**September 17 speaking notes**

**Psychology** as a search for universal truths regarding affect, cognition, & behaviour

**Culture** as a system of shared beliefs, values, practices and associated meanings

Traditional/Mainstream psychological methods of study – variables in causal relationships

Can we think of culture as a variable or set of variables? Alternatives?

**Review of orientation articles**

 Heine and Ruby

 Emphasis on **cross-cultural** psychology

 Lists comparisons of Self (identity) across cultures

 Entity or incremental

 Attributes or relations

 Agency or conformity (stick out or fit in)

 Analytic or holistic thinking

 Tolerance for contradiction

 Sinha

 Psychology as culture blind and culture bound

 Culture as noise for Psychologists in search of the universal

 The generalisability of psychological knowledge

 Culture as a variable, molecular view of culture

 Use of the comparative method

 Bartlett example with stories

 Etic approach, emic approach

 Berry’s emphasis on ecology

 Culture as a system

 Indigenous psychologies

 Summary on page 22, five main points

 Table 1 on page 23

 Greenfield

 Comparison of three approaches to the psychology of culture

 Cultural psychology italics at bottom of page 223

 Study of process as opposed to study of variables

 Example on page 235 regarding values

 The process of constructing meaning

 The processes of development and socialization

 Indigenous psychology (folk theories, folk psychology)

 Yuan (yuanfen 缘分)

 Western Academic Scientific Psychology as indigenous

 Deep structure of culture

 The relationship between person and group

 Language grammar analogy – the my-mommy-told-you game

**A little more orientation**

Arnett chapter

Arnett’s thesis

Mainstream psychology “an insular enterprise”

“Why American Psychology Needs to Become Less American”

[A WEIRD view of human nature](http://www2.psych.ubc.ca/~henrich/pdfs/WEIRD%20in%20Science.pdf)

Western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic

But aren’t basic psychological processes the same for everyone, everywhere?

A particular philosophy of science dominates American Psychology

Modeled on natural sciences

Experimental, cause-effect research

Universal laws (nomothetic vs idiographic)

Small # of variables studied in isolation with distracting variables controlled

Second Psychology – Wundt, Dewey, Vygotsky

His examples of why need a broader psychology?

Developmental – peer relations

Social – gender roles

Clinical – marital relations

Family, Health, Education

Proposals for a more cultural psychology

Alternatives to basic psychological process study: ecological crises, warfare, HIV pandemic, poverty

More emic, less etic

**Cultural phenomena of interest**

The concept of social class

 Economic and social resources

 Status

 Type of work, level of education, income

How many classes?

Class in American culture

 Anyone can achieve economic success with hard work

 In British culture?

What are the shared meanings, beliefs associated with a specific class?

 “enjoying the comfort of like minds”, “people like us”

Hanley chapter

Social mobility

 Council estates

Comparison to traveling from one part of the world to another.

The “wall in the head” – self-fulfilling prophecy

 What is possible? Entitlement

 Self-confidence and class

 Attempts to “pass”

 Cultural capital – “silent symbols more powerful than money”

 -- “keys that can’t be bought”

 -- “tone of conversation”

“Invisible walls … to which we reacted as if they were real”, p. 28

 How is the hierarchy maintained?

Being respectable. What does it mean to Hanley?

 Rough, posh

Middle-class beliefs about the working class

 Aspirational and non-aspirational

**Is it the lads or the system?**

 **Blaming individuals for structural failings**

“Nothing else mattered except the approval of peers”, p. 26

Steinberg chapter

Workers in printing industry in early 20th century Russia

Printing workers as a moral community – the same as a culture? What maintains it?

Community shared beliefs, values, practices (customs and mores) – look to identify examples:

 Drinking habits and rituals

 Manners of speech and demeanor

 Attitudes towards work and leisure

Contrast with the community of employers

Resistance - “an obstinate audience for employers’ efforts to proselytize the ideal of a family of workers and employers and the values of discipline, sobriety, and gratitude”, p. 67

Subordination as a theme in the two readings on class. How cope with this subordination? Its effects?

Apprenticeship – formal here, but we will look at apprenticeship as a model of what is happening in cultural development (Rogoff)

 Distressing, traumatic

Social lessons – “what it means to be a comrade” – “preparation to join the community” pp. 71-72

Enculturation through imitation

Sense of self and identity (competing identities of family, neighbourhood)

Collectivity

Cultural practices as ways of managing tensions among individual/collective tendencies

 “solidarity and difference often coexisted”, p. 82

The culture of “boozing and scandal” alongside the “pursuit of respectability”

Boundaries of community

 Italians and aristocrats – what defines the groups, where are the boundaries?

Attempts to improve workers

 How a sense of identity perpetuates a community

 Defiant gestures