

## FORMULA TWO – DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES AND CONTEXTS IN TEXT-BOXES

### Review article

Derek Hook, Jacki Watts & Kate Cockcraft (eds) (2002) **Developmental psychology**. Landsdowne: UCT Press. ISBN 1-919-713-689 pbk. Pages 432.

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### Abstract.

*This review article considers two local "formulae" of pedagogical developmental psychology textbooks. It reads **Developmental psychology** as deployment of formula two, "classical" theories with contexts hemmed into text-boxes, against (preferred) formula one, contextual issues spilled into thematic, empirical, theoretical, critical and/or historical arguments about interventions. The central interrogation of how (ex-colonized) contexts of development are made to dis/appear in relation to (universal) theory runs in several directions through textual analysis of content, form and function. First, if direct engagement with the multiple forms of South African developmental psychological praxis is avoided, how are South African student-readers hailed into its (Euro-American) truths? Second, if truths are positioned in individualistic (mostly psychoanalytic) theories, how does this "place" (which) South African contexts as "other"? Third, if truth is given to (Euro-American) deconstructions of the coercive power of theory, what can a "South African critique" be, or do? Finally, if formula one cuts deeply into specific sites/issues, and formula two sharpens theoretical tools to cut with, a combination - formula three - would be an invigorating way forward.*

### THE FORMULAE OF PEDAGOGICAL TEXTS.

A new South African developmental psychology text bears the hopes and responsibilities of many of us who teach, research and work in this wide field within its pages. As an audience of post-colonial African academics and students, we are wary and weary (or think we should be) of the bells and whistles of Americana that publishing houses tout at South African universities. Such glossy undergraduate textbooks are seductively replete with resource packs of transparencies, multi-media slide shows and banks of MCQ items for tired lecturers, and 24/7 online tutorials for eager-beaver students. Against these post-modern experiences of textual pleasure, we celebrate

South African texts as other, and their dowdier appearances are part of the authenticity deal. They will tell the truth at last about our histories of oppressions; our disparate dis/advantaged contexts of development; our "different" and "damaged" childhoods; and our edgy engagement with the psy-complex of the developed world.

The intellectual market economy for South African developmental psychology texts is crowded with competition. And so the first ominous thing that I noted about this recent South African text under review – **Developmental psychology**, edited by Derek Hook, Jacki Watts and Kate Cockcraft – was that "South African" is displaced from the title. I read this as a positioning tactic, an ideological and epistemological manoeuvre, elbowing for room now in an international market of knowledges, careers and profits where academics/researchers and publishers scramble to publish or perish. This has implications for the usability of the content covered, for local and international "markets". Existing South African texts appear to use one of two formulas to capture the slippery interface between theories of development and local contexts of development.

*Formula one* puts contexts first. This tactic foregrounds issues and situated experiences of development, and explores how polemical riffs of theory are useful or not – mostly how they have been tested, stretched and ruptured in conditions of diversity and adversity – through empirical engagement with local norms and risk, sustained cultural applications, and critical mobilization of more appropriate formulations or interventions at subjective and societal levels (e.g. Burman & Reynolds, 1986; Dawes & Donald, 1994; De la Rey, Duncan, Shefer & Van Niekerk, 1997; Donald, Dawes & Louw, 2000). None of these texts follows Foucault, but they may be read as constituting a broadly genealogical approach to development: beginning with a problematic issue or surface in the present, and mapping what we know backwards, forwards and sideways through the contextual contingencies and rhizome-connections of peculiarly South African experiences, and psychological practice; its historical hiccups and heart attacks, empirical emergencies, theoretical cul-de-sacs and disciplinary twists. They also (critically) actively "imagine" different subjective futures and ways of being.

*Formula two* puts theory first, and judiciously adds contexts and issues, usually boxed into text-boxes as illustrations or obstacles of theories. Ironically, this formula seems to be modeled on the (mostly) American best-selling undergraduate blockbusters that appear in updated "international editions" almost annually (e.g. Santrock, 2001). In such American texts, descriptive exposition of "classic" developmental psychology theories is organized chronologically in life-span perspective (infancy, middle childhood, adolescence); and/or organized thematically by domains of development (biological, cognitive, psychosocial) and slices of human experience (memory, language, sexuality, gender). This now fairly stable theoretical treatise on human development is sexed up with trendy multi-modal text-boxes which include critical thinking tasks, applications to contemporary issues, stop-press advances on theory, vignettes of psychologists, interesting case studies, glossaries of terms and ubiquitous examples and/or photographs of "cultural diversity". So, South African texts deploying formula two emulate the above form of argument – classic Euro-American theories of development in dense conceptual blocks; organization by life-span perspective and/or domains and themes – and add "South African flavour" through interspersing a percentage (say 20% at best) of local examples, research studies or issues to provide "relevant" and/or

"critical" contextualization for student-readers (e.g. Louw, 1991 – 3<sup>rd</sup> edition currently in production).

I mention these formulae to situate the text under review – **Developmental psychology** – within a field of textual strategies, and to preface my own surprise and dismay at the eagerness with which it embraces (and slides into some of the traps of) formula two; and furthermore, markets the innovativeness of this strategy. Its difference is that it includes several chapters that are solely devoted to examination of influential individual (Euro-American) theorists' contributions in more detail than other books provide – for example, chapters on Freud, Winnicott, Erikson, and so on – but this is stoically packaged within a formula two approach. The back cover of **Developmental psychology** promises "a *theory-driven* approach to development in South Africa", that "*integrates*" hitherto disparate domains of development (cognitive, psychoanalytic and psychosocial); and includes "*key features*" that draw student-readers into active engagement with contextual priorities for development, viz. critical thinking tasks, case studies, interest boxes, recommended readings and photographs. I wish to interrogate some of these ambitious aims in the sense of failing to frame *strongly* contextualized developmental theories for student-readers – both in the formal features of the organization of the book (its "key features", its weighting of disparate sections), and in tracking particular issues across its chapters. It should be clear from this that I will read **Developmental psychology** as a pedagogical text aimed at a particular audience of student-readers. I also confess to partiality for formula one, and this review is mostly written from that position – against the grain – but in closing, I consider whether a (better) formula three might be forged within the interstices of formulas one and two, as theory-richness more and more deeply enmeshed within constitutive context-richness.

### THEORY, AND SLIPPING IN / ON CONTEXTS OF DEVELOPMENT.

**Developmental psychology** embraces theory-driven formula two, and slides into traps of "text-boxing" contexts of development. This slide seemed to be an unwitting effect of the formula of the text rather than heinous intention, for Hook, in his introductory chapter of aims, is quick to emphasize the importance of examining (swarming) theories and (plural) contexts of development; and to acknowledge the tension between objectives of separating and combining them (pp8-12). Here, theories appear as tools to (critically) think with and make sense of our overwhelming (contextual) experience. Hook aims to extend our classical theoretical toolbox – beyond traditional cognitive and psychosocial domains – with hitherto neglected psychoanalytic theories. The discursive distinction between domains of "the psychosocial" and "the psychoanalytic" is somewhat fuzzily conceived (pp6-7), and tends to fabricate psychoanalysis as asocial, or pre-social. I am prepared to let this slide in the interests of "bifocal vision", but wonder why (later on) Bowlby and Ainsworth (in Chapter 14), and Erikson (in Chapter 15) are hemmed into the "psychosocial section", somewhat alienated from their discursive roots in psychoanalysis.

The crunch comes (and here is my formula-one-position) in the ways in which "contexts" are made to appear and disappear in these arguments about theory. This applies as much to Hook's introductory chapter as to the text as a whole. Hook clearly wishes to avoid the narrow and deep specificities of so-called "contextualism" (p8) (cf. relativism), and opts for more or less "generalizable" theories – as the status of what we know and can explain across more than one context – while retaining an awareness of "here and

now" (p9). But in this pursuit of theory, Hook alludes to mis/application to the "specifics" of contexts of development in South Africa, but is unspecific about what contexts these are, and how exactly application to contextual practices would work. His arguments are implicitly opposed to the (copious) positivist, empirical and normative research on children's developmental paths and needs in real South African contexts – possibly because empiricism is a horror to a more elite "theoretical" critical psychology on modern subjectivity. Later on in Chapter 2, Hook mentions different contexts of development as including biological, emotional, social, intellectual, cultural, economic, historical "factors" (pp24-5) – but these remain ineluctably abstract, and are not holistically examined as they inscribe, mediate and regulate the micro-practices of children's and their custodians' daily experience.

"Context" appeared then in Hook's formulation as a oft-recited "principle" rather than a set of real conditions, resources, experiences or minutiae of particular practices; and this principle is wielded by Hook as a big stick to unilaterally threaten the validity and explanatory power of theories (pp8-12), and later, to beat up unethical, dangerous, imperial generalizers of theories (p360-364). In terms of application, it remains unclear if *all* South African contexts trouble Euro-American theories and theorists with their indexical truths or their implicature in ghastly apartheid histories; or *which* South African contexts – or layers of them and discrepancies between them – are the most troublesome to Euro-American theories and theorists, and *why*? For example, considerably more institutionalized attention is given to risk and vulnerability in conditions of resource-poverty and adversity in South Africa than to white, middle classed children (Donald, Dawes & Louw, 2000). Arguments about the specificity of South African contexts of development also elide the beneficence of universalizing theories and norms of the Western psy-complex – beneficence to *all* children perhaps, but in radically different ways, and for different purposes in different contexts, and at different times. I return to the (Foucauldian) issues about beneficence later on.

### HEY, YOU THERE! STUDENT-READERS AS DOCILE SUBJECTS.

This is a text – according to Hook's stated intentions – about "practical animation" of developmental psychology, of "practicing" and "personalizing" it (p3). Rather than *demarcating* contexts of application for theories – for example, in defining contextual specifics as micro-practices, or citing empirical and/or critical South African research that demonstrates contextual contingencies and schisms in a broader practice of psychology than clinical interpretations of individual pathology – it *invites* its student-readers to conjure up their own contexts, and to reflect on their own experience in relation to theories. In the way of interpellation, **Developmental psychology** deploys multiple tactics to hail obviously diverse student-readers into engaged and/or oppositional subject positions as "real South African people". These positions further impel pedagogical and psychological acts of participation with and resistance towards theories, as learners and as selves – the un/witting subjects of disciplinary power. Examples of hailing tactics that follow appear interspersed within the Euro-American theoretical discourse/s of the text: *photographs* of diverse children, youth and adults engaged in activities singly or with others, against frames (and implied stories) of "different backgrounds"; *critical thinking tasks*, exercises and case studies that pertain to particular "real life issues"; and *referral out to additional reading and research*.

Such tactics make naïve assumptions about undergraduate student-readers if they are used - as they seem to be in **Developmental psychology** - to replace or obviate sustained, critical engagement with contexts of development and diversity of psychological practices by the authors themselves. It is all very well having Euro-American theoreticians and trendy "deconstructive" commentators, but what do *South African* psychologists and researchers say about their own and others' work? A critical voice before mine has pointedly asked of South African psychology textbooks (cf. formula two) whether the transmogrification of Janet into Nthombi in conceptual illustrations, the appearance of photographs of African children playing alongside Freud's stages, or the insertion of a text-box on "South African extended families" into the epistle of Winnicott's good-enough-mothering really goes far enough to count as situated subversion of powerfully coercive Western normative fictions of development (Bozalek, 1997). Thus, are undergraduate student-readers sufficiently informed, experienced or interested to respond in preferred (intellectual) ways to the various levels of *application* required? These levels would crucially refer to: application to themselves as subjects; application to others; application to research activities that reproduce theories; and application to broader societal implications in a variety of contexts of practice (other than their own). Is it assumed that this kind of individualized "reflection" and "participation" will (or can or should) be critical of dominant psy-complex ideologies about the self? Is critical contestation and dis-identification assumed to be a simple choice of "authenticity" (as in self-recognition, or the phenomenological truthfulness of one's own experience) over "misrepresentation" (by wicked theory) - without the benefit of exposure to alternative discourses and resistant subject positions in local psychological practices that extend beyond (dominant, intuitive) clinical / psychotherapeutic truths?

My misgivings of such "innovative" textual hailing tactics for student-readers are twofold. First, they imply that student-readers have carte blanche to invent-the-wheel with regards critical appropriation of theories, and indeed that they are the first to feel outraged, ambivalent or lost when faced with the "mismatch" or "gap" between theories and real experience. This effectively obscures the decades of committed writing by empirical and critical researchers in the fields of social and developmental psychologies in Southern Africa (see my admiring comments below on Chapter 21 by Catriona Macleod), and in other post-colonial or developing contexts where discourses, cultures and powers collide (e.g. Stoler, 1995; Berry, Mishra & Tripathi, 2003; Saraswathi, 2003). Making visible such interdisciplinary work - and the constructive interventions that sometimes follow - would scaffold student-readers' reflective participation in particular ways rather than leaving the text "open" for their interpretive vagaries, and their consequent "individualization".

Second, such hailing tactics - photographs, issues in text-boxes, critical thinking tasks, and so on - are formally placed *alongside* authors' treatises on mainstream Euro-American theories and theorists; they are inserted opportunistically in the *middle of another narrative* when space allows; or they are *tagged-on at the end* of chapters. This makes integration of these "real people" and "real experiences" into the main flow of theoretical arguments difficult; and, in turn, it is difficult to scaffold critical commentary on the photographs, text-boxes or tasks from a broader perspective on psychological practices. It is left to student-readers to make such integrative links and interpretive leaps. Furthermore, these hailing tactics - particularly photographs or "interesting

issues" that apply to particular individuals or groups - may produce inadvertent effects of patronization, "othering", exclusion and marginalization of readers' experiences.

### THE UNBEARABLY WEIGHTY MATTERS OF SECTIONS.

Contexts of development appear and disappear in other ways in the organizational form of **Developmental psychology**. The text is divided into five sections, seemingly to unquestioningly follow traditional "domains" of developmental psychology (cognitive, psychoanalytic, psychosocial – with biological foundations summarily dumped early on). The sections are presented without sectional summaries and argumentative rationales from editors for their direction, scope or interstices at meta-levels. Just to show that discourse analysts can count things, I have strategically indicated the number of pages (in total) per section to make several points about (ideological) weighting below. *Section 1 (42 pages)* introduces conceptual territories and the "hows" and "whys" of our journeys through them. This section (by Derek Hook) includes a psychoanalytical case study of the "Norwood serial killer" as the fetishized ugly-face of psychological development "gone wrong"; and in a deft, wry twist, how through this othering of pathology, our own docility as subjects of developmental psychology's narrow conventions of normality is confirmed. In *Section 2 (129 pages)*, Derek Hook and Jacki Watts map psychoanalytic approaches to development, and provide a dizzying armoury of chapters on the theoretical weaponry of Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Jung and Lacan. In *Section 3 (71 pages)*, Kate Cockcroft sets out dominant theories of cognitive development, and then focuses on the traditionally cognitive territories of intelligence, and language and memory development.

*Section 4 (121 pages)* turns to "psychosocial theories" and so-called "socio-political contexts of development", with chapters on attachment theory (Lee Senior), Erikson's theory (Derek Hook), Bronfenbrenner's theory (Derek Hook), Kohlberg's contributions to moral reasoning (James Grant), gender identity formation (Gill Haiden), and "critical issues in development" (Derek Hook). Finally, *Section 5 (29 pages)*, features so-called "key developmental issues in the South African context", with a chapter on race and culture in developmental theory (Mambwe Kasese-Hara), and one that reviews developmental psychological research in South Africa through lenses of dominant meta-theories (Catriona Macleod). I return to some of these specific chapters below, but first some comments about this general organization.

The lack of sustained editorial narrative thread commenting on, and connecting, these sections and/or domains means that the text comes across as fragmented, acephalous and flung together. The domains are in fact radically disengaged from one another, as are some of the chapters within them, rather than "integrative" (which is a stated aim of the text). The mere fact of appearing contiguously in a book surely does not constitute "integration" of domains? **Developmental psychology** is a text that was obviously forged within a particular context of psychological use/practice; most of the contributors and all the editors were teaching within the School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. As such, they may have had opportunity to "frame" for their student-readers the local conditions of development (in empirical research) and inter-linking arguments implicit in this resource material. However, among other audiences who read/review **Developmental psychology** as a stand-alone text, the lack of editorial voice produces disquiet about (at best) subjective value-driven, or (at worst) erratic or biased, weighting of discombobulated sections.

In terms of the above weighting of sections, this is a book that appears then, firstly, as thin and tardy on matters of context. A scant 30 pages devoted to "the South African context" is tagged-on at the end (Section 5). "Contexts" do appear as frequent pop-ups (text-boxes) throughout the chapters, but these are not formally listed in an introductory index (as other textbooks might do), and are hard to anticipate or find. There are at least ten chapters that exclusively featured individualistic/dyadic, organismic theories of development – the so-called "classics" – and 18 pages in total on more "contextual" theories (e.g. Vygotsky in Chapter 10, and Bronfenbrenner, Chapter 17). This curious editorial positioning reproduces (ideologically) the very inscription of wicked individualism that Hook later indicts "traditional developmental psychology" for (Chapter 19). To return to my bugbear about the word "contexts" as a floating/empty signifier; it was not at all clear what "socio-political contexts of development" in the heading of Section 4 are (cf. Dutton, 2003). Does this mean legacies of apartheid – deprivation, poverty, adversity, and risk? Are these socio-political contexts specific to *some* or experienced similarly by *all* South African children? Why do these socio-political contexts appear to be attached particularly to psychosocial domains (Section 4), and markedly, not to preceding psychoanalytic or cognitive domains (Sections 2 & 3)? An editorial introduction to each section might have "set the scene" for the domain, identified key ideas and themes, and clarified or extended arguments (e.g. "socio-political contexts of development", broader forms of psychological practice than clinical psychopathology) and critiques (e.g. individualism, humanism). It might also have established narrative threads crisscrossing the sections in the interests of integration and cohesion for student-readers.

### **PSYCHOANALYSIS UBER ALLES.**

Given my concerns about untrammelled individualism (above), a second impression from the weighting of sections is that this is a book that gives significantly more importance to psychoanalytic approaches than to cognition. There are nine chapters in total on psychoanalytic approaches (including the chapters on the serial-killer case-study, attachment and Erikson), and four on cognition. This inequity of representation has a profound effect on depth and expansiveness of content. For example, Chapter 10 herds Piagetian, Vygotskian and information-processing theories of cognitive development together into a terse, comparative account, which fails to add anything to the narrow cognition-drill of traditional undergraduate psychology textbooks (ditto the following chapters on intelligence, language and memory). The explanatory potential of Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach to strongly contextualized, dialogical thinking, feeling and action in South African contexts, to resist the individualism-imperative of Western psychologization, is entirely eclipsed (pp191-196). Indeed, Vygotsky appears to be shipped in merely to mop up the so-called "cultural bias" and "cross-cultural weakness" of Piaget's (more influential) theory. By contrast, the preceding Chapter 9 is devoted to meticulous unpicking of the intra-psychic subtleties of *one* of Lacan's psychoanalytic phases of development, the mirror stage. Each of the psychoanalytic theorists is given the space of an exclusive chapter.

Such unevenness of detailed attention casts cognition (and some authors and chapters) as unfairly lightweight, thin and unsatisfying; and inadvertently reproduces the hailing powers of the "deep dynamic truths" of psychoanalysis, into which we are drawn to discover ourselves. If it is so that psychoanalysis is under-theorized in undergraduate

textbooks, then the editors might have considered fabricating **Developmental psychology** more intimately in/to that niche; possibly connecting psychoanalytic and (some) psychosocial domains to post-colonial understandings of identification / recognition and subjugation in shifting South African realities, where aspirations of class mobility now lacerate, police, reproduce and marginalize previously raced, gendered and de/politicized identities. Linda Chisholm's (2004) edited volume has, for example, engagingly explored such classed dynamics in relation to a politics of education, and children's "needs" and "best-interests", in post-apartheid South Africa. A peculiarly psychoanalytic take on relational identities - their disputed "development" or "construction" in South Africa - would have produced a more narrowly focused, deeper, and ultimately more thoughtful pedagogical text.

The psychoanalytic chapters in Section 2 are sharp and clear on conceptual description; and in some ways, are wise to focus on fewer, central (often primary) texts in expository detail. Read together, these chapters do in fact add a psychoanalytic matrix of theoretical richness not available in undergraduate psychology textbooks; and it is useful to have these theories gathered into one text, and in similarly accessible style, form and depth, rather than scattered in specialist (and often lengthy and impenetrably jargoned) tomes. However, in terms of "ecological validity", these chapters are markedly loath to address the uneasy, coercive place of psychoanalysis in a developing, ex-colonized context. Chapter 5 on Freud (by Derek Hook and Jacki Watts) closes with a section on stock criticisms of Freud. This section includes a paragraph on "cultural bias" that doesn't mention South Africa specifically or the bountiful South African writing on psychoanalytic lenses or practice (pp86-87); and it is quaintly illustrated with a photograph of three black-African girls in a doorway, with the caption: "How relevant is Freudian theory to South Africa in the twenty-first century? Cultural bias is one of the most frequent criticisms of Freud's psychoanalytic theory." (p87) Well, ahem, how relevant is it then? Is this a kind of Zen enlightenment riddle - one hand clapping and relevance of Freud? The authors remain inscrutable, and are certainly not telling.

So, **Developmental psychology** "covers" the traditional domains of cognitive, psychosocial and psychoanalytic approaches to development, but this coverage is uneven, disintegrative, unreflexive, and in places, superficial. The publishers (or editors) may have strategically gone for breadth of "traditional" coverage so that it might be prescribed as a single (or central) textbook for (international as well as local) undergraduate modules; but (to me) there would seem to be little use in regurgitating theories of development (e.g. Sections 3 & 4) in forms that are always already available in other South African, introductory-level, general psychology texts (e.g. Louw & Edwards, 1997; Swartz, De la Rey & Norman, 2004). Section 2 on psychoanalytic approaches adds theoretical bite - but this bite remains toothless without sustained contextual application, empirical engagement, psychological practice and critique to unpack its impact, and relevance. Breaking psychoanalytic discourse down into "purer" individual contributions/theories was a nifty critical (deconstructive) manoeuvre; but this might render the shift to situated psychoanalytic discursive practice, more generally (or "culturally") in its everyday uses, tricky for student-readers without some re-integrative signposts (e.g. Parker, 1997; Billig, 1999). My call for critique, and practice, is not answered by the tagging-on of the stock "strengths" and "weaknesses" of each theory at the close of chapters. This tactic becomes fatuous through formulaic over-use in **Developmental psychology**, and it rankles.

## GETTING SERIOUS: CONTENT, STYLE AND APPLICATION.

I now turn to more specific matters of content, and criticality. As I have already suggested, the quality of individual chapters is patchy. It does not seem fair to target "weaker" chapters when this weakness might be read as a lack of editorial voice, or clear editorial direction on aims and styles. For example, patchiness is produced through the focus of some chapters on one theory/theorist through unpacking central texts (e.g. Erikson, Klein, Lacan, Winnicott), while others try to capture a swathe of concepts and critique in a historicized "advancement" of theoretical thinking about, say, cognitive, moral or gender identity development. Nothing wrong with either tactic, and they are not inherently contradictory; but the dual effect in **Developmental psychology** is disjunctive. The former chapters (by Derek Hook) appear analytical and meditative in tone, rather than simply descriptive, and invite reflection on the somewhat dated theory and its historically situated context of production. The latter chapters, unfortunately, appear rushed and obsessed with packing triple the amount of rote conceptual detail into a small space. These latter chapters do not have time or inclination to explore methodological foundations and implications of theoretical shifts. For example, Carol Gilligan in Chapter 16 comes in for some snide stick for her (dogged-feminist) refusal to see reason that gender differences in moral reasoning *do not* exist (p. 306). This is not as the author (Grant) suggests, a simple matter of the incontrovertible "empirical evidence" of Kohlbergian measurements – gender bias, yes or no, true or false? – but an ontological, epistemological and methodological schism. Gilligan's influential work – insidious gender essentialism notwithstanding – has spawned hermeneutic inquiry within a strongly "storied" approach to everyday situations, and the various "voices" deployed relationally within those moral dialogues and narratives (e.g. Brown, Tappan, Gilligan, Miller & Argyris, 1989).

I want to take a slightly different tack in exploring content across chapters – asking not whether theories are truthfully depicted, but considering their usefulness in application to an issue in a broader understanding of psychological practice (cf. formula one). I will focus on a subjective surface that generates something akin to moral panic among my own undergraduate developmental psychology students, namely "Aids-orphans". My point here is – again – that in a textbook that follows formula two, tracking an issue to get a coherent and critical view of appropriate theorization across multi-contexts is hard interpretive work that my own students would not persevere with, I suspect, without considerable pedagogical and inter-textual scaffolding from myself.

The Aids-orphan sleuthing narrative went like this. Chapter 14 (by Lee Senior) focuses on attachment theory, and mentions in its closing two pages some of the physical, emotional and social impacts on children, and their caretakers, of being infected or affected by HIV/Aids. Arguing that Bowlby's work fed into social policy on child placement and custody in post-war Europe, Senior calls developmental psychologists in South Africa to examine "the psychology of the Aids orphan" with a view to informing the general public, affected communities and welfare policy and interventions (p262). This point very usefully plugs psychology (as an institution) into the public health discursive machinery around HIV/Aids, but stops short of showing the extensive, urgent and in many instances, positive and hopeful, policy-, intervention- and action-research projects with Aids-orphans and child-headed households. I wonder if we need *more* (of the same, singular) "psychology" of Aids-orphans?

Hyperlink to Hook's hard-hitting chapter 19 on "critical issues in developmental psychology"; here a two-page text-box on Aids-orphans and child-headed households in South Africa appears (pp348-349). This text-box (uncritically) sets out pilot descriptive research on Aids-orphans by the creditable Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (conducted circa 1999, published 2001), highlighting the "developmental crisis" faced by affected children, and particularly the risks inherent in poverty, exploitation, prostitution, crime, dereliction of education, lack of moral authority figures, and stigmatization. True enough; but without pointed theoretical, historical and research commentary, such "crises" merely reconstitute incontrovertible scientific proof of the popular moral panic about the "psychology" of Aids-orphans – that they are dangerously adrift after cataclysmic loss of a Western nuclear-family ideal of unconditional nurturance of their innocence and potential; and furthermore, that The Government should "do something". Unfortunately, the interpretive leaps from this hermetically sealed text-box – containing "The Real" – to the sly sledgehammers of social construction and post-structuralism that Hook wields in the critical argument-narrative of Chapter 19, are again left to readers to make. I made the leaps, eagerly, but then I have been swimming in discourse theory for 20 years.

#### **HOOKE'S HOUSE ON FIRE, AND CRITIQUING CRITIQUES OF CRITIQUE.**

Hook's critical chapter radically unsettles the preceding 342 pages by interrogating the very concepts and developmental truths that have been hitherto set up. Here, Hook relies heavily on the (so-called) "deconstruction" of developmental psychology by (British) Erica Burman (1994) to expose the historical, institutional and ideological contingencies in the "invention" of taken-for-granted psychological objects like "the child", "sexuality", "the nuclear family" and "adolescence". This approach worries at our certainties about normality by tracing how the increasingly institutionalized psychological discursive machinery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century established its control through first regulating deviant individuals (e.g. "adolescents"), and then through managing risk in healthy populations via proliferating child-protection and public health policies. Hook's critical approach to developmental norms is inscribed by Foucault's theory of discourse/s (cf. Rose, 1990). Thus, the institutionalization of the psy-complex has produced a regulatory matrix of disciplinary power that ensnares us all amongst its norms that produce normal subjectivities, and restrain abnormality (Rose, 1990). It is within this discursive machinery then, this matrix of power, that Aids-orphans are fabricated, and placed under surveillance by these norms by us all, as "vulnerable", "damaged", "deficient" "victims". Such fabrication and interpellation is inevitably reproduced through the well-meaning Nelson Mandela Children's Fund text-box (pp348-9); which is possibly Hook's implied point?

There are some gaps in Hook's Chapter 19 – theoretical lacunae that have implications for the "application" of developmental norms in South Africa. Foucault's later model of power (the model followed by Nicholas Rose, and cited by Hook) is circular or polar rather than monolithic, dispersed throughout a moving web of social relations and contradictory in its effects – it *produces* objects, subjects and actions even while it *constrains* what may be known, said or done; but its operation never totally succeeds or fails due to shifting inflammations of *resistance* (cf. Foucault, 1978). Hook's argument tends to follow Foucault's earlier ("archaeological", "orders of discourse") model of discursive structures based on constraining rules and authoritative imposition of "truth".

Thus, Hook emphasizes the negative, repressive restriction of judgements by Euro-American developmental norms in South African contexts; and this at the expense of productive subjective beneficence or any notion of negotiated appropriation of norms, or contestation and resistance. Following Burman, Hook warns – and rightly so – of secondary victimization where already marginalized and resource-poor individuals are held responsible for socio-structural (and discursive) conditions beyond their control (e.g. mother-blame).

But these negative lines of restriction and the wicked injustices of “colonial ideology” are very easy to apply (very wildly) to Aids-orphans. I will heuristically imagine Burman-Hook’s formulation: the “invention” of Aids-orphans might refer to the fashioning of a category of helpless, damaged and further stigmatized child-victims; and regulating the actions of blameworthy custodians of orphans – some of whom might be children themselves – to avoid further risk and harm. These effects might be (sadly) true, but are a small piece of the power-filled discursive apparatus that now embeds such children in South Africa. This is an apparatus that has appropriated and mobilized developmental psychological knowledges about children’s “needs” to produce constitutional rights, State child-support grants, proliferating research projects and intervention programmes, new forms of custodial units, access to social services, child-support help-lines, community awareness and participation campaigns, international funds and grants, philanthropic organizations sponsoring child-headed households, sports events, global media attention, visits by Prince Harry and Oprah, and so on. This seemingly acephalous mobilization of a proliferating “governmentality”, with productive spin-offs flying somewhat unpredictably in subjective, social and infra-structural directions, is what theoreticians, researchers and activists associated with the HIV/Aids epidemic in South Africa are (rather excitedly) calling “social capital” – or forms of citizen-power in the development of health-enabling communities (Campbell, 2003). Such mobilization has both resisted and reproduced – formally and inadvertently – stigma and blame of Aids-orphans; and other resistances have inevitably thwarted its unfettered successes.

This is, of course, *not* a chapter on Aids-orphans; “Aids-orphans” is merely a happenchance text-box in Hook’s treatise on a critical developmental psychology (Chapter 19). I have used this as a strategic example of the slippage and mismatch between abstract theory and a boxed-in context; and Hook’s tardiness with regards to thinking through theory, to applications to real issues in ways that illuminate (in positive, empirical, as well as critical ways) the breadth of implications for psychological practices. I mention this because such “real issues” are often deeply emotive for student-readers given South Africa’s apartheid-past and new democracy (e.g. oppression, freedom, rights, responsibility, citizenship, “African” versus globalized identities). Appiah (1995) has explored (suspiciously) how Western theorization about identity-fragmentation coincided with an emergent, cohesive, authentic (or strategic) sense of identity of “African subjects” in developing or ex-colonized contexts. Similar questions might be asked about the (suspicious) crumbling of certainties about psychological knowledge and expertise as the discipline struggles to interpellate, as professionals and practitioners of various persuasions, students who were previously marginalized. Clearer exposition of applications and implications would serve as signposts and scaffolds for an audience of student-readers who may be new to social constructionist and post-structuralist ideas.

Hook's chapter presents a solid theoretical foundation for critique that is a pivotal part of this **Developmental psychology** text. But as it stands, the chapter appears as a kind of burning down of the colonial house, with anti-climax as its end-point. This is partly due to the chapter's late positioning in the text as a whole – it is the last chapter in the psychosocial domain (Section 4), before matters of "the South African context" begin (Section 5) – which means its critical argument is hard to integrate with what went before, is punchy, pugnacious and promising, and then tends to disperse into other forms, and get lost, in the final section.

Hook's dependence in Chapter 19 on Burman's arguments further limited the scope to explore other implications of the developmental norms of the Western psy-complex. Burman's ideas resonate amongst those of other (British) critical developmental psychologists, who have followed slightly different lines towards active, concrete contextual engagement with implications. For example, Morss (1996) has carefully unpacked – from several meta/theoretical directions – the implications of a critical dismantling of the psychological foundations of "normal development"; and the intricate, empirical understandings of social contexts we need to have in place to achieve and "hold" this theoretical uncertainty. Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers (1992) examine the historicized, acculturated and storied nature of the alliance between child-knowledge, child-protection and family-regulation; and they place psy-complex expertise on norms beside alternative sources of dissident resistances, folk wisdom, popular literature and media. This provides layered opportunities for counter-positions and practices of contestation to be embodied, and shores up the debilitating aftermath of Deconstruction, which seems often to put "nihilism" (and "so what") into certainty's place.

#### **DOWN AND DIRTY: CONTEXTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.**

Section 5 finally arrives to restore "*the South African context*", now ominously definitive, in the singular (p367). These chapters allow contexts of development to appear in less abstract ways, which positively rupture the hitherto dominant context-management strategies of **Developmental psychology**, viz. (a) context-in-a-text-box; (b) contextual-problems-at-the-end-of-chapter; and (c) think-hard-about-your-own-context. As such, Section 5 would be useful to read *prior* to any of the theoretical exposition in the text, because it battles to grasp the (messy) complexity of South African contexts in terms of "application" of Euro-American (organismic) theories; but more significantly in terms of their consumption, and critical appropriation, by local psychologists and researchers. Unfortunately, the two chapters – Mambwe Kasese-Hara's on race and culture (Chapter 20) and Catriona Macleod's meta-theoretical review of research on/with children (Chapter 21) – are poorly matched in terms of length, style and scope (content), and are difficult to compare or to marry. Both, in different ways, push a strongly "contextual" position on children's development, which is at odds with most of the theories in preceding chapters. Once again, an editorial introduction might usefully have connected the dots and marked, rather than resolved, some of the contradictions.

Kasese-Hara's nine-page chapter ultimately bites off more than it can chew in a confined space. It focuses firstly on how ethnicity – "race" and "culture" – has constituted and been constituted by (Euro-American, developed world, "colonial") developmental theory, thereby reproducing the "inferiority" of children in developing contexts like our own. It then attempts to reproduce Nsamenang's (1992) treatise on a

contextual/resistant "African" model of human development in two pages, which unfortunately only succeeds in perpetuating stereotypes about "them" (West-Africans, all Africans), and "their" authentic collectivist cultures and values. Once again, it is a fairly dubious pedagogical strategy – given the sticky implications of such issues in South African contexts – to leave it up to student-readers to track down the Nsamenang text to fill in gaps; or to track lines of thought between Nsamenang's and Vygotsky's socio-cultural model (see recommended reading list, and critical thinking tasks, p378). I urge PINS readers who wish to follow Africanist ideas about children's development – particularly the fruitful linkages with post-colonial discourse, local knowledges and Vygotsky's theories – to follow Kasese-Hara's (better) chapter and Nhlanhla Mkhize's (excellent) chapters in Hook's (2004) later text called **Critical Psychology**.

Macleod's chapter reviews the hurly-burly of South African developmental psychological research within a critical "meta-theoretical" perspective. This is another editorial issue rather than Macleod's, but it might be difficult for student-readers to integrate Macleod's "meta-theories" (mechanistic, organismic, contextual and social constructionist) with the rhetoric of "domains" (psychoanalytic, cognitive, psychosocial) or "theories" (Freud's, Bronfenbrenner's, Gilligan's), in the earlier sections of the text. In many ways, Macleod's Chapter 21 is the grounding counter-stroke of Hook's theoretical critique in Chapter 19. Their arguments (and spirits) are closely aligned, of course; but their jargon is disjunctive and potentially confusing. For example, Hook refers to the "invention of childhood" attributed to "the inventionist view" (curiously credited to Santrock, 2001) (p350), and the loose, unexplained term "deconstruction" (wrongly coupled with the writing of Burman, 1994); but never explicitly situates his critique as "social constructionist." Macleod usefully concludes her chapter with what "social constructionism" is and what it does; and how this has been used as a critical theoretical/research tool in South African developmental psychology to open up debate about and resistance towards (Euro-American or ideological) constructions of "the child", "autonomy", "families", "context" and "well-being". This is the same wine (as Hook's), but deceptively in different bottles.

Situated within the ongoing, vigorous dialogue about what would constitute "adequate theorization" in this field, Macleod's review casts light – particularly – on the discursive clashes between individualistic, organismic approaches to development (Piaget, Freud, and company), and so-called "contextual theories". The contextual-inscription thus diversely inflects positivist norm-investigative models, development-in-context perspectives, "cultural" and activity-system approaches, a critical (or political) strand, and the "public health" industry. Examples of research studies and critical argumentation are worked through the assumptions of each meta-theoretical lens, to display the sprawling, complex, important work of local psychologists. It is through such systematic contextualization – and the connections that are laid bare between Euro-American theoretical assumptions about "children" and "childrearing", research methodology, local norms and government of health of populations – that psychology's ambivalent role in practices of risk-management and social control is questioned. Here, at last, in the final pages of the text, appeared the historicized, politicized and well-meaning mobilizations of "damage" and "resilience" constructions of South African children (pp391-2); and the tricky, inadvertent implications these constructions had/have for interventions at individual and community levels.

This chapter had the "last words" in **Developmental psychology** – and hopefully, its ideas will be like sticky jam smearing all over the preceding chapters and not simply disregarded through being dabbed-on at the end. Its contribution to a theory-driven text that battled throughout with contexts of development, contexts of psychological practice, contexts of psychologized consumption, is fundamental.

### **FORMULA THREE: WAG YOUR TAIL, SHOW YOUR TEETH.**

So, what? Did I like **Developmental psychology**? I read it eagerly, wanted to like it, nearly did at times and threw it down at others. But, rather like the critique that Foucault's notion of resistance merely props power up, and keeps it going, I kept coming back to reading and referring to it, have prescribed selected parts of it in my own developmental psychology modules, and have now written a serious treatise on it, because it is an important book. I have consistently argued throughout this review – from a preferred formula one position – that it is perhaps important for the wrong rather than the right reasons. It slips (up) on the slippery terrains of (lived, experienced, practiced) contexts of development, on empirical engagement, on scaffolding for student-readers, on broader applications of theory beyond individuals/dyads, and on implications to South African psychological practice (including the academy, psychotherapeutic work, personal growth, organizational-systems, research, and public health interventions). But, some of its chapters are sharp, theory-rich, useful and thoughtful; and one would want to support and build on those. I acknowledge too, as a (somewhat wry) post-modernist who thrives on inter-textuality, that there is place for formula one and formula two texts at undergraduate psychology level; that each "do" particular pedagogical things. And so, in utopia, our students should read both, and more. Alas, few seem to have the money, time or inclination these days.

Macleod's chapter (above) shows ways in which formula one (context-rich) and formula two (theory-rich) could be layered together into a formula three. Here, in closing, are two other strategies for a blockbuster formula three textbook.

First, one written by other authors. Swartz, De la Rey and Duncan's (2004) new introductory-general-level psychology text is yet another cook's tour of breathless scope; a thick tome that is inevitably marked by some strange inclusions/exclusions, patchiness of detail and limited theoretical depth. However, it is a worthy attempt in that it combines several important textual tactics. The section on developmental psychology describes "classical" theories, organized into so-called lifespan perspective; and each chapter includes contextual issues, challenges and implications – most often in text-boxes (cf. formula two). But firstly, these chapters are interspersed with "local-issue-based" chapters (e.g. attachment, poverty, adolescence, health and risk, African assumptions of "family" or "education") that foreground explicitly South African research studies; locally diverse issues, contexts, cultures and norms; and consideration of the implications of theories (cf. formula one). Chapters are written by South African psychologists from a range of disciplinary and racial/cultural positions, collapsing the "colonial" idea of psychology as a narrow, clinical and "white" domain of theory. Secondly, there is a strong editorial narrative that connects sections and chapters, linking themes, continuing arguments and highlighting critical issues. Another narrative thread is provided editorially by the episodic diarization of the experiences of a (hypothetical) young woman, Nosipho, as she engages with studying "psychology" at university. This provides a reflective forum where the "implications" of the discipline are

explored in relation to her and her family, community, class, culture and gender. This conscious insinuation of contextual content, with theoretical exposition, might be thought of as forging a formula three.

Second, dear editors and authors of **Developmental psychology**; please come back, some things are forgiven. A second edition of this text would perfectly perform formula three if it were re-packaged from the starting point of the exciting, exacting and edgy "critical thinking tasks" that are tucked away at the close of each chapter like a dog's tail between its legs. Here are the applications, implications and radical interrogations of theory and context – alas, too timid and hidden-away. Nevertheless, I hope many student-readers find these tasks, and are hailed by them, think and talk about them, and are inspired to use them fiercely and joyfully in psychological practice.

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