so will seriously undermine the efficacy of any literacy program, the fulfillment of deferred dreams, and the viability of South Africa in the twenty-first century.

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The discipline of psychology, with its tendency toward ethnocentrism and its overwhelming focus on individual expression and development, has contributed relatively little to the field of comparative education. This strong volume may change that. Patricia Greenfield and Rodney Cocking have assembled a group of essays that taken together demonstrate the value of a cross-cultural perspective for understanding the full range of patterns in human education and development. In so doing, they also enable us to appreciate the contribution of a cross-cultural developmental psychology to the illumination of problems of schooling in comparative perspectives.

The editors are to be applauded for bringing together a stunning range of locales and settings and a highly competent group of international scholars. In her preface and introduction, Greenfield lays out the volume’s conceptual stance. Among other things, she says that the international social sciences have been thoroughly Europeanized, an imbalance this volume aims to correct by fostering the “insider perspective” on traditionally disempowered groups. So here we have a number of well-known scholars studying and writing about “their own,” a group that includes Concha Delgado-Gaitan on Mexican Americans in California, Beatrice Adenike Oloko on Nigerian child street traders, and Ruby Takanishi on Japanese Americans. The “outsider perspective” is given a place in the volume as well, and there are fascinating internal debates between authors, such as Harold Stevenson’s urging of the Chinese David Ho to examine more closely his stereotypical characterization of authority in “Confucian heritage cultures.”

To be sure, the volume’s conceptualization remains centered on the United States, and this may compromise its value for comparativists. While the endeavor originated, admirably, as an attempt to internationalize the developmental field, most of these papers on cognitive socialization were eventually presented at a conference sponsored by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health. A number of the papers report on cognitive socialization among U.S. minority groups, while others report on societies outside the United States that now have “substantial groups of descendants in the U.S.” (p. xvi). It is clear the editors were motivated, in large part, to use knowledge about minority child development to redress the more damaging
“discontinuities” between minority cultural repertoires and those practices dominant in U.S. and European schools. Yet ironically absent is any discussion of cultural and linguistic minorities within the national-level “cultures of origin” of these U.S. and European minorities (e.g., the Ainu in Japan or Mayan Indians in Mexico). Even the photographs that handsomely pepper the volume capture only the lives of recent immigrants to the United States, with the exception of France in one case.

In a comprehensive, programmatic overview, Greenfield explains that every culture, in forging an adaptation to ecological and economic conditions, evolves a distinct set of “value orientations” specifying the proper “endpoints of development” (p. 3). Such orientations, in turn, provide the “developmental scripts for intergenerational socialization” (p. 3). Challenging psychology’s presumption of the “independent individual” as a human universal, Greenfield argues that individualism (or independence—these terms are used more or less interchangeably) is only one developmental script; most cultures, in fact, encourage collectivism (interdependence). Accordingly, the script of independence tends to be most elaborated in commercial societies that socialize their children for “maximizing educational development” (read: schooling), while the script of interdependence finds expression in agricultural and foraging societies that socialize for “survival and subsistence” (pp. xv–xvi).

When I first read this analytic scheme, I thought it both useful and troublesome. Certainly, the challenge to Western individualism is more than welcome, as is a demonstration of the intimate relation between such individualism and a modern culture of schooling. Moreover, the focus on substantive “value orientations” as a key component of cultural history, and thus as a possible source of conflict in schooling, is a helpful advance over the traditional anthropological focus on differences between minority and school-based linguistic and communicative forms. Yet I also wondered whether it was necessary to articulate these points in terms of a dichotomy. To be fair, Greenfield qualifies the dichotomy by conceptualizing cultural scripts as being on a continuum from independence to interdependence (p. 4). She also recognizes that most interdependent cultures are in the midst of a transition to, or a vexing placement within, a market-oriented society with its individualistic schooling. As she puts it, such cultures often move toward “changing the definition of survival skills” (p. 12) to include school achievement. Still, the dichotomy may obscure as much as it illuminates, for it does not easily acknowledge the dynamism of hybrid identity formation, of the complex and layered acculturation strategies so often observed in these cultures.

The structure of the book itself suggests similar difficulties. The empirical chapters are organized into sections on American, African, and Asian “roots.” Yet only some of the studies in each section are really about cultural “roots,” that is, the cultures of origin (p. xii) of contemporary U.S. and European ethnic minorities. The section on “African roots,” for instance, contains essays on the socialization of contemporary Nso in Cameroon (A. Bame Nsamenang and Michael Lamb), of the Soninke now living in Paris (Jacqueline Rabain-Jamin), of working-class African American children in the United States (Ira Kincade Blake), and of Nigerian street children (Adenike Oloko). Furthermore, the justification for studying cultures of origin fails to fully recognize the interposition of generations of historical and cul-
tural experience and begs the obvious question: to what extent do contemporary African Americans have their developmental “roots” in Africa, or third-generation Mexican Americans theirs in Mexico? To be fair, again, Greenfield does acknowledge that such minority cultures likely have a “mix of tools and interaction styles [that] may reflect a mixture of cultural origins” (p. xiv). The studies in the book, after all, are meant to initiate an exploration of cross-cultural roots, not produce a definitive account. But the book would have been even more powerful in assessing the contemporary influence of such roots through systematic comparative study within and across contemporary minority groups and their cultures of origin (see, e.g., the work by Carola Suárez-Orozco and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, Transformations: Immigration, Family Life, and Achievement Motivation among Latino Adolescents [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995], on Mexicans and Mexican Americans). Some authors open their inquiry in this direction. Delgado-Gaitan compares recent Mexican immigrants with those of the first generation, and Rabain-Jamin compares Africans in Paris with a rather too generalized set of “traditional African cultures” without rigorously pursuing such comparisons. Similarly, noted anthropologist John Ogbu contributes an essay in the concluding section that presents his now-familiar comparison of “voluntary” and “involuntary” minority responses to schooling. Ogbu’s penchant for typologizing, while useful for illuminating general patterns and tendencies, now tends to present a unitary view of minority groups that obscures their complex internal dynamics of class, generation, and gender.

The section on Asian “roots,” consisting of some 7 chapters, is the most intellectually exciting and conceptually developed. Here we see a number of the provocative tensions that go uncommented on through the rest of the book. Takie Sugiyama Lebra, Japanese American herself, cogently examines the fundamental contrast between Japanese mother-child socialization for continuity and interdependence and American socialization for discontinuity and independence and suggests that Japanese Americans must develop “bicultural flexibility” (p. 273). David Ho critiques the “authoritarian” culture of Confucian-tradition schools (China, Korea, and Japan), while both Hiroshi Azuma and Harold Stevenson question the Confucian typology and the portrait of rote teaching Ho prefers. Barbara Schneider and her colleagues propose an interesting and useful model for integrating macrolevel and microlevel sociocultural factors in our understanding of East Asian student success in the United States.

Finally, a comment on the range of research and the quality of writing represented in the book: most of the chapters present snapshots of larger, usually long-term studies of cognitive socialization undertaken by well-known researchers. Some of these studies advance or endorse powerful conceptual frameworks for understanding the relations between cognitive socialization in and out of schools. Through his work on Hawaiian and Navajo children, for instance, Roland Tharp demonstrates the value of “cognitive pluralism” (p. 103), a notion originally proposed by Vera John-Steiner. Other chapters, however, frankly seem rather more like pedestrian overviews of research done on the cultural values of certain ethnic minorities. And then there is the uneven quality of the writing. This can be partly explained and excused by the truly international cast. Perhaps more than half the authors do not have English as their primary language. Still, even where the writing
is clear, it can be deadly boring. The editors' instructions to authors that they explore the tension between independence and interdependence, as well as the continuities and discontinuities in cognitive socialization, while unifying the volume, have led in many cases to a stultifying redundancy. The qualitative research that informs most of these chapters is rarely translated into vivid descriptive prose. In short, there is science here, but very little art. As a result, the book intimidates: a chapter or two here and there excites, but as a whole, reader beware!

Rodney Cocking's final essay, which attempts an "ecologically valid" synthesis of cross-cultural findings, is directed primarily to developmentalists and fails to acknowledge the presence of several anthropologists and sociologists in the book. For readers outside psychology, the volume thus breaks new ground in understanding the deeper sources of conflict generated in modern schools, but it requires us to do a lot of work on our own. As it stands, the book makes a powerful critique of ethnocentric developmental psychology without pursuing the obviously important social and educational implications. Yet to ask this of such a book is only to praise the otherwise remarkable relevance and acuity of the overall project.

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The Japanese educational system has frequently been held up as a model to address what some see as the growing problems and failing quality of schools in the United States. However, such calls for change in the American system typically rely heavily on narrow indicators such as test scores and international rankings without taking into consideration the social and cultural contexts of the schools themselves. In these two books analyzing the Japanese educational system—from the elementary level in the case of Gail R. Benjamin to Robert L. Cutts's examination of the university system—neither author falls prey to simple answers for the complex questions of how Japan's educational system operates, how the students produced compare to their international peers beyond test scores, how the educational system is a function of the society in which it exists, and the applicability of such a system to the problems facing its U.S. counterpart.

While both authors address the historical development of the Japanese educational system and the role the system and those associated with it play in Japanese society, both books also draw into sharp focus the contrasts between the country's primary and secondary schools. While many authors point to the discrepancies of early educational preparation in the United States, based on differences in funding, quality of teaching, and classroom composition, Japan strives to minimize such in-