year-old boy at the top of a palm, he ordered him down at once. Later he summoned all the villagers and told them that if parents did not manage to keep an eye on what their children did, the parents would be punished…This does not mean that children are kept away from everything that might hurt them. A generally practiced deference to the desires of toddlers and older children in the choice of play objects permitted them frequently to handle sharp knives, large parangs, sharp pieces of scrap iron, and fires.” (Broch 1990:61)

**Critical German Perspective**

“(“She plays nicely, but does not have eye contact with the baby”) and the exclusivity of attention (“The mother holds the baby nicely on her body, but direct her attention too often to other targets”). Object play is another asset of early care, because stimulating the senses and the cognitive system in general are considered crucial by this 29-year-old married Berlin mother.” (p. 127)

**Critical Nso perspective**

“The Nso women agreed that “the Germans can show a very bad example of child care.” (p. 121)
Nso accelerate motor development, Germans, intellectual

“Object stimulation was rare in both settings. … In fact, rural Gujarati women believe that a 3-month-old baby cannot understand toys and see their advantage mainly in distressing a fussy or crying baby.” (p. 203)


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“When children have gained motor control, their world gradually widens. They are no longer guarded by child tenders wherever they go, and their trips away from the home become longer...(p. 71) small bands of youngsters roam about inland, visiting adults working on the swiddens…Children seem content to sit around adults when the latter are working. The children sit quietly, just watching, for an hour or so.” (p. 72)


“Cultural systems will be treated as extensions of the power to learn, store, and transmit information.” (Mead 1964: 31)

“Children accompany their parents and participate in adult activities that involve little skill. No attempt is made to develop skills—the emphasis is rather on the easy, pleasant identification with the activities of adults.” (Mead 1964: 57)

“So the social structure of a society and the way learning is structured—the way it passes from mother to daughter, from father to son, from mother’s brother to sister’s son, from shaman to novice, from mythological specialist to aspirant specialist—determine far beyond the actual content of learning both how individuals will learn to think and how the store of learning, the sum total of separate pieces of skill and knowledge which could be obtained by separately interviewing each member of the society is shared and used.” (Mead 1964: 79)
It’s only make-believe


“Children’s pretending to be a fierce animal such as a shark or a tiger, which is so common in other societies, was never observed in Maing Tuu.” (Broch 1990:103)

“Once I observed five girls engaged in the imitation of a female possession-trance ritual. The girls, all between four and seven years of age, were dancing and acting out the various roles of the ritual experts. They put the most elaboration into the act of walking on or stamping out imaginary embers. This play took place just a few days after a real possession-trance ritual had been conducted in a neighboring village.” (Broch 1990:107)


“Various items serve instead of the valuables that the grownups use—tiny pebbles instead of dog’s and porpoise teeth, the long flowers of a nut tree for strings of shell discs, and rats or lizards for pigs. When first the youngsters pretend to keep house they make no sexual distinction in the allocation of the tasks. Boys and girls together erect the shelters, plait the mats, cook the food, and fetch the water. But within a year or so, although they continue to play in company, the members of each group restrict themselves to the work appropriate to their sex. They boys leave the cooking and
water carrying to the girls, who, in turn, refuse to help with the building.” (Hogbin 1969: 38)


“Among the Balinese, children are encouraged to imitate the theatrical and artistic aspects of life.” (Mead 1964: 67)
This study of natural indicators of cognitive development is based on observations of a sample of boys and girls aged five to eight years in each of two Guatemalan villages. The thesis of the study is that there are natural indicators of differences in specific aspects of cognitive development. (p. 265)

The degree to which children engaged in self-managed activities (either voluntary or involuntary) entailing the following of an exacting series of sequences was associated with success at a formal test of analytic ability; and the degree to which the children engaged in voluntary social activities was shown to be associated with success at a formal test of language ability. These associations in turn support the idea that adults and other children can (if they observe these and other natural activities) make reliable judgments of cognitive abilities and that these judgments differentially affect the ways in which children are socialized in the culture. (p. 266)

To what degree do the older members of a community make effective use of the talent available to them. An unintelligent person could not become a successful singer in...Navajo culture ...to what extent are Navajo children discouraged in subtle ways from considering such an option when they probably lack the
native ability to take it and to what extent are they encouraged if they have the capacity to become singers. Is there a "track" system of education to be found in nonliterate and simple societies? (p. 293)


“The importance of the cultural context of competence is also shown in studies with Australia Aborigines. [Aboriginal] Intelligence was most often seen as independence and helpfulness…Asking questions is considered neither intelligent or desirable.” (p. 275)

“In the Thai culture the quality of respect is uniquely valued. Children are encouraged to learn kreu jai. Academic achievement without kreu jai is not regarded as worthy. Kreu jai incorporates a somewhat more cognitively complex concept than is usually understood in Western notions of “respect.”...Kreu jai is at the heart of the elegant system of Thai interpersonal relationships; it is also reinforces hierarchical distinctions…For the Thai, desirable intellectual performance includes effective social performance as an essential component.” (p. 277)

“There are few opportunities to develop problem-solving skills or independent critical thinking.” (p. 277)...Thai studies have shown strong class differences, not only in school performance, but also
in achievement motivation and moral development, in each case favoring the higher socioeconomic classes.” (p. 275)


“A mother when nursing her little boy will often pat him gently on the penis, or, if she is bathing him, affectionately rub it. A baby’s erection is received with pleasure and more ruffling. Little girls’ genitals seem to receive less attention, yet even then get an occasional playful pinch. An infant’s handling of the genitals receives no attention; but when a little boy receives trousers (at the age of about four or five) there begins a steady teasing to teach him modesty of dress, and girls receive this treatment even earlier. I observed no genital manipulation by children over five or so; and no sexual play between children.” (p. 102)

“Obviously, the practice of children and adults sleeping together in one bed involves a good deal of physical intimacy…The facts of sexual intercourse seem to be successfully hidden, at least form the conscious awareness of children, in spite of the fact that is seems to be carried on in the same bed, or at least in the same room, as the children.” (p. 103)

“The child before he is five or six is said to be *durung djawa*, which literally means ‘not yet Javanese…It implies a person who is not yet civilized, not yet able to control emotions in an adult manner, not yet able to speak with the proper respectful circumlocutions appropriate to different occasions. He is also said to be *durung ngerti*, “does not yet understand,” and therefore it is
thought that there is no point in forcing him to be what he is not nor punishing him for incomprehensible faults.” (p. 105)


“Many of the differences between our treatment of Simeon and villagers’ treatment of their children revolved around beliefs about child development. We were anxious to teach Simeon as much as we could, and we encouraged him to find out about new things—to be active, to explore. We taught him words for things outside (e.g., the stars, the names of herbs), while village parents mainly concentrated on teaching words for things inside first: most important kinship terms. Our inquiries into developmental markers, for example, at what age a child was expected to walk or talk, were considered odd and we continually answered with a polite “When they walk, they walk. When they talk, they talk.” Rapid development, while desirable from a Western perspective, was a source of worry and concern for villagers. For one thing, a child who was quick to develop was susceptible to the evil eye, which might result in boils on the child’s skin or stammering. The latter concern might occur as a result of some remarking, “Oh, how well he speaks.” Another concept that affected notions of child development was ayashu, or fixed life span. If children develop too quickly—by acting with maturity greater than their years—families suspect that their life span will be short.” (p. 74)
“A third notion that mediated ideas of development was prakrti, constitution. If a child was lethargic from malnutrition, parents would often assume is was the child’s constitution to be “that way.” Many villagers had never seen a child as active as Simeon, and it was generally assumed that this was a result of his inherited constitution. Even Simeon’s curiosity was interpreted as constitutional; after all, weren’t his father and mother always asking questions and constantly moving here and there?” (p. 74)

“Villagers had few notions of the child as an individual with a will of his or her own. Instead, they viewed a child as a source of entertainment.” (p. 74)

“Adults subjected Simeon to constant teasing, offering him something to play with and then, moments later, asking for it back, citing a kinship term: “I’m your mothers’ brother, mava, can’t I have it now?”…We came to understand that teasing a child and then observing the response was a way villagers could evaluate a child’s character and personality.” (p. 75)


“The German mothers valued autonomy significantly more than relatedness and the opposite was true for the rural Nso mothers.” (p. 105)

“Typical Bonerate children are defined as being *bodo* (stupid)—that is, they have no wisdom or knowledge of social norms and values. By implication they are not responsible for their misdeeds and behavior, and you cannot demand much from them (p. 15)…Because they have not developed a mature mind of their own, children are generally not punished (p. 73)…When children violate moral standards or cultural norms of conduct, they are excused with reference to the general fact that children are *bodoh*. Just as Bonerate people cannot define precisely the onset of childhood, which comes after an introductory stage that lasts through infanthood and babyhood, they have difficulty describing the boundaries between childhood and adolescence and between adolescence and adulthood. These transitions are stages rather than fixed points. In most instances adulthood begins with marriage, but the full status of adult membership in the village is normally not granted until the first child is born to a couple.” (Broch 1990:15)

“Parents say children have their individual speed of development, and there is no reason to worry if a child does not toddle around at an early age. He will let go when ready.” (Broch 1990:31)
The Decision to Teach our Children


“For the Nso women, clearly the developmental domain that is to be accelerated is motor development and the major tool used to achieve this goal is a special Nso practice of body stimulation: lifting the child up and down in a vertical position. (p. 119)…The Nso also practice for motor milestones when they place infants in vessels or let them practice walking.” (p. 120)

Accelerate independence, reducing labor of child care

“Body stimulation is another highly valued parenting system in Gujarati villages. One domain of body stimulation is baby massage. In a study on baby massage in the Nandesari area, Abels (2002) reported that the interviewed women referred to the health of the baby and to the effect of body massage making babies strong; it is good from the bones, the blood can move freely and the veins are separated. Moreover, 24% of the statements in the massage study referred to strong legs so that the infant learns to walk quickly. Another domain of body stimulation is infant standing.” (p. 122)
“Q: And is it essential to walk early? A: Is it essential? It is good for him to walk early than crawl…Except early walking, there are other beneficial developmental consequences of the standing practice as a 32-year-old illiterate mother of six pointed out: “If we make a child stand like this, his legs will be stronger. He passes urine and he digests milk easily. It is good for the child to make him stand.” (p. 123)…A standing baby also makes less work for the mother…Q: So while defecating is it essential to make the child stand? Do you feel so? Why? A: This is because the clothes do not become dirty.” (p. 124)


You might remember that we talked about the widespread practice among African peasants (at least in the past): to dig a hole in the ground of the field they are working in and sit their toddlers into these holes. In this way mothers who had no older girls or a niece to do the babysitting task could supervise their little children while working and prevent them from causing damage. I wrote a few sentences about this practice in my first (German) article about Bamana children which I am sending you as attachment. You will find this example on page 106

“…in an important sense, Inuit do not socialize their children…In our society we see a child as an essentially empty vessel which, through the complementary acts of teaching and learning, is gradually filled with the knowledge and strategies which make it possible for it to cope with a complex social universe. Inuit, by way of contrast, see a child as already whole having a personality fully formed at birth in latent form. All of these he will manifest and use in good time with but little assistance. In…the Inuit image of infants, children and adolescents as social actors, endowed as they are with already well formed social personalities.” (p. 39)

“The acquisition of any new skill by a young person is always celebrated. Whenever a girl catches her first salmon trout or sews her first pair of socks, and whenever a young boy kills his first goose or traps his first fox, the community is given notice of the growing competence of the child.” (p. 45)

“Children are allowed to explore the world using what skills they can muster; and there is remarkably little meddling by older people in this learning process. Parents do not presume to teach their children what they can as easily learn on their own.” (p. 50)


“When looking at these studies…one gets the feeling that parent-to-offspring accounts of transmission could be partially fictional, a research artifact due perhaps to an over-reliance on interviews
during fieldwork, some preconceptions about craft learning in informal contexts, and the emphasis put by the artisans themselves on “tradition” and “heritage,” especially when confronted by foreigners.” (p. 153)


“Children are not living their lives in a social vacuum. Their adult relatives grant whatever privileges and duties their childhood is based upon (p. 11)…adult members of the society evaluate child activities as proper conduct for various developmental stages. The adult community grants its children permission to do certain tasks and prohibits them from doing others because parents and community members share many goals for the children. On the other hand, healthy children are seldom constrained by rules, norms, and parental goals and wishes to a degree that immobilizes them in complete obedience to all cultural demands.” (Broch 1990:12)


This is unsatisfactory as a theory of how cultural knowledge persists

over time. In particular, there is a conspicuous lack of attention—in standard social theory generally—to information as a distributed resource (Thompson 1995). Recognition of this simple fact has many ramifications. I will concentrate here on three. First, it urges us to identify the agents behind cultural transmission. Second, it
implies not everyone has equal access to cultural knowledge, which in turn suggests that intra-cultural variation may be significant. Third, by emphasizing the need for beliefs and values to spread, it forces attention on the psychology of information acquisition, since only internalized knowledge is likely to be further transmitted. (p. 446)

...responsibility for indoctrinating the young may be distributed throughout the local community. (p. 447)

...cultural knowledge is not just transmitted information but the internalized derivatives of others' social inputs. This internalization depends on the entire personalities of each individual: cognitive, evaluative, and affective. Through this process, some cultural information acquires emotional and directive force, and thus determines an individual's behavior...Other anthropological research has shown, however, that the nature of culture acquisition is also determined by the social context in which transmission occurs...much knowledge is implicit, and can only be acquired through practice...For information to become embodied knowledge, the individual must engage in the everyday use of that new knowledge, so that feedback from experience can produce understanding. Thus, over time, socialization (or FAX theory) has given way to an emphasis on the active filtering of cultural inputs (internalization), which in turn has been replaced by activity-in-context as the dominant paradigm (p. 448) within which the reproduction of social systems is understood. The picture has become progressively more complex as new types of
considerations have been added. The unit of analysis has advanced from the abstract group, to the passive individual (the recipient of culturally transmitted information), to the actively appraising individual (internalization theory), to the socially situated individual, to a cluster of behaving individuals (novices, experts, and their tools) within a field of practice. The notion of culture itself has followed these changes in perspective—going from being a bucket poured into empty mental reservoirs, to the product of an active engagement between individual minds and a circulating complex of knowledge. Individuals are seen as gaining access to this knowledge within a specific social context and incorporating it in their own inimitable fashion. (p. 449)

…few take a life-span perspective; in particular, cultural learning among adults is almost universally ignored. This is because socialization has traditionally been presumed to end at adolescence. However, significant changes in social roles and self-perceptions continue into adulthood, as individuals enter new social arenas (p. 449)

**Transmission of food-taboos.**

In fact, results from the pattern of correlations between members of households and within villages in the study population suggest the degree of non-parental transmission is insignificant in this belief system, at least during the early years of life when most food avoidances are acquired. Thus, it is true that parents are important figures in the maintenance of these cultural traditions. This may be particularly the case for aspects of culture that are closely tied to
personal identity, such as food avoidances. Some avoidances are also linked to a norm that such beliefs should be acquired specifically from parents. However, even here, it is possible to see a discrepancy between norms and practice: especially as individuals age and come under the influence of people outside their close family, they continue to learn about their culture, obliterating to some degree the traces of knowledge acquired earlier from parents. (p. 450)

**Farming villages in the Ituri Forest.**

These people live in small, clan-based villages of under thirty individuals, situated along a single dirt road. Gardens are quite small, and food is supplemented through exchanges of garden produce for meat captured by the forager group with whom each clan has a traditional relationship. Avoidances against consumption primarily concern the forest-dwelling animals obtained through these economic exchanges…Over three hundred different types of reasons for avoiding foods were reported by this population. (p. 452)… Homeopathic Taboos. For example, "Kelikofu [a type of hornbill] is bad for parents of children to eat, for when a child is sick, it shakes just as the bird, when comes out of its hole [in a tree trunk], is cold and shakes."

…the Ituri people themselves have a normative model that these beliefs should be vertically transmitted…the rule is that parents should transmit these beliefs to their offspring of the same gender…when a child reaches about seven years of age ("when the child begins to have some sense"), the same gender parent begins to opportunistically present the child with samples of a particular
food item, with instruction that this item cannot be eaten. Often, some rationale is also provided, such as: "My parent did not eat this food; neither can you. It is our tareta [restriction]." The parent repeats these instructions, with or without the benefit of an example of the food item, while impressing on the child the necessity of continued transmission ("This is our tareta; you must not let your child eat this food or it will become sick"). The child remembers these avoidances throughout life, and at the appropriate point in his/her own children's lives goes through the same instructional process with them. Thus, each individual should avoid those foods that his/her same-gender parent told him/her not to eat;

this parent was in turn taught by his/her own parent. (p. 453)

Has data that suggest self-report of cultural transmission may inflate vertical transmission from parents to offspring.

Intra-cultural variation in belief among individuals known to share specific households or villages is used to infer where people learn cultural beliefs about the edibility of foods. (p. 468)

…analysis presented here and elsewhere suggests there are three phases in the normal life course of social learning with respect to food taboos in the Ituri. The first phase is one of cultural innocence, during roughly the first ten years of life, when all foods are viewed as potentially edible because no social restrictions have
yet been placed on them; personal preferences rule behavior. Children are simply considered too naive and thoughtless to bother trying to socialize. (p. 470)… In Phase Two, occupying approximately the next decade of an individual's life, the first phase of transmission takes place, largely from parents. Becoming culturally competent takes time; many individuals do not acquire a full complement of taboos until well into their twenties…The third and final life history phase consists of a longer, but less intense period of cultural transmission — this time with significant extra-familial inputs. This largely constitutes relearning or changing one type of knowledge for another…Perhaps the most interesting general result of the present analysis is the greater cultural variation within households than between households from the same village. This suggests that variation in the pattern of transmission between households generally blurs smaller-scale structures or belief-clusters. This is an indication that, as individuals get older, they look not just to parents and sibs but to those outside the household for cultural models. (p. 471)


“Children are not living their lives in a social vacuum. Their adult relatives grant whatever privileges and duties their childhood is based upon (p. 11)…adult members of the society evaluate child activities as proper conduct for various developmental stages. The adult community grants its children permission to do certain tasks and prohibits them from doing others because parents and
community members share many goals for the children. On the other hand, healthy children are seldom constrained by rules, norms, and parental goals and wishes to a degree that immobilizes them in complete obedience to all cultural demands.” (Broch 1990:12)

Paradise, Ruth and Rogoff, Barbara In press. Side by side: Learning by observing and pitching in. *Ethos*

**In numerous studies of children’s social learning in Mexican village settings, the authors note:**

In these cases, an expert’s intent to instruct was not necessary for these children to learn through observation, though repeated opportunities to observe and interest in learning the activities, as well as engagement in them (even if discouraged), were essential (p. 24) …Where children participate in a wide range of family and community activities, conversation and questions between children and adults usually occur for the sake of (p. 25) sharing necessary information, and adults rarely focus conversation on child-related topics in order to engage children in talk. Talk supports and is integral to the endeavor at hand rather than becoming the focus of a lesson (p. 26).

The expectation that learners will avoid asking questions may also be based on a respect for the ongoing endeavor, avoiding interrupting and constraining the expert’s activity. Questioning by children may signal immature self-centeredness and rudeness.
(rather than signaling curiosity or valued inquisitiveness) (p. 29).
The Importance of Good Manners


“Parents also claim to be ashamed of their children’s public behavior…They would allow the children to be chastised by others, to even join in the chastisement themselves.” (p. 54)

“The activities that make up Baining social life are preeminently processes of producing social actors. Whatever their own cultural limitation, they aware that they are the agents of their own creation: as they say, “they make themselves.” For the Baining, then, human agency, as the capacity for willed, consciously directed activity, is the central quality of human social life that links the complementary aspects of social persons as the products and producers of one another, and their shared social world. As this implies, the Baining, do not conceive of this capacity or its products, their conventional forms of activity and personal (Fajans 1997:282) identity, as “natural.” (p. 283)

“By the time a child is around two years old, it also has learned to use smiles and coyness to get approval….A few years later, a blank, unsmiling face will be a sign of a well-mannered child, especially a girl, and laughter a sign of potentially loose morals.” (p. 120)

“A smiling young child is rare, a special delight. Young children do not seem to find much to smile about,” said Hurijan, healer of children’s ailments. “And this is better so,” she added. “Life isn’t funny anyway.” Besides, a very sweet young child is in danger of becoming spoiled (nazeli)…may get used to (amukhte vabi) to indulgences so much that it will grow up to be ill-mannered and lazy, foul-mouthed.” (p. 121)


“The same kind of learning by being pushed and pulled through a simple pattern of motion occurs in the acquisition of the speech forms of respect…I have often seen children little more than a year old, barely able to stand, go through a polite bow and say an approximation of the high word for good-by…Just as she keeps saying the proper term over and over for him…the mother always refers to various adults by the polite term that the child should use until he automatically falls into the pattern. Politeness learning is highly emphasized by the prijaji (people of aristocratic value orientation), and a prijaji child of five or six already has an extensive repertoire of graceful phrases and actions.” (p. 100)

“Insin may be translated as “shame, shyness, embarrassment, guilt.” A child even as young as three begins to ngerti isin, to “know isin”
which is thought to be the first step toward growing up. (p. 111)…
As they grow older isin is taught them, first by mobilizing the already established wedi reactions, later by playing on developing self-esteem by deliberate shaming. The two-year-old, silent in fear that the strange visiting man will, as his mother had warned, bite him if he makes a noise, is not unrelated to the four-year-old who, stiff with shyness, hides behind his mother…The result of the inculcation of isin in children is that at any formal public occasion, such as a wedding or a club meeting, they are exceedingly quiet and well-behaved and will sit docilely at their parent’s side through hours and hours of formal speeches.” (p. 113)

“The nature of discipline and the canons of obedience thus change as the child grows.” (Geertz 1961:114)


“Babies are drilled daily on their terms for relatives.” (p. 43)

In spite of cases in the ethnographic record where adults teach children kin and politeness terms, the world’s authority on language socialization, Elinor Ochs, cautions:

“Overwhelmingly, however, language socialization transpires implicitly as members of a social group recurrently involve children in language-mediated activities, where children are positioned to attend to the sequential orderliness of language practices and ways in which language is conventionally used to index expected stances, actions, identities, and ideologies.”


“…adults deny providing any formal education in kinship reckoning, although informal education clearly consists of overheard conversations among adults. Adults may clarify for one another the identity of a specific luntangho, or stranger/guest, by repeating his or her clan name and origins, including kin associations with locally known consanguineal or affinal relations.” (p. 239)


“Alfred may not have had scholarly teachers, but … heard and learnt by heart many English poems. Such poems contained within them not only teaching on the proper character and behavior of a nobleman, but also the history of the people. In a society that was still largely illiterate, the important skills to develop for adulthood
were retentive memory, and a thorough knowledge of the history of feuds, kinships and land claims.” (p. 146)

“Boys, as in the later medieval period, must have learnt how to behave in company as part of their education. Children, noble and otherwise, crop up in the sources as servants of noblemen, although one aristocratic child placed in service with Abbot Benedict objected to this method of education: “A noble born child held light before [Benedict’s] table, and began to take offence that he had to serve him in such mean things. The saint, through God’s Spirit, soon perceived his pride, and, severely reproving him, said, “Brother, bless they heart”, and ordered the light to be taken from him, and him to set; and he related to his brothers the pride of the child in detail.’ Even Alfred, champion of schooling and literacy taught ‘virtuous behaviour’ as well as literacy to the sons of his household and visitors. As in the latter Middle Ages, learning the skills of service and noble behaviour were of paramount importance in the education of the nobility.” (p. 147)


“Childhood, the second phase, starts at an approximate age of five years. In this stage the world becomes wider, for children are free to roam about. At this phase youngsters also get their first assigned chores, such as carrying water and taking care of younger children. This is also the period when play activities dominate much of the child’s time. At the same time tentative, informal instruction begins to be offered by adult villagers. Late childhood and early puberty, the third phase, starts about the time of circumcision.
Today physiological puberty sets in somewhat earlier than the social ritual...for the boys. At this time interaction between boys and girls is beginning to be more formalized. Both are more involved in various household chores such as agricultural work, fishing, and cooking. By now youths should also have developed a more formal understanding of social positions within the community. They become more attentive to their physical appearance and may often appear shy in situations where they were previously unconcerned.” (Broch 1990:28)
Fostering Conformity and Altruism

Minks, Amanda 2008. Socializing Rights and Responsibilities: Domestic Play among Miskitu Siblings on the Atlantic Coast of


“Parents generally exhort the child to be cooperative…Sharing is stressed by giving bits of food and toys to the baby and by eliciting gifts of these same items from it. This “drill” is reciprocity goes on continuously…The effort to maintain a cheerful, positive universe continues throughout this period.” (p. 43)


“To assess compliance with request, the mother asked the child to bring three objects to her and to bring her three objects to place or person.” (p. 235)

“Figure 8.4 shows a Cameroonian Nso toddler following the request immediately. The Costa Rican toddler needed several reminders from his mother (see Figure 8.5). The Greek toddler shown in Figure 8.6 did not obey the request at all. A Nso toddler complies completely and immediately. A Costa Rican toddler needs reminders. A Greed toddler does not follow at all.” (p. 238)

“The effects of mother’s education within the second generation indicated that the more highly educated mothers were more likely to use the categories “Feeling Good about Oneself,” “Psychological Independence,” and “Self-control” and less likely to use the category of “Respectful” towards others and towards family members. These results are consistent with former research on socialization goals and SES, which shows that “obedience” becomes less important and “independence” more important as mother’s education increases.” (p. 63)


“A toddler presented with a piece of fruit is told to give half to “So-and-so,” and should the order be resisted, the adult ignores all protests and breaks a piece off to hand to the child’s companion.” (Hogbin 1969: 33)

“The elders begin by telling tales of the giants called *umou* that are supposed to inhabit the remote mountains. These beings, they say, are ready to pounce on naughty boys and girls and carry them off to a cave, where the bodies are cooked and eaten.” (Hogbin 1969: 34)
“Some reference may also be made to any stranger who has recently passed through the village. “You saw that dark-skinned man going by yesterday evening?” Mwane-Antu reminded Mbule. “Well, where he lives they buy little boys. The big basket he had over his shoulder is for popping them in. If you don’t stop your games for a bit and fetch my pipe from the house, as I’ve told you to do twice now, I’ll offer you to him when he returns.”” (Hogbin 1969: 34)
Fostering Aggression

Socializing Gender


With the onset of menstruation, the *patoja* becomes a *seniorita* or *muchacha*. For a male, the age of *muchacho* begins when he can fulfill tasks and earn what a man does. This fact is reinforced by the notion that a man ought to be interested in women only when he has the capacity to support one. And too, a woman should not attempt to be joined to a man without knowing the principles fundamental to running a household, particularly making tortillas. (p. 272)

Girls are more often found playing in home environments-houses or patios-than are boys. The more mature and active boys who are not yet involved in work with their fathers are quite independent and participate in play that may take place quite far from their homes, like bathing in the river or picking fruits. (p. 274)

It is interesting that the imitations and even the social role play of girls most frequently involves the mundane daily routine work of
their mothers, whereas little boys rarely imitate masculine work, most of which takes place in distant fields. Rather, they imitate activities that only few men perform, such as riding a horse or playing the marimba. In our society too, particularly in urban and suburban settings, the opportunities for children to view masculine work are limited and, indeed, the father's work may be completely outside the child's sphere. (p. 275)


“According to the texts left by Spanish missionaries and indigenous informants, the Aztecs had very definite ideas regarding the proper upbringing of children. Parents, midwives, and the community at large socialized children to become productive members of society who knew their place.” (p. 55)

“Midwives greeted a baby boy with war cries, separated him immediately from his mother to indicate his future as a warrior, and gave his umbilical cord to an experienced soldier for burial far from home. In the first weeks of the boy’s life, priests pierced his lower lip to prepare him for the warrior’s lip plug (p.55)…Girls, on the other hand, were destined for domestic tasks. The midwife would bury a baby girl’s umbilical cord in a corner of the house because domestic enclosure was her destiny. Gifts presented to newborns at their naming ceremony had symbolic importance: for girls, a broom and a spindle, for boys, weapons.” (p. 56)
“Boys also went to the temple at five years of age, to learn about religious doctrine and to begin to serve gods. Girls began to be initiated into the work of the Aztec household. Boys had more freedom to roam about.” (p. 56)


“[Deh Koh is a] village in the high mountains of southwest Iran...The people of Deh Koh are Lurs, speak Luri, and are Shi’a Muslims.” (p. 1)

“The more mobile, cheeky children—not all are like this, of course; there are shy and meek homebodies, too—are well informed of goings-on in Deh Koh, a source of intelligence for their relatively house-bound elder women relatives at home. Girls are considered much better at such intelligence gathering than are their brothers, but their movements never (p. 7) reach as far as do those of their brothers. Their radius of movement shrinks rapidly, for propriety’s sake, just at the age when they become really good at observing and reporting.” (p. 8) “Rarely is a girl seen lingering in the street by herself. Girls stick to their neighborhoods. (p. 5)...Girls tend to play in small groups, games that require little space.” (p. 11)

“In groups, boys between the ages of three and twelve are expected to never be far from *sholug*, noisy pandemonium, from being wild and without manners, *fuzul.*” (p. 17)

“Our elder daughter, at five, wanted clarification from us about the consequences of her playing with the neighbors” four-year-old
son and his slingshot: was it true that she would turn into a boy, as his mother had said? Mahmud, two, wanted to help his mother wash clothes. She quickly rinsed the subs off his arms and scolded him: “Do you want to turn into a girl?! Go away!” (p. 142)

“Although people say that bad behavior of children under the age of reason (about nine for girls, twelve for boys) most likely is not sinful.” (p. 207)…An eight-year-old boy who misbehaves an disobedys is only “naughty” (fuzul); a fifteen-year-old acting this way would be called vellou, a moral lightweight; at twenty years of age, he would be called rotten, dirty, and crazy, and be the despair of the dishonored family.” (p. 208)

“Girls reason (aql) develops faster than that of boys. This explains why girls study harder and get better grades, why they are more responsible and not vellou, and also why they can do a lot of housework and study at the same time, if need be.” (p. 297)


“Megan was given special treatment because she exemplified the Fijian concepts of wacece (cheeky or spirited) and yalo kaukauwa (a strong, solid, demanding spirit). Fijian socialization is designed to produce persons who understand their places in the social hierarchy based on age, gender, and rank. However, when a child resists this process and do not display the general childhood awkwardness, such behavior is encouraged.” (Turner 1987:105)
“I did not like some aspects of her Fijian socialization. For instance, the personality traits that earned Megan regard for her self-confidence also brought her criticism; they were more acceptable for a boy than for a girl. Thus she was labeled *via via levu* and *via via tagane*, respectively, “someone who wants to be bigger” (i.e., higher in rank or age) and “a female who wants to act like a male and assume the masculine gender’s privileges.” (Turner 1987:106)


“After about the sixth year, the child gradually begins to enter the world outside the intimacy of the nuclear family. Little girls are introduced to the world of buying and selling. Little boys are given freedom to run with their gang through the town. Many children are placed in other families during this period.” (p. 116)


“When they are five or six years old, the distinction of sex which was first evidenced in their different costumes begins to affect their conduct more noticeably…By the age of eight of nine the division between the boys’ world and the girls’ is complete.” (p. 31)

“The adolescent is held to full account of his conduct. No longer are lapses excused, in moments of parental indulgence, because he is too young to understand. For boys are some allowances may still be made for the natural high spirits of
their age, but for girls the restrictions on conduct are very rigid.” (p. 34)


“When, however, small boys and girls touch and play with their genitals, this is ignored and not commented on.” (Broch 1990: 74)

“Children love to play on the beach and in the water where they swim, dive, and splash water at each other. Boys and girls mingle freely, most of them naked. But some, especially the older girls (from nine to twelve year old) who have been circumcised wear skirts or *sarongs*.” (Broch 1990:102)

“When they are about ten to twelve years old, a gender role differentiation gradually develops.” (Broch 1990: 79)

Cited in Paradise, Ruth and Rogoff, Barbara In press. Side by side: Learning by observing and pitching in. *Ethos*


DeLeon describes a Tzotzil boy growing up in a largely female family eagerly applying himself to the learning of various household skills, including tortilla making, embroidering and weaving. This occurred in spite of the fact that he was systematically discouraged and reprimanded for his involvement in female tasks.

“When they are five or six years old, the distinction of sex which was first evidenced in their different costumes begins to affect their conduct more noticeably…By the age of eight of nine the division between the boys’ world and the girls’ is complete.” (p. 31)

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“When they are about ten to twelve years old, a gender role differentiation gradually develops.” (Broch 1990: 79)

“Among the Manus, boys and girls are treated very much alike until they reach the age of betrothal, at about ten years.” (Mead 1964: 57)
Parent-child Conversation


Refers to baby talk as “deep culture.”


“Adults experience the early vocal productions of their offspring as eminently important. Vocalizations, like gazes and smiles, are interpreted as signs of positive affect that consistently elicit attachment behaviors.” (Keller 1988:427)


“Among the opportunities afforded by mealtimes are those for child development and socialization. Mealtimes provide special potential or fostering development, first, because they are a context in which children are a captive audience, at least for the few
minutes it takes them to eat. In addition, mealtimes provide opportunities for parents to model, coach, monitor (p. 3), and control children’s behavior, as well as opportunities for children to be apprentices in meaningful activities.” (p. 4)...In families with children ages six to eleven, 80 percent reported a shared meal on four or more days, and 55 percent reported a shared meal on six or seven days.” (p. 5)

“The television is on at dinnertime in many families: 63 percent of eight to eighteen year olds in a recent national survey said the television is “usually” on during meals.” (p. 6)

“Using large-scale samples that bridge social classes and ethnic groups, researchers show that older children and teens who eat a greater number of family meals each week have more nutritious diets... an independent association between teens’ eating more family meals and having a lower likelihood of engaging in extreme weight control behaviors, such as use of laxatives and self-induced vomiting.”(p. 11)


“Researchers have noted that when there are elevated levels of chaos in the household, there is a reduced ability to understand and respond to social cues. We conclude that communication and commitment during mealtimes operate synergistically with the overall commitment to mealtime routines, lending itself to either the clear and direct exchange of information...There is increasing
evidence to suggest that chaos in the environment is related to poor socioemotional functioning….We also proposed that mealtimes form part of the symbolic foundation of family life. (p. 85)


“Until World War I years, many poorer urban white workers were also unable to adopt the middle-class model of family mealtimes…As a result, turn-of-the-century middle-class observers would note with dismay that in the lower-class houses they visited, proper family meals were unheard of, and food was simply left on a bare table for family members to grab when they could…These observations soon concluded that home economics could be the perfect medium to win the “dangerous classes” to the cause of proper domesticity. This new discipline was originally aimed at middle-class housewives left with no domestic help by flight of wage-earning white women from domestic service into expanding manufacturing and clerical sectors.” (p. 23)

“The traditional American family meantime is a recent creation…It was a minority group—the Victorian middle class—that invented the family mealtime mystique in America. Yet the actual implementation of that original ideal has historically been more exception than the rule.” (p. 32)

“Mealtimes vary widely across social classes and race in amount and style of talk.” (p. 52)

“Dinner table conversations offer rich opportunities for extended discourse, in part because talk is (at least in the families we studied) part of what is meant to happen at the dinner table. In other words, these families shared a cultural norm that mealtimes are family time, that mealtimes last more than just a few minutes, that pleasant conversation involving all the family members is appropriate, that all the family members should be present, and that every member of the family (p. 54) should contribute to the conversation. (p. 55)...The kind of talk that normally occurs at mealtimes provides rich information to children about the meanings of words, and thus constitutes a context for learning vocabulary embedded in all the other kinds of learning that are going on...[We] showed that mealtime was a more richly supportive context for the use of rare words in informative contexts than toy play or even book reading.” (p. 63)...In [one] segment of a longer mealtime conversation, Rosalyn is getting the practice in making future plans and describing those plans to others.” (p. 52)

“The more children are exposed to extended discourse during mealtime conversation, the more chances they have to acquire vocabulary, understand stories and explanations, and know things about the world. Because these are capacities that are drawn on heavily in school but are typically not much attended to in preschool or primary classrooms, children who have had the chances to acquire them at home have an important advantage in pursuing academic success.” (p. 64)
“Comparing American families with Norwegian families of similar social class, we found that the American families produces less narrative talk than the Norwegians (16 percent versus 31 percent of utterances) and more explanatory talk (22 percent versus 12 percent of utterances). Even the youngest children in the two groups of families fit the pattern; Norwegian preschoolers asked more questions than evoked narrative responses, whereas American preschoolers asked more often for explanations.” (57)


Study followed a group of 74 three-year-old children for two years. Home visits audiotaped the language used during storytelling, playing, and eating. Mothers interviewed about family activities. Dickenson et al. found that those children who were engaged in various conversations with adults were more likely to do well on measures of literacy. These gains held up through the early years of elementary school.