

directions

NEW

FOR
CHILD
DEVELOPMENT

moral development

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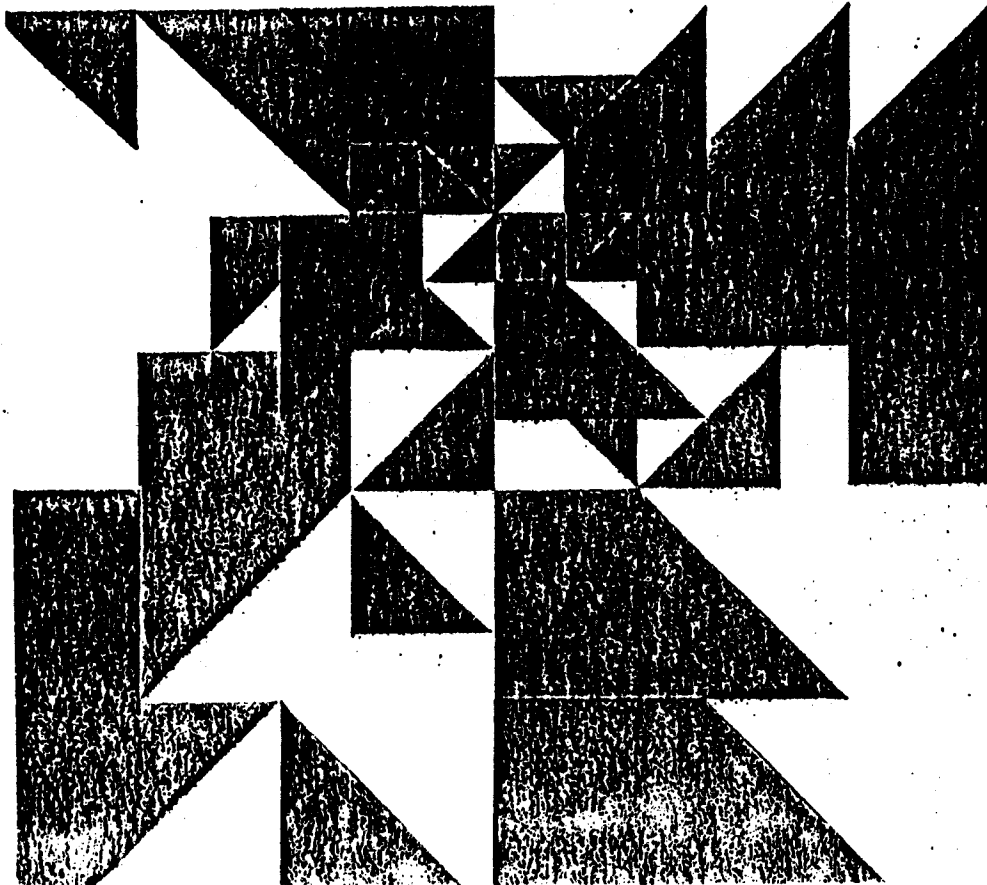
Even young children show considerable cultural competence in their accusations and excuses, and can differentiate among various types of rules.

speaking of rules: the analysis of culture in breach

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Culture may be thought of as a negotiable, loosely organized collection of rules or standards for regulating conduct (D'Andrade and Romney, 1964; Goodenough, 1970; Kay, 1966; Levi-Strauss, 1969; Whiting and Whiting, 1960). The basic idea is that culture is "a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call 'programs')—for the governing of behavior" and that man is "the animal most desperately dependent upon such extragenetic, outside-the-skin control mechanisms, such cultural programs for ordering his behavior" (Geertz, 1973, p. 44). As Geertz further remarks, "Beavers build dams, birds build nests, bees locate food, baboons organize social groups, and mice mate on the basis of forms of learning that rest predominantly on the instructions encoded in their genes and evoked by appropriate patterns of external stimuli: physical keys inserted into organic locks. But men build dams or shelters, locate food, organize their social groups, or find sexual partners under the guidance of instructions encoded in flow charts and blueprints, hunting lore, moral systems and aesthetic judgments: conceptual structures molding formless talents" (p. 49-50).

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Or, as Levi-Strauss has noted, "absence of rules seems to provide the surest criterion for distinguishing a natural from a cultural process" (p. 8).

The "control mechanism" view of culture is not new, although one is struck by the fact that it is shared by contemporary culture theorists who agree about little else. Over a century ago, Tylor (1871, p. 1) identified the elements of culture as "knowledge, belief, art, morals, law [and] custom," all rule domains. Only slightly more recently, Freud became fascinated by man's distinctive capacity to monitor and regulate behavior by reference to rules and to our species' seemingly irrepressible involvement in self-criticism (see, for example, 1964, pp. 59-60). The "superego" concept emerged.

Cultural control is an incessant, almost mundane feature of daily life. Yet despite the long history of the "control mechanism" view, we still know relatively little about the way cultural control is routinely exercised. For theorists of culture, the transition from grand abstraction to the observation of ordinary process has been a difficult one. One reason is that culture is one of those "essentially contested concepts" (Gallie, 1968); it positively invites costly semantic dispute. Armed with definitions and counter-definitions, nearly every school of anthropological thought has tried to appropriate the concept for itself. More energy has been spent in jurisdictional controversy and definitional cataloging than in the observation of behavior.

There is a second reason for the lack of progress in the study of cultural dynamics. It is not news that people live in a world populated by "dos," "don'ts," "musts," "cannots," and "up-to-yous" of their own making. Many know this, but many have also assumed that these commandments, exhortations, recommendations, taboos, and restrictions are well-formulated, neatly packaged control programs (or "scripts") waiting to be mastered and internalized by the young. Our own image of cultural process is somewhat different. We believe it is more fruitful to assume that cultural rules are continually tested, employed, clarified, and negotiated in microscopic moments of everyday life. These moments, which we shall refer to as *situations of accountability*, are easily overlooked, but it is in these often brief verbal moments that the process of cultural control and negotiation can be directly observed.

Evaluative inquiries are ubiquitous in everyday life. Demands for an account of why someone has done (or is doing) what he has done (or is doing) occur so routinely they often go unnoticed—unless, of course, an account is not forthcoming. In response to "Why are you late?", "No comment" will just not do. Social order and social relations are easily disrupted by a simple refusal to account for one's behavior.

Situations of accountability are easily observed:

1. Madeline comes to school after a day's absence.

Teacher: Madeline, we missed you yesterday. Where were you?

Madeline: *See, my mother and dad didn't want me to come to school because they both slept late.*

Teacher: Oh, they had vacation yesterday?

Madeline: Yeah.

Teacher: Well, I guess that's a good excuse.

Cultural Control Message: Children are expected to be in school every day(?).*

cultural control

Accountability is a domain of speech behavior. When action appears to depart from what we consider ordinary, expectable, or approvable behavior, we begin to speak about it in certain ways. We become interested in making evaluative judgments about the behavior in question. Under these circumstances, two kinds of speech acts commonly occur, *accusations* and *accounts*.

2. Some nursery school children have gotten their clothes wet and are changing into extra pairs of trousers kept by the school. They are in a dressing area with a double door that opens separately above and below. Gary, Abel, and Edith stand around the open top half of the door. Edith stands on a chair looking through the door. Gary and Abel peek over the top.

Vickie: You silly dummies . . . you're all pecking. We're getting dressed, you guys. We're still getting dressed.

Teacher (approaching): What's wrong? Are you changing clothes?

Vickie: Yes.

[Teacher closes the door]

Edith (to Gary): Keep that locked. Now don't open it.

Vickie: Don't look, now, don't look!

Cultural Control Message: One must not watch while other undress(?).

3. It is time for the kindergarten children to go out. Douglas expresses his intention to stay in.

Teacher: Sorry, dear, we're all going out. No one is staying in.

Douglas: *No! My mother said I just got a sore throat.*

Teacher: Sorry, everybody is going out.

Douglas: *But when you have a cough, you can't go out.*

Teacher: Well, if you can't go out, then you stay home because you're sick. I have a cough and I'm going out.

[Douglas goes out with the class]

*In each case we have qualified our statement of the underlying rule or cultural control message with the sign (?), which is intended as a reminder that our identification of the relevant rule is an inference; these rules are seldom, themselves, uttered. Furthermore, the rule is an inference for the participants as well, and we do not assume perfect agreement in their formulations; we feel that cultural rules are by nature negotiable and always carry the possibility of other understandings.

Cultural Control Message: When it is time to go outside, everyone goes(?); children are not permitted to stay in the classroom by themselves(?).

Accusations and accounts are speech acts that correlate with behavioral episodes in which some breach of social expectation occurs. Operationally, this correlation is tautological. Accusations and accounts make functional sense only when behavior departs from the ordinary, expectable, and approvable forms associated with a given context. An accusation or account is an indication that such has occurred or is perceived to have occurred by at least one participant. With respect to our observations, the answer to the question "How did you know when to record an episode and classify it as a situation of accountability?" is "Somebody made an accusation or an account." However, the question whether or not a "breach" actually occurred can be ambiguous. One participant may perceive a breach when others do not, there may be misunderstandings, or someone may be falsely accused. Furthermore, we sometimes observed behavior for which a participant might justifiably have been called to account (we believe we understand *some* of the rules of our culture), but none of the participants commented on the behavior; such instances were not recorded.

Accusations and accounts are essentially functional concepts. They are identifiable not by form but by what they do. An accusation calls attention to behavior in such a way as to expose it to evaluative scrutiny. As Scott and Lyman (1968) observe, ordinary, expectable behavior does not receive attention. Under certain conditions, calling attention to behavior by direct verbal reference or by implication constitutes criticism or, in the terms of Scott and Lyman, "valuative inquiry" (see also Austin, 1961). An accusation is defined by this function. The term *accusation* is likely, according to ordinary use, to seem too strong for many such instances. We have kept it, however, because the language contains no more suitable generic term for this class of phenomena and because it vividly reminds one of the essential function of these speech acts—to call attention to the fact that someone has done, is doing, or is about to do something amiss. An accusation invites the response of an account. There is less of a problem, we believe, with the term *account*, but it does need to be distinguished from explanation. The function of an account is to interpret behavior in such a way as to make it more understandable according to the criteria for expectable, approvable behavior. Explanations also make things more understandable, but they do so under conditions in which untoward action is not an issue.

We shall not, in this study, try to work out the set of conditions that specify what constitutes an accusation or an account. In fact, although such an endeavor might proceed along the lines suggested by Searle's (1969) analysis of "promising," we are not sanguine about ever arriving at a universal formula. It is evident, for example, from a perusal of the utterances that function as accusations and accounts that there is nothing about these utterances *out of context* that marks them as accusations or accounts. The utterance "that is not a paper cup" contains nothing to identify it as an accusation; "I

don't have any sandals" contains nothing to identify it as an account (it happens to follow the utterance "It's too hot for tennis shoes; it's better to wear sandals"). Either utterance could, in various contexts, be an accusation or an account, or it could represent an entirely different speech act (request, command, proposition) having nothing to do with accountability.

How, then, was it possible for us to identify utterances as accusations or accounts? The general answer, we believe, is that for us to recognize accusations and accounts we had to be competent members of the speech community investigated and therefore to know the conventional acts of that community, within a normal margin of error. A competent member of a speech community is able to identify an accusation or an account, because he or she understands the *functional* relationship of a speech act to other verbal components of an episode as well as numerous nonverbal and presupposed components of the act's context. Any attempt to explicate and codify these understandings would probably have to be done for each episode individually; there is no general formula.

Rarely, from our observations, can actual accusations and accounts be distinguished from other kinds of speech acts on the basis of vocabulary or overall semantics—*independent of context*. However, the process of identifying accusations and accounts is not as tenuous or subjective as it may seem. It is what we all do when we interpret one another's speech behavior; it is intersubjective, conventional, and open to consensual validation. An example may be the best way to make the point. A teacher who noticed a child holding a water glass approached the child and said, "That is not a paper cup." This utterance initiated interaction. The child responded, "I'm going to put it down." The observer had not been aware of the classroom rule that children are not supposed to handle glassware except when assisted by an adult; they are supposed to use paper cups. This rule, however, became immediately understood upon witnessing the episode and was verified by a subsequent utterance of the teacher. The utterance "that is not a paper cup" in the context of a teacher approaching a child and initiating interaction, followed by the child's self-correcting or reparative response, implied something like: "That is not a paper cup, it's a glass (which is, in this context, the *relevant* thing; because *most* things are not paper cups), and you know that you are supposed to use paper cups and not glasses." This expansion can be inferred from the utterance. The child clearly understood it in this way, and some such expansion is necessary to understand the child's response. In fact, the implications of the utterance could be expanded further to include its evaluative force ("that's bad") and its probable directive intent ("put it down"). It is held that most people (within the speech community) would derive these meanings from this utterance in this context or, in other words, that they would assent to our expansion. But the inference that an utterance is an accusation or an account often can be validated only by reading the entire syntagmatic sequence—the utterances that follow or precede it, along with their implications according to context.

Accusations and accounts, in other words, do not have a standard recognizable form. They are functional units which derive their function

from their relation to other units in a sequence. They are, in the terminology of Pike (1954), *slots* or positions in a meaningful sequence. Only the entire sequence fully accounts for the meaning of a slot. As defined, the situation of accountability has, as its minimum of slots, the enactment of or reference to behavior recognizable as a breach to one or more participants and either an accusation or an account.

An accusation, then, is to be construed as a functional slot in an interaction sequence which by implication, in a given context, raises the question of valuation of behavior as untoward. The utterance "we already had his birthday party" derives its force as an accusation from the fact that it follows the utterance "we are going to have Adam's birthday party today." An implicit understanding to the effect that, as a rule, "we only have one birthday party in class per person per year" mediates the implicit conclusion that it is somehow amiss and in need of explanation that we are having Adam's birthday party for a second time. The utterance receives an account, "his mother sent some treats today because she didn't send them last time," which validates the utterance as an accusation by authority of a participant's recognition that it requires an account. But the presence of an account is not necessary for identifying an utterance as an accusation. What is necessary is that the utterance conventionally implies a negatively evaluative conclusion (having a second birthday party for Adam might not be "bad" but it is implied to be "incorrect" in some way) and that the implications or premises that mediate this conclusion can be specified — and ultimately that they would be shown to be conventionally agreed on by informants. Consensual agreement is testable.

Situations of accountability are behavioral episodes which carry the potential that someone will be called to account. These episodes involve behavior potentially interpretable as violations or breaches of social expectation. We assume that social expectations are rule-governed and that therefore one or more rule systems or cultural control mechanisms are associated with the interpretation and negotiation of situations of accountability. The nature of such rule systems (cultural control mechanisms) and the manner of their manifestation in situations of accountability are open questions, ones which our set of observations begins to explore.

kinds of cultural control mechanisms (rules)

During sixty hours of observational time (90-180 minutes per session several times a week for several weeks), 630 situations of accountability were observed and recorded in either a University of Chicago nursery school class (NS) or kindergarten class (K). A basic question to be faced was "How are the rules associated with the 630 situations of accountability to be classified?" What we sought was a classification of rules based on the way rules of a given type exercise their control and are appraised by those subject to their governance. Black's (1962) analysis of rule clusters was very helpful in this regard. Although we depart from Black's classification of rule types in certain respects, we have borrowed much from his discussion (see also Hart, 1961; Whiting and Whiting, 1960).

Black divides rules into types according to a number of parameters used by competent members of a culture to appraise a rule. Six parameters can be identified: the historicity of the rule, the source of the rule, the potential alterability of the rule, the method of rule validation, the consequence of rule violation, and the relevance of the truth criteria — all as viewed by members of a given culture. For example, in this analysis, at any given time culture bearers view "moral" rules (such as "mothers and sons must not copulate with each other") as unalterable and ahistorical. Although in fact many moral rules change with time and vary cross-culturally, one can identify the *moral* status of a rule by noticing, in part, that questions such as "How do I go about changing the incest taboo?" (alterability) and "In what year was the incest taboo created?" (historicity) are judged peculiar, ill-formed, or somewhat beside the point by any competent member of our culture (or at least any member we would be willing to call competent).

At least five rule types, or cultural control mechanisms, govern the behavior of competent members of our society. The are: (1) regulations (or laws); (2) conventions (or customs); (3) morals (or ethics); (4) truths (or beliefs); and (5) instructions (techniques, recipes, or "know-how"). Table 1 shows how each rule type relates to the six parameters of orientation and appraisal and identifies the modality (it's legal, it's the done thing, it's wrong, it's true, it's effective) in which each rule type is evaluated. We cannot fully explicate Table 1 in this chapter, but a brief discussion coupled with some examples of each rule type from our nursery school and kindergarten protocols should serve to clarify the scheme.

Regulations. Prototypical regulation formulations can be found in the internal revenue laws of the United States and various sections of the *Internal Revenue Code* (for example, "If you receive more than \$400 in interest, you must complete Part I of Schedule B and answer the questions in Part III").

Regulation rules are historical — someone made them at some time, as when the kindergarten teacher made a "new rule" that children were not to bring toys from home. Regulations have their source in a specifiable authority who also has the authority to alter them. The power vested in the relevant authority is the validation for such rules. The consequence of transgression is penalty. Regulations have no truth value, except insofar as one can ask whether such and such is a rule or is not a rule within a given society or institution. It is considered appropriate to ask of a regulation each of the following questions: Who made this rule and when? Who punishes breaches? What are the penalties for violation? How do I go about getting it rescinded? But it is somewhat peculiar to ask, how do you know it will work?

4. Everett has brought a box to school. Adelle takes it to use. Everett asks to have it back, but Adelle won't give it to him.

Everett: Well, it's my box and I can do whatever I want with it.

Adelle: Not if you bring it to school it isn't.

[Adelle keeps the box]

Cultural Control Message: If you bring toys to school, they become property for common use(?).

Table 1. Rule Types

	1. Regulations/ Laws	2. Conventions/ Customs	3. Morality/ Ethics	4. Truths/ Beliefs	5. Instructions/Techniques/ Recipes/"Know-How"
1. historicity	historical	potential but unclear	ahistorical	ahistorical	ahistorical
2. source	specifiable authority	unspecifiable	a priori	logic, reason, experience	experience
3. alterability	alterable: specified procedure	potentially alterable: no specified procedure	unalterable	unalterable	unalterable
4. validation	relevant authority	consensus	intrinsic	empirical, consensus of experts	empirical, consensus of experts
5. consequences	extrinsic: penalty	extrinsic: negative social evaluation	intrinsic: moral culpability	intrinsic: error	intrinsic: extrinsic: ineffectiveness
6. truth-criteria	inapplicable	inapplicable	indeterminable	analytic or synthetic	synthetic
7. mode of evaluation	It's legal (or illegal)	It's the done thing (or it's just not done)	It's right (or wrong)	It's true (or false)	It's effective-useful (or ineffective)

5. Kenneth approaches a teacher.

Kenneth: I went downstairs and got my dinosaur.

Teacher: I asked you not to, Kenneth, because there's no teacher down there.

Kenneth: Mrs. S. went with me.

Teacher: Oh, then that's all right.

Cultural Control Message: Children are not permitted in the basement work area unaccompanied by an adult(?).

Episodes 1 and 3 above would also be classified as demonstrating regulation rules.

Conventions. Prototypical convention formulations can be found in any book on etiquette, manners, or dress (for example, "Don't eat rice with your hands"). Conventions are perceived as potentially historical, but the time and process of their origin are not specifiable (except in some cases by mythology). The source of conventions is supra-individual; it is "custom." Conventions are potentially alterable, but not by the power of a single individual or institutional body, or by a specifiable process. It is not well-formed to ask, "How do I go about revoking the rule 'shake with your right hand'?" Conventions are validated by consensus. People simply agree, for example, that it is all right for gentlemen to expectorate into receptacles in public places but that it is not all right for ladies to do so. Conventions are perceived as "the done thing." The consequence of violation is social disapproval. Conventions bear the same relation to truth value as regulations.

6. Gary (to Sam): Why do you always dress up the same?

Sam: Uh-uh.

Gary: You always dress up in that.

Sam: No, sometimes I wear blue.

Cultural Control Message: Day-to-day changes of costume are required for public appearances(?).

7. The teacher has greeted Fred as he came in the door. Fred did not respond. The teacher walks over to Fred.

Teacher: Fred, Fred, Fred, you were so busy you didn't hear me say "Hi, Fred."

[She takes Fred's chin in hand.]

Just say "Hi," then I'll know we saw each other.

[Note: The teacher's "accusation" contains an account, "you were so busy . . ."]

Cultural Control Message: One is expected to return a greeting(?).

Episode 2 above would also be classified as exemplifying a convention rule. **Morals.** Prototypical moral formulations can be found in sacred texts (such as, "Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife"). Table 1 indicates that

morals are ahistorical. Perhaps this requires a brief explanation. Morals, like conventions, may in fact be culturally and temporally relative. However, the category is intended to encompass not morality as considered by philosophers and anthropologists but moral rules as seen by the people who hold them. Thus, if an individual accepts as a moral principle that it is wrong to eat flesh, he will believe that it is wrong for everyone and would have been wrong in the past and will be wrong in the future, regardless of whether people recognize it as wrong or not; there is no time at which it became wrong or at which it might become right. Likewise, there is no source. As the subscriber sees it, the rule is a priori, unalterable, and its validity is intrinsic. It is ill-formed to ask, "How do I go about changing the rule 'Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife?'" The rule is greater than mere temporal authority or man and his procedures. It is supra-individual and seems to have authority whether it is "effective" or not. One does not start violating the incest taboo once birth control techniques eliminate the possibility of (mutant) offspring. The consequence of breach is violation of intrinsic value, or moral culpability. The truth value of moral rules is indeterminable.

8. Agnes shows the teacher fresh paint on her shirt.

Agnes: Look what Clifford did.

Teacher (to Clifford): Why did you do that?

Clifford: What?

Teacher: Paint her shirt.

Clifford: *I didn't paint her shirt.*

Cultural Control Message: One must not damage the personal property of others(?).

9. Tammy and Nina are washing the table where brownies were mixed. Agnes comes to help.

Tammy: I'm sorry, but you can't help.

[Alice comes over from her painting and intervenes.]

Alice: She can help. You don't have to be just rude.

[Tammy begins to cry.]

Teacher (approaching): What's the matter?

Tammy: She pinched me.

Teacher (to Alice): Why?

Alice: *She wouldn't let Agnes help.*

Teacher: That's not your business. I told Tammy to clean the table. I'm very angry that you hurt Tammy.

[Alice cries. The teacher kneels down and comforts her until she stops.]

Cultural Control Message: One must not do physical harm to others(?); retribution does not justify physical harm(?).

Truths. Typical truth formulations can be found in dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, and texts on logic or on bodies of knowledge (for

example, "Hors d'oeuvres and canapes are appetizers served with drinks"; "In Guatemala only 2.2 percent of the population owns 70 percent of the arable land"; "Smoking increases the likelihood of lung cancer"; "It rained today in Chicago; therefore, either it rained today in Chicago or Martians landed in New Jersey").

Truths include both specific facts and generalizations that are laws in the scientific sense. As with morals, what is accepted as a truth is considered ahistorical, although, in fact, what is considered true may change. Again, at a given time, any truth is unalterable. The sources of truth are logic and experience. Most truths are validated with reference to empirical data, sometimes in combination with logical criteria (such as definitions). Validation may be based on first-hand experience or on the consensus of experts when the relevant body of experience is not available to the general public. The consequence of breach is error, which, like moral culpability and unlike penalty and social disapproval, is a consequence intrinsic and not extrinsic to the act. The truth value of this class of rule may be analytic or synthetic.

Some readers might object that truths should not be classified as rule types; truths tell you how the world is, not how it ought to be. The objection overlooks a simple matter of fact. Truths play a part in many evaluative inquiries in everyday life and function rather effectively as control mechanisms. Searle (1969, p. 185) contrives a delightful example: "We are in our half of the seventh inning and I have a big lead off second base. The pitcher whirrs, fires to the shortstop covering, and I am tagged out. . . . The umpire shouts, 'Out!' I, however, being a positivist, hold my ground. The umpire tells me to return to the dugout. I point out to him that you can't derive an 'ought' from an 'is.' No set of descriptive statements describing matters of fact, I say, will entail any evaluative statements to the effect that I should or ought to leave the field. . . . I therefore return to and stay on second base (until no doubt I am shortly carried off the field)."

10. Gary, Everett, and Seth are discussing monsters. Gary is holding a model tyrannosaurus rex, which most of the children in the classroom can identify.

Gary: Rex means "king." [An adult told him this the day before.]

Seth: Uh-uh. King Kong is. [There is a standing class discussion of which creature is "king" of the dinosaurs and monsters.]

Gary: Rex means "king," too.

Everett: He's king of the dinosaurs.

Seth: Uh-uh. King Kong.

Gary: Uh-uh. King Kong is a gorilla.

Cultural Control Message: King Kong is a gorilla; gorillas and dinosaurs are mutually exclusive classes. Therefore, a gorilla cannot be king of the dinosaurs(?).

Instructions. The typical instruction can be found in any recipe book or manual (for example, "If your electric oven has a top element, be sure it is

turned off before cooking a soufflé"). Instructions are highly similar to truths on most parameters in Table 1. What has been said of the historicity, alterability, and validation of truths holds for instructions. Instructions are evaluated, however, in the context of goals and means. They might be thought of as recipes for achieving specified results. Their source is in experience and their validation is synthetic. The consequence of breach is ineffectiveness, which is presumably intrinsic to the act, but involves consequences in the extrinsic world as well. It is well-formed to ask of an instruction, "What am I supposed to accomplish by doing that?" It is well-formed to ask of an instructor, "How do you know that will work?" It is ill-formed to ask, "How do I go about changing the rule 'refrigerate after opening'?"

11. Jeffrey and Kathy are sitting at a table. Jeffrey declares that he will break the board in front of him with a karate chop.

Kathy: I bet you can't, I bet you can't.

Jeffrey: *I know I can't, but I'm gonna try.*

[Kathy watches as Jeffrey tries and fails to break the board.]

Cultural Control Message: Thick boards cannot be broken by children making karate chops(?).

12. Alex has built a "dinosaur" from wood and nails and painted it. Against the teacher's advice, he wants to take it home.

Alex: No, this can't stay. I want to take it home.

Teacher: It might get soaked in the rain.

Alex: I'll take a bag. I'll take a bag. I wanna take it home.

Teacher: You might have to wait.

Alex: No!

[Alex picks up his "dinosaur." It falls apart and he leaves it at school to be repaired the next day.]

Cultural Control Message: Don't take freshly painted articles home in the rain(?); you can avoid getting things wet by taking them home in a bag(?).

These rules categories may or may not exhaust the kinds of rules found within societies. They sufficed, however, to classify all breach events recorded in the NS and K classrooms. The classifications were treated as mutually exclusive, although it was sometimes disputable whether or not a given breach content belonged in one category and not another. Nevertheless, interjudge reliability was satisfactory, the coefficient being .83 for 171 cases (kappa coefficient of agreement, Cohen, 1960).

situations of accountability: the cultural competence of children

Our next concern was to determine the extent to which our NS children (ages three, four, and five) and K children (five and six) are culturally

competent. To what extent are the five cultural control mechanisms (regulations, conventions, morals, truths, and instructions) differentiated and at work in the way children orient to their symbolic environments? The question is an important one, in part because the traditional literature on moral development (such as Piaget, 1965; Kohlberg, 1963) treats the various rule types we have been discussing as though for young children they were a single domain (with "marbles" confused with morality, so to speak). In contrast, Nucci and Turiel (1977) and Turiel (forthcoming) have suggested that "social-conventional" rules and "moral" rules constitute distinct systems even among preschool children and undergo quite different courses of development. Questions concerning the differentiation of cultural control mechanisms in childhood can be answered in at least three ways:

1. *By direct interviewing.* For example, children could be asked a series of questions about a corpus of rule formulations. Nucci and Turiel (1977) have used this technique, and their results are encouraging. Rules associated with classroom transgression were classified as either "social-conventional" or "moral." The classification was based on answers to interview questions concerning such dimensions as "changeability," "relativity," and importance (for instance, "What if there weren't a rule in the school, would it be right to do [the observed act] then?"). Agreement between children and adults about what was "moral" was quite high (83 percent). We have not tried this procedure in our study.

2. *By examining the distribution of breach-type recognitions.* It is possible to examine the way recognized breaches are distributed among rule categories for both children and adults. Nucci and Turiel, for example, discovered that adults responded to "social-conventional" breaches far more frequently than children, while children and adults responded with equal frequency to breaches in the moral domain. One implication was that young children were distinguishing between "social-conventional" rules and "moral" rules. Our results on breach recognitions are discussed below.

3. *By analyzing speech behavior.* Instead of directly interviewing children about their orientation to various rules, one can conduct a fine-grained analysis of their accusations and accounts. Do children give evidence in the way they accuse and excuse that indicates how sensitive they are to differences in the type of rule that has been breached? Every act of speech represents choice. Any utterance contrasts what is said with what might have been said. We assume that such selection is nonrandom and, in part, revealing of shared understandings about the kind of rule whose breach is being negotiated. A preliminary analysis of the accounts of kindergarten children is presented below.

Breach Recognitions. Three hundred sixteen situations of accountability were recorded in NS, 312 in K. Note that the only breaches recorded were those accompanied by an accusation or an account. This means that the distribution will not necessarily represent the frequency of occurrence of each breach type, only the frequency of occurrence-with-comment. Furthermore, the breaches represented are in the eyes of the beholders, that is, the participants; the observer exercised no judgment about whether an accusation was "justifiable" or "accurate."

Table 2 shows the proportion of recorded breaches falling in each breach category. The stability between classrooms is immediately apparent, as is the unevenness of distribution among the categories. Categories 4 and 5 (truths and instructions) represent extremely small proportions for both groups. While lively arguments about facts and about how things should be done were observed among both NS and K children, it appears that these matters are generally of less interest to the participants than breaches of regulations, conventions, and ethics. It is also possible that the task structure of the classrooms generates fewer breaches of truths and instructions.

The first question that might be asked is *who* notices which kinds of breach. In other words, do the different breach types elicit differential responding from adults and children, at the grossest level: presence versus absence of verbal response? Here we will be concerned only with those responses that initiate situations of accountability, namely an accusation or an anticipatory account given in the absence of an overt accusation, the latter signifying that the individual has recognized his own breach. Such responses will be termed *breach recognitions*. In NS, adults made 33 percent of the breach recognitions, children 67 percent. In K, adults made 25 percent and children 75 percent of the breach recognitions. If breach recognitions do not organize differentially for adults and children, then we would expect that in NS 33 percent of the breaches of each type would have been recognized by adults, 67 percent by children, and in K, 25 percent of the breaches of each type would have been recognized by adults, 75 percent by children.

Table 3 shows the actual proportions of breaches of each type recognized by adults and children. The table suggests that the proportions for certain breach types diverge from expectancy, with consistency across classrooms. Adults in both classrooms make more than the expected number of breach recognitions where the breach concerns regulations; children, of course, make fewer than the expected number of recognitions concerning this breach type. With regard to breach type 3, morals, children in both classrooms make more than the expected number of recognitions, adults fewer. Some divergence from expectancy is also indicated for breach types 4 and 5 (truths and instructions), but because of the small Ns for these categories, the indications are likely to be unreliable, and there is no consistency across classrooms.

Table 2. Proportion of Recorded Breaches Falling Within Each Rule Type

Rule Type	NS (N = 316)		K (N = 312)	
	Frequency	% of Total	Frequency	% of Total
1. Regulations	67	18	65	21
2. Conventions	115	36	125	40
3. Ethics	119	38	102	33
4. Truths	7	2	13	4
5. Instructions	18	6	7	2

Table 3. Proportion of Breaches of Each Type Recognized by Adults Versus Children

Breach Type	Adults				Children			
	NS Obs. %	NS Exp. %	K Obs. %	K Exp. %	NS Obs. %	NS Exp. %	K Obs. %	K Exp. %
1. Regulations	70	(33)	46	(25)	30	(67)	54	(75)
2. Conventions	30	(33)	23	(25)	70	(67)	77	(75)
3. Ethics	22	(33)	16	(25)	78	(67)	84	(75)
4. Truths	14	(33)	23	(25)	86	(67)	77	(75)
5. Instructions	22	(33)	14	(25)	78	(67)	86	(75)

Table 4 displays the same data in a different manner. It shows the proportion of total breach recognitions for each age group that concerned each type of breach. Here again, the differential importance of breach types 1 (regulations) and 3 (morals) for eliciting breach recognitions from adults and from children is clearly displayed. According to Table 3, breach type 2, conventions, is associated with adult and child recognition proportions very close to expectancy. Table 4 displays similar proportions of adult and child breach recognitions concerning this breach type.

The patterning displayed by the tables relates to the work of Nucci and Turiel (1977), who found that children and adults responded with differential frequency to social-conventional transgressions. The category "social-conventional" bears a complex relation to breach types 1 and 2 of the set under consideration. The categories of Nucci and Turiel are content categories, whereas the five categories derived from Black's (1962) analysis are defined formally, according to the criteria stated, with the assumption that content will vary from culture to culture. Nevertheless, in assigning breaches to categories, it is always necessary to make judgments about how the particular culture under observation assigns content to the five categories. The content of the category "social-conventional" as defined by Nucci and Turiel splits into two categories of the present set, regulations and conventions.

Nucci and Turiel conclude that adults are more concerned than children with social-conventional transgressions. The patterns displayed in Tables 3 and 4 suggest that adults are indeed more concerned with regulations (school rules in this case), but not with conventions (cultural expectations). We believe that the observed differential speaks for the distinction between these two domains.

The tables suggest that children are more apt to recognize breaches of morals than are adults. This finding is again in contrast with the pattern identified by Nucci and Turiel, but that is not to say it should be interpreted in a manner inconsistent with their conclusion that in general adults and children are equally concerned with breaches of morals. As Nucci and Turiel note in accounting for the different classes of responses that adults and children make to moral transgressions, children are much more often the victims,

Table 4. Proportions of Total Breach Recognitions of NS and K Adults and Children, Distributed Among the Breach Types

Breach Type	Proportion of Adult Breach Recognitions Falling in Type		Proportion of Child Breach Recognitions Falling in Type	
	NS %	K %	NS %	K %
1. Regulations	38	35	8	15
2. Conventions	32	37	38	40
3. Ethics	25	20	44	38
4. Truths	1	4	3	4
5. Instructions	4	1	7	3
6. Total	100	100	100	100

at least in the classroom situation. Rarely does a child hit or kick a teacher or take something belonging to a teacher. Consequently, a number of moral transgressions occur and are settled out of adult purview. Of more interest, perhaps, with respect to the development of social cognition, is that, given the same phenomena, children seem more apt to interpret behavior as a moral breach. For example, children seem more apt to react to minor physical injury or inconvenience as if it were intentionally inflicted; they even occasionally assign blame to others who had no apparent part in the untoward event except that they were there. Thus a child might interpret an event "he knocked me down" when a teacher interprets it "you ran into each other," or a child might say "he painted my shirt," a teacher "you put your arm against your drawing." The category "morals," furthermore, included content involving taking materials "belonging to" others, or materials to which others had some legitimate claim. Frequently a child would accuse another of taking something designated "mine," when, from the adult standpoint, the first child's claim to the object was quite tenuous. The data suggest, we believe, not that teachers are less concerned than children with moral breaches when they occur but rather that children judge more things to be moral breaches than do teachers.

In summary, the tables show that regulations, conventions, and morals account for between 90 and 95 percent of all breach recognitions in each sample segment; adults respond with disproportionate frequency to breaches of regulations; children respond with disproportionate frequency to breaches of morals; the levels of responding to breaches of conventions are similar across groups. The observed patterns are stable across NS and K classrooms. The differential adult and child response levels and the stability of proportions across classrooms support the distinctions among rule domains. Domains are differentiated according to patterns of responding.

Children display high levels of response to violations of conventions and morals, but unlike adults, they tend to overlook breaches of regulations. One way to interpret this finding is that teachers are more concerned with maintaining social order in the classroom than are children. A second interpretation is that teachers lack sufficient legislative authority to induce respect for their rules. A third interpretation is that conventional rules ("Greet people when they say hello") and moral rules ("Don't damage another person's property") are not as restricted in their range of application as are regulations, which, in our study, tend to be rules designed for a special context, namely school. The breach recognition data may indicate that children are more likely to recognize the legitimacy of rules which they experience in a wide variety of contexts (at home as well as at school, for example). These various interpretations are not mutually exclusive. All three suggest that children draw some kind of distinction between rule types. Other evidence, in particular the way in which children talk in situations of accountability, suggests that five- and six-year-olds in fact distinguish rule types according to some of the parameters in Table 1. Cultural control mechanisms seem to be differentiated and functioning in the young minds of our informants.

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talk about certain things, such as acts, circumstances, rules, and knowledge, and they talk in certain ways. Some of the things talked about and ways of talking vary by rule type. An analysis of the accounts of kindergarten children suggests that five- and six-year-olds distinguish among certain of our rule types in much the way adults do, and adjust their speech behavior accordingly.

Twelve utterance categories were inductively derived from our entire corpus of accusations and excuses. These categories were found to be sufficient for the mutually exclusive and exhaustive classification of what turned out to be 1,800 utterance units. Interjudge reliability for the categorization of 300 units was .82 (kappa coefficient of agreement; Cohen, 1960). We cannot discuss all of the twelve utterance categories in this chapter, nor can we discuss any of them in detail (a full explication is available from the authors). Rather we shall restrict ourselves to a brief description of six utterance categories which, upon statistical analysis, were found to significantly characterize and sometimes distinguish the accounts associated with the five rule types.

References to circumstances, consequences, and precepts occur most typically in kindergarten accounts associated with breaches of regulations and conventions. Utterances referring to *circumstances* cite the conditions of the situation or scene that is the context for an act. The circumstances mentioned are assumed to bear on the evaluation of behavior. They have a force to the effect "in view of the fact that . . ." and account for breaches by pointing to conditions under which the rule in breach is somehow inapplicable. Circumstances may be of many kinds: states internal to the actor, external events, or preceding utterances. These conditions represent the innumerable "unless" clauses that qualify the governance of rule. For example, Douglas, who does not wish to join the others outdoors, appeals to the circumstance of having a sore throat, and when this fails, to still another, the specific instructions of his mother (see episode 3 above; also see episodes 1 and 5; relevant utterances are italicized). Accounts of this kind represent an assumption that the rule in breach may be qualified or changed in view of conditions specific to the situation. They assume that the given rules are made more or less valid depending on the context.

Consequences refer to the predicted outcomes of acts, with an implication that the outcome referred to is either positively or negatively evaluated. As accounts, these utterances may be used in two ways: to show that breach of the rule is necessary to achieve a desirable outcome or to show that following the rule would result in an undesirable outcome. They appeal to the spirit as opposed to the letter of the law and assume that the existence of rules is justified by their social benefits: When these are not served by the rule, the rule may justifiably and temporarily be disqualified.

Precepts refer directly to a rule of conduct; they cite some generalization that is intended to guide behavior. The rule cited might be of any type. Douglas, once again (episode 3 above), in his attempt to be excused from going outdoors, cites a rule classifiable as an instruction: "If you're sick, you can't go out." The teacher counters with another of the same kind: "If you're [that] sick, then you stay home" (also see episode 4). Used as accounts, these utterances imply that the rule in breach is, in a given situation, contrary to

another rule which is assumed to override it, perhaps by virtue of its greater generality.

Circumstances and consequences negotiate rules in breach at the level of the situation, assuming that the validity of the rule is alterable according to changing situational conditions (as if the rule became stronger or weaker depending on external factors). This kind of accounting makes sense where it can be assumed that there is a specifiable authority to whom one can make appeals (see Table 1). Appeals seem to take the form that rules exist for purposes and that where there is a competing purpose, or where the purpose is not served by the rule, the rule may be temporarily discarded. Precepts negotiate at the cultural level, arguing that more than one rule applies to the situation. This kind of accounting makes sense when there is ambiguity about the relative "strength" or generality of competing rules. Thus perhaps it is not surprising that the domains of regulations and conventions more than any other make people think about citing rules.

References to *acts* occur most typically in kindergarten accounts associated with breaches of moral rules (see episodes 8 and 9 above). As accounts, these descriptions deny either that an act of which one has been accused occurred or that the accused did it ("I did not"); or they redefine the act in such a way that it is no longer blameworthy. Diane, accused of "stealing" Sandra's chair, points out that since the chair was empty, she didn't steal it, she "sat in it." These utterances do not bring a rule into competition with another rule; the definition of the act makes it clear that the rule does not apply.

Notice that the accounts associated with moral breaches do not propose competing or qualifying rules, or point to circumstances under which the rule is alterable. They rather try to show that either the act or the situation is being misinterpreted and that, given the correct interpretation, there is no breach. The associations suggest that the force or validity of moral breaches is not readily negotiable and that one must instead appeal to the interpretation that no breach of the rule has occurred. Definitions and categories become more important than competing rules. In many situations of accountability it almost appears as though a person who breaches a moral principle must deny the breach through redefinition, in order to avoid blame, for there is simply "no excuse," a strategy in keeping with the perception of moral rules as unalterable and intrinsically valid and worthy of respect.

References to *epistemics* occur most typically in kindergarten accounts associated with breaches of truths and instructions. Utterances in this category refer to the limits and bases of knowledge, including propositions presented as "facts." Epistemics represent the knowledge on which action, including a propositional act, is based (see episode 11 above). The association of epistemic accounts with breaches of truth represents an apparent constraint on discourse peculiar to the negotiation of breaches of truths, namely that little is relevant to the negotiation of facts except other facts and processes of inference. The situational context becomes irrelevant except insofar as it contains the basis of inferring something. The negotiation of rules through epistemic statements is concerned with exposing the beliefs as well as

the bases for the beliefs according to which the participants are acting. This kind of accounting makes sense when people are concerned with negotiating rules with a view toward deciding not the applicability of the rule to a situation but the ultimate validity of the rule itself. Similar discourse might occur in metadiscussions about other rule types, such as whether or not the rule "You shouldn't hit people" is a valid moral rule.

References to *intentional states* occur most typically in kindergarten accounts associated with breaches of instructions (again, see episode 11 above). Utterances of this type refer to conative states of the actor. When these utterances are used as accounts, the wants, needs, preferences, or goals of the action are considered a relevant criterion for the applicability of the rule. The use of these accounts presupposes that the actors' conative states are a criterion for evaluating behavior. Consequently, accounts of this type are especially appropriate to rules that depend for their validity on specific goals. An instruction about how to cook soufflé effectively is somewhat beside the point if one abhors French cooking, and it is with respect to instructional rules that one's personal goals, desires, and preferences are relevant matters for discussion and distinctive features in accounts.

The way kindergarten children give accounts seems to suggest a sensitivity to distinctions among rule types. Regulations and conventions seem to elicit a legalistic orientation rich in references to conditions, consequences, and rule formulations. Morals elicit negotiations over what it was that was done. Truths and instructions elicit "knowledge talk," and in the case of instructions this is linked to a concern for what it was someone was trying to accomplish, his goals, wants, and preferences.

summary

This chapter has focused on "situations of accountability." We have argued that cultural dynamics are most fruitfully examined by analyzing in detail the way in which, by means of accusations, excuses, and justifications, we incessantly regulate one another's conduct, provide orientation, and negotiate behavioral possibilities. By analyzing what children say in situations of accountability, we have inferred that various cultural control mechanisms (regulations, conventions, morals, truths, instructions) may well be differentiated and at work in regulating the conduct of five- and six-year-olds. The breach recognition patterns of children lend some support for this conclusion. We encourage further research on the issue.

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