

fruitful areas for future research. Graduate students and researchers in a variety of fields can surely benefit from its multidisciplinary, inquisitive orientation. It is gratifying to see anthropologists working in an interdisciplinary context on problems that are both theoretically and methodologically challenging as well as relevant to pressing social issues.

Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind. *James V. Wertsch.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985. 280 pp. \$24.00 (cloth).

THOMAS S. WEISNER
University of California, Los Angeles

Anthropology has always tested and applied psychological theories, from the work of Tylor, Frazer, Malinowski, and Margaret Mead, to the present. But unfortunately, anthropology rarely has influenced the psychological theories in return. In the case of the Soviet scholar Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), it seems that we finally have a psychologist whose work is not only relevant to anthropology, but is open to and would be enriched by a theory of culture. Here is a major psychological thinker open to the importance of context and social forces shaping the mind, but who never really developed a theory of cultural context to go with his psychology.

Vygotsky's approach to a social theory of mind and thought rests on the idea that social activity in the interpersonal plane (Vygotsky called it interpsychological) is internalized and transformed as such activity becomes intrapsychological. This process of transformation occurs in what Vygotsky called the "zone of proximal development," which is the *potential* developmental level of a child (or adult)—the thought of which a person is capable if participating in guided activities with others.

Vygotsky's model for studying mind and society, then, is to start with the social and historical development of the contexts in which children live, study these at the micro- or interpsychological level, be certain to concentrate not only on what individuals have become but on what they could become or are becoming through guidance in the zone of proximal development, and then study the results of these processes intrapsychologically.

Wertsch identifies three central themes in Vygotsky's theoretical approach: "(1) a reliance on a . . . developmental method; . . . (2) the claim that higher mental processes in the individual have their origin in social pro-

cesses; . . . and (3) the claim that mental processes can be understood only if we understand the tools and signs that mediate them" (pp. 14–15).

Vygotsky's work concentrated on mediation of mental processes through internalization of speech. Vygotsky saw the importance of language and semiotics. He based his theories of the development of mind on the mediating functions of words as signs. Signs and social communication via signs are for him the pathway to understanding the connections between the individual mind and individual capacities, and social processes.

Recognizing the undeniable importance of language as a mediational tool, it is nonetheless surprising to find so little in the way of a broader theory of culture in Vygotsky's work, as Wertsch himself points out (p. 216). How does the totality of the activity around children (e.g., the personnel available, motivations, cultural tasks and goals, scripts for conduct) arise out of sociocultural conditions, for instance? What accounts for certain people (mothers) assisting children in the zone of proximal development in one culture, but others (siblings as caretakers or teachers) doing so in different cultures? Rich conversation and narrative is an expectable cultural script during dinnertime in one society, but silence and deference are expected in another. Vygotsky's model of activity needs to include more than language, and the cultural activities themselves need to be explained.

Vygotsky's model of mind requires a clearer sociocultural basis. On the cultural side, research is needed linking social and cultural ecology to processes in the local, day-to-day activities of children. Cultural analyses will need to move beyond an exclusively conceptual or meaning-based view of culture, to one that includes the local activity setting and interpsychological level. And this work will require incorporating mechanisms for cultural change, just as Vygotsky emphasizes change in his zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky did not integrate the "natural" or biological course of development of the individual and cognition very effectively into his model, nor does his vision of mind and society have much to say about problems of motivation, emotions, or human needs. His psychology also needs better integration with the many new developments in the cognitive sciences. But Vygotsky's work is clearly not a closed system and can be usefully integrated into other psychological models, as well as theories of culture.

Wertsch's presentation of Vygotsky's ideas is clear, subtle, and always focused on the cen-

tral issues in Vygotsky's work. The book goes beyond Vygotsky's work and draws on other current research in cognitive studies, cross-cultural psychology, education, and work by linguists, philosophers, and students and colleagues of Vygotsky. Wertsch appreciates the importance of Vygotsky's feat of integration

Social/Cultural Anthropology

Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered, *Bruce G. Trigger.* Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985. 444 pp. \$35.00 (cloth), \$18.95 (paper).

DEAN R. SNOW
University at Albany, SUNY

Trigger has written a book on ethnohistory that will be valued more by anthropologists than by historians. The disciplines differ strikingly in how they view the common data base, what scholars are expected to do with it, and in the nature of criticism itself. Beneath superficial common cause lurk what may be mutually regarded as dangerous myths; the historian's myth of facts that speak for themselves is balanced by the anthropologist's myth of theory. In the main, anthropologists seem more concerned with data validation, its application to theoretical issues, and the resulting sharpening of generalization. Historians seem more concerned with the verification of facts, the development of ideas, and the cumulative growth of historiography as literature. To the extent that Trigger's book straddles the disciplines, it will provide common ground on which anthropologists and historians can either talk past one another or come to better understand their differences. It also straddles the principal languages of Canada and an international boundary, refuting (I hope) the notion that there are or can be multiple anthropologies.

Canada in its Heroic Age was focused on the St. Lawrence lowlands. The natives were principally the Northern Iroquoians and the newcomers were principally French. In an excellent first chapter, Trigger uses this context to criticize the renowned historians that have shaped (read "distorted") the Indian image. The second chapter reviews the archeological background, which Trigger controls as well as he does documentary sources. Chapter 3 combines a summary of 16th-century events with a critique of Boasian ethnography.

across what today are disparate social science disciplines. It is a significant contribution by Wertsch to have synthesized the theory itself with such clarity, and more so to have brought it up to date with contemporary research in so many fields.

Chapter 4 deals both with the events of 1600–1632 and with Trigger's materialist theoretical perspective of them. An eight-page manifesto on ethnohistory makes clear that he knows the hazards of working in an academic borderland. To many historians and some anthropologists, the events have all been described before and the theory is superfluous, making them wonder why it was written at all. My own view is that Trigger sheds brilliant new light on a shadowy period. For example, his discussion of Indian concepts of profit (p. 188) goes far beyond Hunt's ethnocentric treatment of the fur trade economy, and is a model of empirical and theoretical balance.

Trigger deals with the period from the arrival of Jesuits and epidemic diseases around 1632 through the destruction of the Hurons to 1663 in chapter 5. The chapter contains a key discussion of the fundamental contrast between hierarchical European institutions (both political and religious), and the egalitarian institutions of the Iroquoians. Much hangs on an understanding of this theoretical point, which is ignored by those who take such things as Indian religious conversions at their European face values. Consider a discussion between an Iroquois sachem who conceives Jesuits as a French faction, and a Jesuit missionary who conceives sachems as hierarchical rulers and you will begin to understand the complexities of the documents. Consider a discussion of that discussion by an anthropologist and historian at a meeting of the American Society for Ethnohistory and you will begin to understand the complexities of that too.

The chapter also makes the point that "there are few problems relating to the understanding of the protohistoric period that are of greater importance than determining population trends at the time" (pp. 241–242). The views of the historians Calvin Martin and Henry Dobyns do not fare well in Trigger's exploration of this issue.

The final chapter, which is a condensation of the previous five, reveals the ethnohistorian's dilemma most clearly. A careful and de-