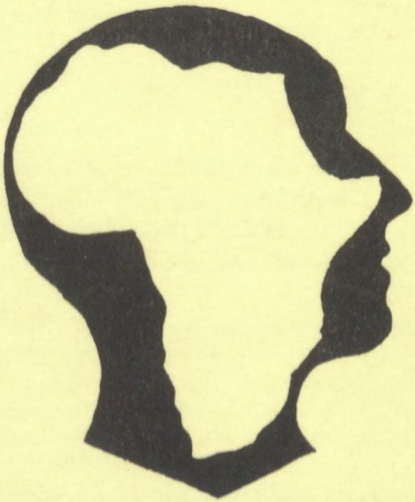
PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIETY



12

1989

PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIETY NUMBER 12 1989

CONTENTS

DEBATE

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

Kant claimed to have been awakened from his dogmatic slumber by the writings of Hume. Some philosophy students have been heard to joke that the outcome of his awakening was the even more profound slumber of the "Transcendental Anaesthetic". Perhaps what this feeble jest indicates is that awakening is an uncertain process. In the course of its first eleven issues, **PINS** has delivered some pricks to the sleeping mass which have (hopefully) contributed to the stirrings we have seen during the past few years. It is essential that we continue to do this as a vital element of our efforts to promote relevant psychological practices in South Africa. One of the most powerful instruments in this task is the Uncomfortable Question which, if correctly posed, becomes an irritant to the sleepers. The articles, debates and reviews published in our first eleven issues have posed many, and we hope that these in our twelfth continue to do the same, lest the snoring becomes loud and deep once more.

This issue of **Psychology in society** presents three articles which deal with aspects of a fundamental and difficult issue in comtemporary South African psychology, namely the understanding of the development and the experiential world of children growing up in a society afflicted by violence and widely seen as "culturally diverse". If one begins to regard the two options of "cultural diversity entails cultural relativism" and "cultural diversity is a mere screen concealing psychosocial universals" as both being problematic, then the current debate on the effects of violence on children must be seen to be fraught with conceptual and methodological difficulties. The same would apply to the debates on cultural deprivation, education, mental health and so on. The reason is that these debates, and associated research, are caught in the tension between the relativist and universalist perspectives. While we cannot claim that they unambiguously present the way forward, two of these articles (Levett, Miller) do explore the tension and the pitfalls of naive research and help our readers into the discourse which is essential to progress. The third article (Dawes & Tredoux) presents valuable information for the debate on children in violence and also reminds us of the reality that while we talk, children are living in crisis.

We happily publish a debate on the psychology of detention in this issue. In **PINS -11** Kevin Solomons looked behind the descriptive category of post-traumatic stress disorder in detainees and started to theorise about some of the psychodynamic aspects of working with ex-detainees. David Edwards has

replied to Solomons' article raising some objections to Solomons' **methodological** formulations and the conclusions that he (Solomons) draws. Kevin Solomons tries to answer Edwards, while finding that much of Edwards' criticism misses the point of the original article.
We would like to encourage readers to debate and discuss some of the issues that appear in **PINS** in the form of short articles, replies, discussions, comments and so on.

We also present three book reviews. **Not either an experimental doll** has already been reviewed in **PINS** (Gillian Eagle in **PINS - 10**) and we sought a second review by Letlaka-Rennert because we felt that she could valuably add to the earlier review and provide an interestingly different perspective. Jeffrey Masson has achieved notoriety for his earlier criticisms of Freud and psychiatry; his new book **Against therapy: Emotional tyranny and the myth of psychological healing** is a wide ranging attack on a variety of therapies. Cloete's review suggests that these criticisms include many valid points but are constructed in such a way as to render them unable to contribute to a useful restructuring of psychotherapy. The third review of **The psychological complex** is by Susan Van Zyl. Working from Rose's position on the development of psychology, Van Zyl suggests that psychotherapy may be transforming into a "non-psychological" helping activity. This transformation will be recognised by many psychologists who are directly involved in helping victims of oppression and members of the proletariat. Van Zyl's argument should provide them with food for thought and shows a need for a conscious and careful redefinition of what we mean by "relevant psychotherapy".

Masson accuses psychology of being uninterested in the world outside of its small domain (see Cloete's review). A colloquial expression sometimes used to mean "asleep" is "dead to the world". Perhaps Kant would have accepted this expression as a description of dogmatic slumber. In any event, we might stretch the metaphor and describe a relevant psychology as one which is alive to the world in the sense implied by the lengthy quote from Marx given in Miller's article. We must hope that you, our readers, are not satisfied to be passive recipients of what we manage to publish, but wish to be lively constructors of your conceptual world (see Miller's article again).

This number - **Psychology in society - 12** - comes out a long time after **PINS - 11**. As we said in the editorial of **PINS - 2** (already), independent projects like **Psychology in society** are run by moonlight and one of the unfortunate consequences of "working in poor light" are our irregular production intervals. We thank our subscribers and readers for their patience. **PINS - 13** will be out early next year.

Rai Turton and Grahame Hayes

Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 3-18

Critical psychology: A territorial imperative

Ronnie Miller
University of Natal
Durban

Cultural relativism is a luxury third world countries cannot afford. With the possible exception of South Africa's apartheid policies, no third world country would seriously attempt to implement social policies based on the notion formulated by the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition that "all cultures have to be considered equally effective in producing ways of dealing with the problems of survival of our species under unique patterns of constraint" (1982, p.710). Quite apart from the awesome spectacle that some cultures appear to be considerably more effective in the ways they have produced to exterminate the species, the doctrine of cultural relativism has a hollow ring for people for whom the harsh realities of survival include famine, disease, oppression, and exploitation. But, perhaps, it is unfair to judge cultural relativism by what it says and, instead, it should be understood as an injunction to psychologists who conduct research in remote places away from home that they do not come from a privileged place. What this means is not necessarily that people always and everywhere are equally good at survival but only and importantly that psychologists should refrain from judging and ranking others because to do so is to come from a privileged place. Taken literally, however, cultural relativism is a truism of a singularly uninformative kind for both the development of scientific enquiry and for human emancipation.

There are two ways to assert that people are basically the same and they reflect the fundamental cleavage between theories concerned with states and theories concerned with change, between being and becoming. The fundamental problem of cultural relativism, as has been argued elsewhere (Miller, 1984), is that it is essentially a conservative doctrine. It does not and cannot address the problem of change. To assert that people are basically the same, that they have the same basic cognitive processes, is to assert that they

are people: and to argue that people are different because they experience different situations is to forget that they are people. To find our common humanity we need not search for what it is to be common but for what it is to be human. A science of human emancipation needs more than an assertion or even empirical evidence that people are good at what they do, not only because otherwise they would not survive long enough to bear witness to the claim, but because to be human is to be good at what others do and to do what no one has done before. The problem of cultural relativism is not whether it is right or wrong but that it entails a prescription for research that perpetuates psychology's perverse mimicry of the natural sciences and its consequent irrelevance to human affairs.

CULTURAL RELATIVISM AS A RESEARCH PARADIGM

A good example of how cultural relativism is put to work is provided by Cole (1978). The example is instructive because the assumptions are clearly stated and the conclusions follow with the impeccable logic that informs all tautologies no matter how complex or disguised their formulation. In an autobiographical account of an "Ethnographic Psychology of Cognition - So Far", Cole writes that he adopted the assumption "that people would be skilled at tasks they had to engage in often" (p.617) and he continues as follows:

> "This statement may appear patently obvious or trivial, but its consequences are neither. Eventually it led me to reformulate the problem of the relation between experience and the development of cognitive processes, as I shall attempt to make clear presently."

Presumably the tasks that people engage in often are those that are effective for survival and the research task then is to identify the situations that elicit these tasks and to investigate how people become skilled in their execution. The important point to notice is that like the ubiquitous stimulus of experimental psychology, the task eliciting situation is "given"; in a laboratory by the experimenter and in the field by the culture. In both cases, the question of how the stimulus arrived in the experimenter's laboratory or the situation in the culture is ignored. The implications of this deliberate indulgence in ignorance require further analysis because it is this kind of bliss that is at the heart not only of Cole's explicit approach but of cross-cultural psychology in general.

If we apply Cole's assumptions not only to Kpelle rice farmers who are "masters at measuring rice" (1978, p.617) but also to Swiss scientists who presumably are masters at logico-mathematical thinking what form would our analysis take? We would observe all the situations in which Kpelle children participate in rice-measuring activities and how these situations are structured to encourage and teach the skills required for measuring rice. Similarly, we

would repeat this procedure for Genevan children. At the end of the day we would confirm Cole's reformulation of the relationship between experience and the development of cognitive processes.

> "Cultural differences in cognition reside more in the situation to which particular cognitive processes are applied than in the existence of a process in one cultural group and its absence in another" (Cole **et al** 1971, p.233).

Given the assumptions with which we started and the methods of the investigation, it would indeed be surprising if we arrived at any other conclusion. What the analysis would provide is a set of descriptions and it is true that this kind of information is not entirely trivial. But this is not to say that it is theoretically informative. Nothing in the analysis can explain how people who are good at measuring rice can become good scientists and the reverse. But this problem need not be phrased in cross-cultural terms. The analysis also cannot explain how Kpelle farmers became good at measuring rice or Genevan scientists good at logico-mathematical thinking. Presumably these abilities are not created in heaven or **in utero**. The point, and it is the crucial point at least for psychology, and especially for psychologists interested in culture, is that situations do not create people, people create situations. The premise that science and its institutions provide an opportunity for the application of scientific thought is not only a poor substitute for theory but, if treated seriously, encourages us to forget that people create science and all the other activities we call culture.

To appreciate the implications of Cole's formulation concerning cross-cultural differences, it is important to recognise that he is critical of approaches in cross-cultural psychology that compare performances across cultures. This may be a valid criticism but it does not imply that Cole's own approach is either valid or necessarily better. Cole points out that the "use of "culture as as independent variable" rests on a strong assumption" which, he argues, is "that psychological experiments "tap", "measure" or "assess" specific cognitive processes" (1978, p. 628). The problem with this assumption, he argues, is that failure to perform a task does not necessarily imply a lack of process. Leaving aside issues that may be methodologically important but are theoretically uninteresting such as the fact that people may be unwilling to perform, or disinterested in the task, or simply unfamiliar with the entire procedure, the problem Cole identifies is only a problem because culture or situations are regarded as independent variables. All of the prescriptions advocated by Cole and his associates (Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, 1982, p.674) including, "turning the Piagetian approach on its head", assuming "that learning is context-specific", "adopting a position championed 75 years ago by Thorndike", or the simple formula "Experience -- Task performance", not only miss the point but compound the very problem he attempts to solve. The

point is simply that the strong assumption about culture, or situations, or experience, as independent variables is an assumption not only that they are "variables" but that they are "independent" of either the actions they evoke or the psychological processes that generate action. To the extent that culture or situations are variables at all, they are dependent, that is, the products of human action. Children who do not conserve do not **fail** to perform on a **conservation** task and therefore lack **conservation** processes. The task only becomes a conservation task when children impose conservation structures on it. Likewise, from a psychological perspective, the earth only started to revolve around the sun after Copernicus rearranged the cosmic situation. People who believe that cultural differences reside in situations and not the reverse, must also believe in angels.

Jahoda (1980, pp.125-127) convincingly points out that Cole is most certainly wrong in believing that his theoretical formulations can be reconciled with those of Vygotsky, except by an inside-out transformation of Vygotsky into a social learning theorist. But the differences between Cole and most other cross-cultural psychologists, as Vygotsky pointed out, "arise out of the **theoretical interpretation** psychologists want to assign to the consequences of various stimulating environments and not out of variations in the general methodological approach within which observations are made" (1979. p.58/9). Cole is by no means alone in falling foul of Vygotsky's sharp criticism of what he referred to as the "inadequacy" of the "stimulus-response framework" (1979, pp.58-61). Jahoda's postulate that B = f(P x EC) (1980, p.129) expresses the same entrenched inverted reasoning that what is "given" to our understanding are psychological processes (P) and eco-culture (EC) and that what needs to be explained is behaviour. It is perplexing why psychology is so resilient in its resistance to the idea that what is given, not only to psychology but to all the human sciences, is human action, and that what requires explanation are the various manifestations of such action. The reason why Cole cannot have Vygotsky without Piaget, and a B = f(P x EC) version of cross-cultural psychology cannot have either, without distorting the very essence of their theories, is because they both attempt to understand how people construct the world of their experience from their actions and not how their actions are constructed from the world of their experience.

It is ironical that psychologists must learn from Marx, the father of sociology, that neither mind not culture is thrust upon us from above but manufactured from below.

> "In direct contrast to German philosophy, which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, or conceive, nor from what has been said, thought imagined, or conceived of men, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We begin with real, active men, and from their real

life-processes show the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms of the human brain also are necessary sublimates of men's material life-process, which can be empirically established and which is bound to material preconditions. Morality, religion, metaphysics, and other ideologies, and their corresponding forms of consciousness, no longer retain therefore their appearance of autonomous existence. They have no history, no development; it is men, who, in developing their material production and their material intercourse, change, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. Those who adopt the first method of approach begin with consciousness, regarded as the living individual; those who adopt the second, which corresponds with real life, begin with the real living individuals themselves, and consider consciousness only as **their** consciousness." (In Bottomore and Rubel, 1956, p.75)

PIAGETIAN AND VYGOTSKIAN PERSPECTIVES

The key to understanding both Piagetian and Vygotskian theory is to recognise that they address the same theoretical problem. For this reason, it is not suprising that they also adopt the same method which Vygotsky (1978, p.8) explicitly attributes to Marx. If knowledge or culture is not assumed but must be explained then learning in the empiricist sense of context or content-specific learning presents a paradox. This is simply that knowledge cannot be learned before it exists. Piagetian concepts, from object permanence to conservation, all demonstrate what may be termed the learning paradox. The force of Piaget's empirical studies is that he demonstrated that the objects of his consciousness or understanding are different from those of a child not because of anything in the objects themselves, from which knowledge could be "learned", but because of differences in their states of consciousness or conditions of understanding. In the case of Vygotsky the situation is complicated by the fact that "learning" is the primary concept in his theory. But Vygotsky's concept of learning is very different from any content-specific or S-R view of learning. It is not necessary to labour this point because Vygotsky (1978, pp.58-65) himself constantly rejected what he referred to as "naturalistic" or S-R approaches. It is, however, necessary to show, and in some detail, what Vygotsky's theory of learning does mean and why it not only addresses the same problem of the learning paradox but is also a necessary complement to the partial solution provided by Piaget. Before attempting a resolution of the Piagetian and Vygotskyian approaches, it is necessary to consider in more detail Piaget's major theoretical construct upon which all the others hinge, the concept of equilibration.

Equilibration: A Piagetian approach to self-regulation

In an important sense, Piagetian theory starts and ends with the idea of equilibration. When Piaget says that "in the act of knowing the subject is active" (1964, pp.13-14), the activity that makes an act an act-of-knowing, is equilibration or self-regulation. The mechanisms of equilibration are the well known assimilation and accommodation processes that are built into the biology of the knowing subject and provide the basis for Piaget's claim that "intelligence is a particular instance of biological adaptation" (1952, pp.3-4). From the earliest co-ordination of simple sensori-motor schemes to the most complex formal operations, the construction of new understanding or new ways of assimilating the world is a function of self-regulation. But for all Piaget's (1977) formal descriptions of equilibration as a system of compensations and so on, in the final analysis equilibration remains unexplicated as a psychological construct. What the construct implies is the existence of a set of psychological mechanisms that operate on or regulate the various kinds of operations (concrete, formal, etc.) that Piaget has described. In this sense, the theory ends where it started with self-regulation as a hidden property of the organism. But the importance of self-regulation for understanding cross-cultural differences does not seem to have been fully explored.

Because equilibration has been considered mainly as an organismic property, the invariant sequence of the Piagetian stages has been taken as confirmatory evidence of an organismic regulatory system. Variations in the rate of acquisition of the stages is taken as evidence of non-organismic factors such as culture. The problem with this interpretation is that it allows learning of the kind that Piagetian theory specifically excludes to enter through the back door. Not only does Piagetian theory exclude learning as an explanation of development but, as Vygotsky points out, Piaget's method is designed to eliminate the influence of learning.

> "The point of asking questions that are so far beyond the reach of the child's intellectual skills is to eliminate the influence of previous experience and knowledge. The experimenter seeks to obtain the tendencies of children's thinking in "pure" form, entirely independent of learning" (1979, p.80).

If the stages of development are a function of equilibration, then a delay (or acceleration) in their acquisition is a delay in equilibration; and if cultural factors influence the rate of acquisition of developmental stages then they influence equilibration. The same argument applies to findings that show that concrete and formal operations may be manifest in some domains of knowledge and not others. There is no way for culture to enter Piaget's epistemic subject other than via the process of equilibration. This is what Piaget means in his retort to Levi-Strauss's claims concerning the logical status

of complex kinship systems, that "What we want to know about is individual inventions" (1971, p.117). To suggest, as Jahoda does (1980, p.119) that Piaget did not develop the point about individual inventions is to overlook the fact that his entire theory represents the development of this very point. Whether or not all or only some adolescents in Geneva actually invent abstract systems is an empirical issue. Piaget's theoretical point is that if and when they do, the invention will be a function of equilibration or self-regulation; if it is not, and it is acquired by learning, then it will not be an invention at all. What this means is that culture can not creep into the system from the bottom up but must march in at the top and annex the system of self-regulation. To understand how this may happen, it is necessary to go above and beyond Piagetian theory; above in the sense that Pascual-Leone claims to stand on Piaget's shoulders in his explication of equilibration; beyond to Vygotsky's theory of mediation as an explication of self-regulation.

Pascual-Leone's neo-Piagetian "Theory of Constructive Operators" (1970, 1983, 1984; Pascual-Leone & Goodman, 1979) can be viewed as a functionalist modular modelling of equilibration in terms of a set of content-free operators that together co-determine performance across stages of development and across kinds of situations or tasks. He refers to these operators as "silent" in the sense that they operate on content or experiential processes (i.e., schemes) and regulate which of these will determine performance. For example, when confronted with a typical conservation experiment, children at different ages focus on different aspects of the situation and it is this "silent choice" of representing a situation in a particular way, that the theory attempts to explain in terms of a set of regulatory or constructive operators. Of the several operators Pascual-Leone has identified, most important from a developmental perspective are the **M** and **L** operators.

Pascual-Leone argues that cognitive developmental phenomena such as Piaget's vertical and horizontal decalages are primarily (but not entirely) a function of the **M** operator. This operator is conceptualized as a mental energy reserve or attentional capacity (similar to Piaget's centration mechanism) that is the main cause of and sets age-bound limits to such cognitive resources as "mental effort" (e.g., Kahneman, 1973) and "working memory" (e.g., Case, 1978). The reserve or capacity of the **M** operator increases with age and its strength or measure, in terms of the number of schemes it can boost (i.e., can drive or strongly activate), is referred to as **M** power. As the capacity of **M** increases, the number of schemes or units of information a child can apply in a given situation increases, and hence problems requiring greater informational complexity can be solved. This growth of attentional capacity is interpreted as caused by the maturational growth of the **M** operator, a purely organismic process indexed to chronological age.

Although structural changes in cognitive growth may be attributed to increases in **M** power, the **M** operator is not sufficient to explain development and Pascual-Leone identifies various kinds of learning operators. In the present context, they are referred to generically in terms of an **L** operator. The important point is that the **L** operator is conceptualized not as a set of content schemes but as a weight, power, or force that is applied to control and produce performance when, in a particular situation, a well learned or overlearned set of schemes is activated. For example, in the typical Piagetian conservation experiments, to succeed the child must resist or overcome not only the content but the force of previous learning in order to correctly solve the problem. In this sense, the **L** operator may facilitate or inhibit development depending on the nature of the situation and of the other silent operators that together co-determine performance.

The relation between the **M** and **L** operators is of particular interest because it is by means of **M** that it is possible to attend to new non-salient aspects of a situation or to override the effects of previous learning. However, the application of **M** (attentional energy) is a function of what Pascual-Leone calls executive schemes (i.e., plans) that mobilize **M** and these executives are learned. The role of executive schemes in mobilizing and regulating the application of **M** is evident in the distinction Pascual-Leone draws between structural and functional **M**-power, the former referring to the amount of **M**-energy available and the latter to the actual amount used. According to Pascual-Leone, field dependent people do not mobilize their full **M**-power and this, together with the effects of other silent operators, is responsible for their performance on various tests. The important point in interpreting field dependence in these terms is not that people do not use their full **M**-power potential but that they may not have appropriate executives to mobilize **M**. Pascual-Leone's theory is an idea tool for cross-cultural research, not only because it clearly distinguishes between developmental and learning operators, but also because the empirical methods used to test the theory control for the effects of learning. This is achieved by prior training and pretesting to ensure that all subjects have mastered the information needed on tests of **M**-power. In general, Pascual-Leone's explication of equilibration is based on a bilevel organization of the psychological system such that a set of content-free operators may be mobilized by learned executives to generate performance.

Mediation: A Vygotskian approach to self-regulation

In Piagetian theory equilibration represents a set of operators that generate "individual inventions" or, to use Vygotsky's terminology, "independent problem solving". However, Vygotsky proposes generative mechanisms of a different kind, not necessarily in competition but at least in co-operation with those proposed by Piaget and, more recently, by Pascual-Leone. Because of Vygotsky's emphasis on "learning", it is easy to lose sight of the fact that his

concern, no less than Piaget, was to explain, not only how people are able "to solve a variety of more advanced problems independently" (1979, p.88), but also to provide an explanation that does not fall foul of the learning paradox.

The essential difference between the Piagetian and Vygotskian approaches concerns the origin of what Vygotsky called "higher mental process". He argued that these processes, such as intelligence, memory, thought and language, have their origin, not in the biology of separate individual organisms but in the social life, cultural forms, or signs that are mediated through the agency of others. Unlike the contents of a stomach, the contents of a human mind do not have an independent existence. Meaning does not grow on trees. Meaningful human action is only possible in the context of a system of shared signs and, as such, is not the property of separate independent individuals. Fundamental to any understanding of Vygotsky is the distinction, implicit in his approach, between the psychological and biological individual. Volosinov (1973) points out that the term individual is usually "thought of in binary opposition" to the term social whereas the proper correlate of social is "natural" or biological.

> "To avoid misunderstandings, a rigorous distinction must always be made between the concept of the individual as natural specimen without reference to the social world (i.e., the individual as object of the biologist's knowledge and study), and the concept of individuality which has the status of an ideological-semiotic superstructure over the natural individual and which, therefore, is a social concept. These two meanings of the word "individual" (the natural specimen and the person) are commonly confused, with the result that the arguments of most philosophers and psychologists constantly exhibit **quaternio terminorum**; now one concept is in force, now the other takes its place" (1973, p.34).

Higher mental processes that have their origin not in nature but in culture represent a semiotic superstructure over the structures of modern cognitive functionalist theories. In these theories, the individual is essentially a biological entity whose inner psychological mechanisms are, in principle, separate from those of other individuals much as one person's stomach is independent from another although both function in the same way. But when Vygotsky speaks of a uniquely human psychology defined by higher mental processes, he shifts the traditional boundaries of psychology and, in effect, initiates a discipline or domain of enquiry that lies at the interface between nature and culture. Higher mental processes partake of, and are constrained by, biological forms at one end and social forms at the other. Human action is the product of processes whose origins are as much social as they are biological and the problem for psychology is to understand the nature of the interface, the higher mental processes, that make possible or generate human

action.

The idea that higher mental processes such as thinking and independent problem solving are "social" in their origin requires careful analysis. In general terms, children are regulated by adults or, to use Vygotsky's term, adults mediate between children and their experience of the world. But the fact that children (and adults) learn from adults and not only as a result of direct experience with the environment, certainly does not cover or exhaust what Vygotsky means by social. In fact, this limited and restricted meaning of the term social whereby knowledge is transferred from one head to another leads directly to the learning paradox. The deep meaning of Vygotsky's claim that higher mental processes are social in origin is not that people learn from other people but that the products of mediated learning are social. What the child acquires in learning a culture is the network of meanings and rules that obtain between people. What is acquired through mediation is not the private intellectual property of individual learners but the collective and cumulative intellectual tools of historical others, what Vygotsky calls "culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions". Each generation of children confronts a new world constructed and transformed by previous generations. Sight and hearing are biological properties of individual beings but looking and listening are cultural properties, gifts of history and not of nature. These gifts are bestowed through the mediation of others but it is not sheer otherness that constitutes the social dimension of human existence. When children are taught how to look and listen they become part of history because they learn to participate, not only in a world of objects animate and inanimate but, in a universe of meaning that transcends the individuality of biological existence because it is constituted not in but through and between people.

For Vygotsky the problem is to explain how children "grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (1979, p.88), that is acquire the cultural rules or meanings that regulate action. He proposes that mediation creates what he refers to as a "zone of proximal development". It is interesting, and also instructive, that Vygotsky provides two accounts of the zone of proximal development and yet it is usually only the first descriptive statement that is quoted (for example; Bruner, Cole, Brown and Ferrara, Wertsch, Wertsch and Stone, in Wertsch, 1985).

> "It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978 p.86)

Given his distinction between description and explanation of psychological processes, it is not surprising that Vygotsky goes on to pose the question "What, then, is defined by the Zone of Proximal Development.....?" It is his

answer to this question that deserves attention because it shifts the emphasis away from the descriptive to an explanatory level of analysis and firmly grounds the concept within the broader context of his general theory.

> "The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed the "buds" or "flowers" of development rather than the "fruits" of development. The actual development level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively" (1978, pp.86-87).

The force of Vygotsky's "flowers" and "fruits" metaphor is to drive home the point that an explanation, as opposed to a description, of a psychological process can only be achieved through a "disclosure of its genesis, its causal dynamic base" (1978, p.62) or what today are commonly referred to as generative mechanisms (for example: Bunge, 1973; Bhaskar, 1979; Chomsky, 1975; Harre and Secord, 1972).

If we focus exclusively on Vygotsky's descriptive statement that the zone of proximal development is the distance between actual and potential levels of development that may be achieved with the help of others, then it is easy to lose sight of the fact that it is the child's "independent developmental achievement" (1978, p.80) that ultimately must be explained. Vygotsky's proposal that "the only 'good learning' is that which is in advance of development" (1978, p.89) together with the statement that "the zone of proximal development characterizes development prospectively" (1978, p.87) leaves little doubt that he clearly recognized and attempted to identify in development generative mechanisms to explain how human learning equips people to solve new problems independently, and to cope with unfamiliar situations. In discussing the zone of proximal development, Cole (1985) provides examples of how adults interact with children and teach them skills such as weaving (see Childs and Greenfield, 1982) and tailoring (see Lave, 1978) by breaking down the process into a number of steps and allowing children to become proficient at each level of the task. He points out that children have witnessed the entire process many times so that from the start they begin to "practice what they already know" (1985, p.157). Vygotsky's point appears to be the very opposite. The zone of proximal development provides an opportunity for children to practice what they do not know. A flower is not a little or immature fruit and neither does it become a fruit in a graded set of steps. A flower contains within it a set of mechanisms that will generate a fruit. By means of these mechanisms a flower is transformed into a fruit. It is true that little fruits grow into large ripe ones and the same is true of little weavers and tailors. How this happens may be of interest but it is a

different order of explanation from that required to answer how flowers are transformed into fruits. People do not transform the world or their conditions of existence by "practicing what they already know".

The notion of generative mechanisms is useful if we attempt to extract some general formulation from the matrix of learning and developmental processes that are at work in the zone of proximal development. The problem is not only how external social knowledge or culture is internalized by individual children but how individuals are able to use their socially derived intellectual equipment creatively to transform both nature and culture. This is a necessary theoretical consideration in order to avoid the trap of the learning paradox and to provide, in principle, an account of how culture is possible. The zone of proximal development may be conceptualized as the co-ordination between two sets of generative mechanisms. Culture as mediated to the child represents a set of extrinsic generative mechanisms; what Geertz refers to "as a set of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instruction - for the governing of behaviour (1973, p.44). Children"s actions (looking and listening for example) are regulated by adults according to culturally prescribed control mechanisms; problems are defined, methods of solution prescribed, sources of information provided, styles of processing encouraged. In this way, children begin to practice what they do not yet know and, in this sense, learning is in advance of development. The internal machinery inherent in human biology may be understood as intrinsic generative mechanisms; Piaget's equilibration processes or Pascual-Leone's silent operators that regulate action from within and constrain the kinds of actions children can perform on their own. Real children, however, never act alone. Concealed within the self of each individual person are the social tools that regulate the life processes of historical others.

It remains to clarify the nature of the social tools that constitute the human intellect. Geertz's conception of culture as a set of control mechanisms rather than as "complexes of behavior patterns - customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters" (1973, p.44) reflects a similar bilevel structure as that inherent in Piaget and Pascual-Leone's equilibration models. The point of a bilevel structure, whether of mind or culture, is to accommodate a moment of constructivity or transformation without which change is not possible. Politics, puddings, and games embody the constraints of plans, recipes, and rules; in general, all manufactured goods whether by mind or machine embody the constraints of the tools of their manufacture. But the tools of pudding construction, recipe, mixer, and oven, are no more inside the pudding than kinship systems and wedding rings are inside a marriage or culture is inside a situation. This distinction between the contents of culture, and what Luria refers to as the "actual forms of culture" (1976, p.3), is implicit in Vygotsky's theory of mediation.

The distinctive feature of human mediation is that in the process of learning a specific task, such as baking a cake, children learn not only about cakes but also about recipes; and what they learn about the relationship between cakes and recipes is that when you eat a cake you do not also eat the recipe. The cultural form of a cake is its recipe, the conditions of its production, and what is transmitted through culture or learned through mediation are not only cakes, or tasks, or situations, but the tools of their construction. When children are guided through a task by a mediator who regulates their actions, the regulations embody the constraints of the cultural forms or tools that transform a "situation" into a meaningful task. These outer-regulations may be conceptualized as "mediational operators" in the sense that they apply on specific contents but are not constituted by the particular objects or events. When these outer-regulations or mediational operators are learned or internalized as self-regulations, they function as social tools. In this sense, Vygotsky's higher mental processes are reflections of cultural forms that, in turn, embody the constraints of these processes.

The problem that Vygotsky and Luria addressed in their cross-cultural research, conducted some fifty years ago in the Soviet Union, can be addressed only within the framework of a theory of mediation that serves as an interface between the silent operators of biological individuals and the hidden mediational operators of social others.

> We still do not know whether changes in socioeconomic structures or changes in the nature of social practice result only in broadened experience, acquisition of new habits and knowledge, literacy, and so forth, or whether they result in radical reorganization of mental process, changes at the structural level of mental activity, and the formation of new mental systems. Proof of the latter would be of fundamental significance for psychology as a science of social history" (Luria, 1976, p.12).

Like the question posed, the answer appears obscure if psychological and cultural processes are regarded as "fixed forms of spiritual life and remain unchanged under different social conditions" (Luria, 1976, p.164).

> "... as the basic forms of activity change, as literacy is mastered, and a new stage of social and historical practice is reached, major shifts occur in human mental activity. These are not limited simply to an expanding of man's horizons, but involve the creation of new motives for action and radically affect the structure of cognitive processes" (1976, p.161).

The argument of cultural relativists that mental processes are always and everywhere the same but that they are applied differently to meet the demands of specific situations is also no doubt true provided that the process

of application is not attributed to the constructive power of the passive form of English grammar but to the generative power of human minds constituted by social tools.

It is, perhaps, appropriate to conclude on a speculative note. Culture must have started when a disgruntled radical primate realized that she could have her cake and eat it. Cross-cultural psychology will begin in earnest when similar minded psychologists realize that you can have culture and change it.

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Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 19-32

Psychological trauma and childhood

Ann Levett
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch

Abstract
Experiences of sudden unexpected physical injuries and danger to life have psychological effects in the sense that strategies are mobilized to ensure personal survival and safety. Ideas about psychological trauma in childhood, however, are bound up with differently conceived issues. Firstly there are preoccupations with certain **events** or situations and these are emphasised over others. Secondly, there are dominant ideas concerning **evidence of trauma**; these are widely held. Particular models of childhood, i.e. **discourses of childhood**, are always involved in talk about psychological trauma in children. This paper examines current notions about the causes of variations in children's behaviours (or problems in children) and discloses for scrutiny the ways in which four major discourses of childhood (passive, innocent, organismic and cognitive/rational) interact with these causative models to construct and perpetuate particular views of psychological trauma.

Concern has been expressed about the possibility of traumatic effects on children of exposure to violence. There is an expectation, though not always clear, that such children are likely to grow up to be aggressive, unruly and ungovernable - or psychologically disturbed. This paper draws on part of a larger study concerning the effects of childhood sexual abuse (Levett, 1987, 1988) and will address central issues involved in current concerns about the traumatic effects of certain kinds of childhood experience. A conceptual analysis of ideas of trauma is pursued; the significant part played by metaphors will be introduced.

Widely encountered ideas in the popular media and in professional clinical psychological literature are seldom examined at a conceptual level.

Considerable confusion dominates contemporary ideas about psychological trauma (Mestrovic, 1985; Levett, 1989a). There is no generally accepted theory within which to direct inquiry concerning psychologically traumatic effects. Freud used the term trauma quite loosely (Greenacre, 1967) and even in psychoanalytic theory there is still much controversy about this notion (Furman, 1986; Yorke, 1986). The term tends to be part of non-reflexive commonsensical language practices, resting in tacit knowledge, which suggests it has the plasticity of a social representation (Moscovici, 1984) or a metaphor (Good and Good, 1983; Lakoff, 1987).

As an important step to developing appropriate approaches to the diversity of situations deemed to be "emotionally damaging", it is crucial to examine current understanding, and to lay bare the assumptions involved. These are accessible through language: talk and written discourses. Through such deconstruction, at least we would know something about the ground we stand on at present in talk about trauma.

It seems obvious that writings about psychological trauma draw implicitly on a medical model of physical trauma, where specific events like motor accidents or strokes have a range of fairly explicit consequences for physiological functioning. These effects may be evaluated through physical examinations and investigations using reliable instruments. A range of data gathered in this way can be compared against known baseline parameters. Thus information about blood pressure, pulse rate, reflexes, kidney function, and so on, can be coordinated against a background of other data (e.g. previous medical history, age) to gauge the current condition of a patient and to monitor progress following one or another intervention. Even in dealing with physical trauma, however, there are many unknown factors and the outcome is often difficult to evaluate. One such variable would be the person's wish to recover - or his/her investment in illness. Another very different factor might be a clinician's confidence, in using a different strategy from a colleague for instance. Psychological factors influence every human situation.

However, in evaluating the presence and extent of psychological trauma in children, many of the most basic problems which face the clinician are of a different order from those which confront the trauma surgeon. The subject of investigation is quite different; it involves several levels of complexity, and partly these lie outside the confines of psychological study as usually construed - in the realm of current, widely held ideas (tacit knowledge). Three of the most important of these are the **events** which are regarded as psychologically traumatic, the **ways** used to infer psychological trauma, and the way in which these inferences are bound up with **dominant notions of childhood** and widely held models of development in contemporary western culture.

TRAUMATIC EVENTS

The conventions of a history of positivistic experimental psychology (modelled on natural science or biological studies of a certain type) has led to over-simplification and to narrowly focused research. The consequence has been that specialization within the discipline (clinicians, cognitive psychologists, researchers in motivation or emotion, social psychologists, etc.), and the search for significant cause-effect links, has taken applied psychology into many cul de sacs. In relation to psychological trauma, particular events (e.g. a narrow escape from death in an earthquake or a fire) have been noted to precede a set of emotional reactions. The understanding of these responses as survival strategies means they are seen as natural responses. Two apparently logical "discoveries" follow. One is the growing list of events which retrospectively are construed to provoke similar sets of reactions, which I will discuss first. The other is the systematization of the expected reactions (which will be discussed as the way of establishing psychological trauma).

An extrapolation is made from the event of threatened loss of life - where there is a survival related change in physiological state along with emotional, cognitive and broader behavioural changes - to a range of other circumstances. Thus separation from parents, divorce, being bitten by a dog, emigrating, being sexually abused, witnessing an accident, all become listed as psychologically traumatic events. A perusal of the clinical literature shows that each of these, and other particular events has been selected out at some time for attention. This happens partly because someone is troubled, perhaps a parent. Certain behaviours (called signs and symptoms) are noticed (Good and Good, 1980). However, it is also partly because at a symbolic level one could perceive some commonality between these events, in the sense of some aspect of danger or loss. However, there are also a range of historically specific reasons for the events selected and their perpetuation, and these must also be considered.

Until quite recently, looking at the example of sexual abuse, this sort of experience was not part of the "official" list of psychologically traumatising events. In the 1970s American feminists drew attention to these phenomena (Russell, 1976) and, in a particular climate of liberal humanist government with awareness of a powerful body of enfranchised women in the USA, funding was directed to researching incest and rape. This may be seen as a tokenist sop to feminist lobbying since the causes for sexual abuse are embedded in social structures of male-female power relations, and particular styles of sexual relating, whereas much of the research and intervention which followed located causes in problem families, provocative femaleness and careless mothers, or sick men suffering from faulty control of biologically based male sex drives. Some of the research which was generated is unquestionably important, for example, uncovering the extent of sexual abuse (Russell, 1984) and the complexity of the issues involved (Browne and

Finkelhor, 1986). However, while more and more cases are reported and charges are laid, there is little clarity about the best interventions, a very small proportion of offenders is convicted, and while appearing to be useful the overall situation is untouched. The status quo is unaffected.

To individually address the historical background to each "traumatic" situation which has been given prominence in clinical writings is outside the limits of this paper. The point highlighted is that there is a great deal of other problematic human experience which has not been selected out for the same attention. There is little or nothing in the clinical literature about the effects of, for example, failing at school, being disregarded because one is female or black, the realization that one is not literate or numerate, or does not have access to some facility such as a hospital at a critical moment. Furthermore, in South Africa, attempts to draw attention to the common practice of punitive beatings of children in the school systems (Rabinowitz, 1988), and to the sexual molestation of girls and young women by their male school teachers or lecturers, have met little response. These everyday situations could be argued to be psychologically damaging in that they affect one's sense of identity and self-respect but they have not been seen as important enough to demand attention; it would be informative to study and elaborate on the factors involved. However, at present what creates more concern and receives more publicity is the possibility that black children who have been subjected to militaristic violence, and who have been involved in necklacing and other responses, will become violent adults.

There are sociopolitical reasons for the selection of certain situations as traumatic, even though it appears that the reasons are wholly humane ones. It can also be said (in the broadest sense) that there are sociopolitical reasons involved in every instance in which someone is seen to be deficient, deviant, or to display problem behaviour (Foucault, 1980).

EVIDENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

The tendency in psychology has been to schematize human functioning in terms of emotional states, cognitive processes, learning and perception (including self perception) and so on. These systems, and the individual, are commonly separated from the historical contexts of social groups and sociocultural processes, as if they are universal and not governed by sociolinguistic and cultural conventions. What this disregards is the growing body of understanding (from social anthropology and ethnopsychology) which reveals that expressions of emotion, self and subjectivity, are culturally shaped and are embedded in linguistic repertoires (Armon-Jones, 1985; Gergen and Bernack, 1984; Kleinman and Good, 1985; Harre, 1986).

Against a background in which emotions are viewed as givens, fixed in physical structures and physiological processes, certain behaviours and

expressions of emotion - termed signs and symptoms - are given authoritative status through the apparatus of professional education and expertise. On the basis of a particular and culture-bound body of knowledge (clinical research, practice and expertise) certain of these behaviours are understood to designate disturbance and are identified as traumatic effects.

The problem with norms of behaviour and models of human development, or ideas about deviance and psychopathology, is that they are enmeshed with sociocultural value systems. There is no clearcut or fundamental measure of healthy behaviour, comparable to a normal range of blood pressure or respiration rate. It is well established that clusters of signs and symptoms which constitute diagnostic systems of psychological disorder fluctuate historically and may differ from one social context to another. Apart from the most extreme and bizarre forms, which would be rare, clinicians have to learn to "see" signs and symptoms, many being inferred. Thus there are conventions guiding perceptions which are learned as part of professional expertise and socialization.

Finally, these conventions which guide recognition of signs and symptoms among adults become shaky when applied to children. Part of this is explained through talk about the instability of children's behaviour, and about various discontinuities between different age levels or stages. There is a lack of evidence to support the idea that problems in childhood particularly shape adult behaviour (Zeitlin, 1986).

It should not be surprising then that empirical studies of long term effects of psychological trauma (with various causes) come up with diverse and contradictory results. In general these studies are retrospective and are initiated through work with adult clinical populations, from which research samples are drawn. Agile or ingenious reconstructions of past histories may be evolved (Gislason and Call, 1982). On the other hand, where an adult's life story includes events which are regarded as traumatic, but there are no clear long term effects, there is likely to be talk about protective factors (which run into dozens of commonplace possibilities) or resilience (a metaphorical elasticity of personality) (Rutter, 1985). Not many clinical researchers question the "fact" of "psychological trauma" and, in fact, one could regard such studies as examples of empirical results which are discounted because they do not support hegemonic models of explanation (Lakatos, 1970; Feyerabend, 1978).

Most approaches in clinical psychology assume that the answers to current adult difficulties, however construed, lie in childhood experience (Riley, 1983). Thus there is an idea that exposure to physical abuse in childhood leads to the development of an adult who will readily abuse others. This comes from retrospective studies of assaultive adults, and an attribution of a

cause-effect relationship to such experience. There are no studies which, for example, show that adults who were physically abused as children may have a particular respect for others, or that children exposed to violence might develop unusually strong bonds within their friendship systems. This sort of research, which needs to be done, would go against the dominant discourses which seek reasons for present problems by stereotypically sifting through a clinical history to cull a crop of neglecting mothers, absent or alcoholic fathers, broken families, deficient parenting, and the like.

Ideas about psychological trauma in childhood are closely linked with dominant ideas guiding western thinking about children. Models of "normal" and "deviant" human psychological development, like diagnostic models, constitute learned discourses. There are models of human development which (again following the model of biological growth of the body) specify that psychological development follows a fairly well defined "normal" course, and that particular experiences (or absent experiences) may derail this development; this is particularly evident in talk about sexual development in relation to experience of childhood sexual abuse.

DISCOURSES OF CHILDHOOD

Distinctions between child and adult, or based on age groups in children, are assumed in everyday talk and in most psychological texts. These are based in obvious physical differences and in the changes observed during the physical growth of children as they develop the characteristics of adults, e.g. size and the biological features of reproductive processes. All cultures distinguish between adults and children in some way but definitions of childhood, the criteria for evaluating behaviour in different age groups, the particular place which children hold in different sociocultural groups, and the ways to clarify the transition from child to adult differ widely (Cook-Gumperz, Corsaro and Streeck, 1986).

Common assumptions about psychological differences between children and adults are based in observable physical changes, and suggest that we can understand psychological processes as though they are organic in the same way, or that their origins are the same. However, culture and language are as inextricably involved in psychological processes as they are in psychological practices. Certain mental representations (schemas of thought) are used in everyday language and are incorporated by psychology as though they are fixed and indisputable. The discourses on trauma reflects one such representation; the dominant discourses on childhood are another.

Prevailing ideas about childhood are most invisible in middle class talk about middle class children (Kessen, 1979). Psychological texts are often criticized for presenting middle class experience as though it is universal but this particular aspect, notions of childhood, is not usually remarked. The

idealized, ethnocentric and mythical aspects of assumed universals of childhood are most obvious when the daily realities of working class life or the sociocultural practices of other groups are considered. The lives of South African working class children have been discussed elsewhere (Gordon, 1987; Burman, 1988), drawing attention to the range of experience which is involved.

As in Europe and North America, contemporary western concepts of childhood (based in a narrow range of middle class experience) are powerful and pervasive in South Africa. These ideas are central organising schema in daily talk about children, among professional health care workers and in the media, and are hegemonic in the sense that they are normative and prescriptive: "this is how children should be".

Newson and Newson (1974) directed attention to the social pressures of the "cult of child psychology". Later, Riley (1983) reviewed the history of western child psychologies illustrating the effects of theories on the way children have been depicted and studied, and discussing the popularisation of psychological and psychoanalytic theory in Britain. Apart from scattered references to Margaret Mead's cross cultural studies, most psychology has been isolated from social anthropology and social history. This is especially true of clinical psychology: clinicians tend to work under great pressure, from parents, educators and agencies, to relieve problems and complaints and to explain troublesome phenomena, and rarely find time to reflect on their models of practice.

The historical and cultural specificity of notions of childhood has been discussed (Aries, 1973; De Mause, 1975) but few psychologists have reflected on their assumptions (but see Bronfenbrenner, Bruner, 1986; Kessen, 1979; Mackay, 1974; Riley, 1983; Shotter, 1984; Steedman, Urwin and Walkerdine, 1985). Today it is recognised that children's interpretative repertoires are likely to be different in some respects from those of adults who share their social environment, because of relative assimilation of sets of dominant constructed meanings (Bruner and Haste, 1987), but children's repertoires are as complex and as socially derived and involved as adult repertoires from a very early age. Such views still have a limited circulation among clinicians and it is important to recognise the existence and nature of the discourses of childhood hidden in talk about experience which is viewed as traumatic for children. It is easy to slip into indiscriminate assumptions about cause-effect relationships, especially where the events involved are emotive and where they are entangled with political rhetoric.

The backdrop to contemporary discourses of childhood involves **protection** and **regulation** through normative comparisons. The development of children takes place today under the protection of "the family" (more particularly

mothers) and of various other state-recognised and mandated institutions of protection, welfare and education (Donzelot, 1980; Parton, 1985). All of these institutions draw on discourses of childhood in carrying out their particular functions, and make use of them to justify the appropriateness of their interventions. This locks families, parents and children, and children in relation to other authority systems, into particular sites of control and dependence (Burchell, 1981). Normative interventions and rules of parental behaviour regulate children's behaviour, education, the policing of both parents and children, and ensure the production and reproduction of particular kinds of adult. The forms of subjectivity which are produced (Willis, 1977; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984) incorporate rules of behaviour and expectations of certain forms of social structure; each individual fits him- or herself into the available categories of class, gender, workplace, etc. in active ways. The individualization of children against the context of regulated notions of childhood is part of the discourse of power which, in Foucault's sense, revolves around normalization (Foucault, 1980).

Dominant discourses of childhood have tended to fall into characteristic patterns. These themes are not mutually exclusive: authors, speakers and listeners often slip from one to another discourse without awareness. Four readily identifiable models of childhood are sketched here.

(1) The **passive** child: children are viewed as passive recipients of external forces of adversity (traumatic events) and of socialization. These forces shape or deform the child in certain ways. In this discourse, no account is taken of the child's agentic qualities or of the range of strategies and interpretative repertoires available to the child in each sitation encountered.

(2) The **innocent** child: children represent an essential innocence, an inherent goodness which lies at the core of all people, beneath encrustations or deformities caused by external agents ("socialization") or adverse experience, which produce badness in a range of forms. The innocent or unformed child thus may be contaminated by contact with certain others or certain experiences. For example, there is a widespread idea of a "loss of innocence" which occurs when the child is betrayed or confronts mortality. Exactly what is represented by loss of innocence is far from clear; the theological undertones are very obvious. (At the same time it should not be assumed that the opposite holds: that the child comes into being as a small but fully formed adult, in some sense).

A variation of this portrayal is the child as the most "natural" human, i.e. close to nature and unspoiled by society. In this version the child may be depicted as having natural impulses which must be curbed in order to produce a social being out of a non-social one (Chodorow, 1985). However, a child is a social

being in an important sense of the term from the moment it has a place in the thoughts and plans of others and is so even more tangibly in its presence and interaction with caregivers and, later, with others.

(3) The **organismic** child: the child is an undeveloped adult in which a process of built-in organic unfolding takes place, following an age-related, "natural" developmental blueprint. This requires a particular kind of environment for "best" development (a greenhouse model in which the best environment is a particular kind of middle class one). This discourse incorporates a biological or evolutionary notion of development as a teleological process, from less to more complex organisation, with an inbuilt weeding out of the less adaptable or imperfect organisms. Implicit is the idea that the process has a ideal endpoint: the normal adult male or female who lives in a normal society (whatever this may be), and incorporates the idea that the normal or natural process can be inappropriately derailed, disrupted or speeded up by certain kinds of experience.

(4) The **cognitive/rational** discourses which depict childhood as a period of learning. In these discourses children are depicted as asocial individuals with inherent cognitive hardware who, learning certain programmatic functions (viewed as foreign initially) develop the capacity to operate on the environment in increasingly sophisticated ways. Although an agentic aspect is incorporated in this version, there is no recognition of the inseparability of human thought, consciousness and strategy from the social matrix, and there is an assumption of a pre-existing nonsocial being (Shotter, 1984) as is present in the other three discourses of childhood. Each version perpetuates western assumptions of a separation between the individual and the social group, a form of dualism increasingly challenged by social theorists today (Geertz, 1975; Giddens, 1979).

All, in different ways, are essentialist versions of childhood. They are often inseparable, sliding together in talk about children, and are clearly present in discussions of psychological trauma in childhood, as some thought will indicate. These European and North American discourses of childhood are not necessarily the only ones available to humankind, and we have no idea how they relate to black South African discourses of childhood, based in heritages of different linguistic and social practices.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have examined dominant ideas about psychological trauma and the long term effects of childhood events regarded as traumatic, with the intention of showing up the ways in which discourses rooted in everyday knowledge shape and perpetuate our concerns and beliefs.

Human subjectivity cannot be separated from the social and sociolinguistic

matrices in which the person is situated. Development thus is not usefully conceptualised as a "fixed" process, nor are certain outcomes crystallised on the basis of a particular event or set of events which have been experienced, as suggested by the discourses of trauma and childhood.

Throughout life, each human subject negotiates his or her positioning within the range of available discourses which provide meaning, a sense of self, and purpose, to human action (Benveniste, 1971; Henriques et al, 1984). Diverse discourses are available and change historically in each society; many are contradictory. Emotional investments (preferred or significant ways of viewing or presenting oneself) are involved in the processes of subjective positioning in relation to available discourses, and govern both the discourses in which individuals position themselves and the switches which are made from one place or time to another. Subjective investments are not fixed, rational or unitary: positioning in different discourses can lead to a range of contradictions. These are confusing to the student of human behaviour who attempts to make sense of social interactions using conventional models of psychology. And of course, they are processes of major interest to clinical psychologists who struggle to make sense of the incongruities with which they are confronted in the confusion and conflicts of clients - children or adults.

There seems little doubt that other discourses than contemporary western ones are and will be available to today's South African children. As children or as adults, they may or may not be invested in positioning themselves within available western discourses. Perhaps we need to develop some understanding of the central metaphors which are involved in organising ideas about equivalents of psychological trauma (e.g. damage or pollution), childhood and adolescence, and gendered subjectivity, in other language groups. These are likely to constellate quite distinctive discourses; they may or may not link experiences of violence of the kind which tend to concern western-trained psychologists and psychiatrists with psychological changes which are understood as damage.

In considering the effects of violence on black South African children's future social behaviour, we cannot assume that western discourses of psychological trauma and childhood, tenacious and powerful as they are, will necessarily play a significant part in shaping the subjectivity of these individuals. Even if they do, the forms taken - the subjectivities which evolve - may well vary, as is the case among girls and women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse.

Note: an earlier version of this paper was presented at the Knowledge and Method Conference, HSRC, Pretoria, January 1989. The HSRC is acknowledged for financial assistance for the research out of which this paper has emerged; the opinions expressed are the author's, however.

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Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 33-47

Emotional Status of children exposed to political violence in the Crossroads squatter area during 1986/1987

Andrew Dawes and Colin Tredoux
Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town

INTRODUCTION

During the period May to July 1986, 53 people were killed and 70 000 were rendered homeless following a series of violent attacks by a group of vigilantes (known as Witdoeke) on their shanties in the K.T.C., Nyanga Bush and Portland Cement squatter camps. It has been alleged that members of the South African security forces did little to prevent these attacks and these allegations are the subject of current court hearing (Cole, 1987, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1988).

The history of the Crossroads area is documented by Cole and according to her analysis the attacks were mounted by a group which had an interest in clearing these camps so as to make room for the upgrading of the original squatter camp known as Crossroads. This process has now begun and one of the former Witdoek leaders has been made mayor of the area under the new governnment local authority structure (Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1988).

The events of 1986 have been described as one of the most brutal forced removals in South Africa's history. The response of the state to appeals for aid to the families was typified by this statement by Minister Badenhorst:

> "We will do our bit if necessary. We won't let people starve or freeze to death. But it must be remembered that South Africa is not a welfare state" (Cape Times, June 25, 1986).

This attitude may be sharply contrasted with the response of the South

African government to the tragic floods in Natal during the following year. It is worth noting too that churches and synagogues in white group areas which had taken in women and child refugees were informed by the police that they were contravening the Group Areas Act and that the refugees would have to leave (Dawes, Tredoux and Feinstein in press).

This brief background cannot convey the magnitude of the destruction that took place or the complex politics which gave it birth. During the conflict which lasted several months, the majority of displaced people were housed in tents, churches, mosques and school buildings, several of which were burned down in subsequent vigilante attacks. Most of the refugee families lost all but a few possessions. The state refused to allow the displaced persons to rebuild their shacks and offered "assistance" to move to the new township known as Khayelitsha. The majority of the homeless eventually did move, but some stood fast. In August 1986 this group began to re-establish themselves in the area known as K.T.C. This study investigated a sample of those residents who returned to K.T.C. This paper reports on a small section of a wider project which aimed to investigate the psycho-social sequelae of the conflict for adults and children and which has been reported more extensively by Dawes, Tredoux and Feinstein (in press).

In order to conduct the project, permission had to be obtained from the newly constituted committee of K.T.C. This was done at a series of meetings with the people where the purpose of the research was explained to the residents. The researchers had to make clear their own opposition to apartheid and had to be linked to one of the relief organisations before being accepted into the community. (The relief organisation was the University of Cape Town Students Health and Welfare Organisation).

CHILDREN, CIVIL CONFLICT AND STRESS

This research was informed by several studies in other contexts of political violence, namely the Middle East (Lebanon and the Occupied Territories of Israel) conducted by Punamaki (1987), Northern Ireland (Fraser, 1974; Fields, 1980; McWhirter, 1983) and Kampuchea (Kinzie Sack, Angell, Manson and Rath, 1986). At the time of conducting this project there were no South African studies focusing specifically on the impact of political violence on a fairly large sample of families and children. Useful reviews and theoretical comment have however been provided by Gibson (1986 and 1987) and by Swartz (1988). Most work in South Africa has been based on interviews with small groups (Straker, 1987) or has taken the form of reports on experiences of young people in detention (Detainees Parents Support Committee, 1986). Some comments on the likely impact of the violence were based on anecdotal evidence and not on systematic study (UNESCO, 1987).

This is not to diminish the importance of reports of this nature. They do not

however allow us to gain a more systematic picture of the situation.

The literature on other theatres of conflict and studies of the impact of violence on children in communities not torn by political conflict, ((Anthony, 1986; Eth and Pynoos, 1985; Garmezy, 1985), tends to yield convergent findings. Cumulative stress seems to render children more vulnerable than single events: boys younger than adolescence tend to show more evidence of stress symptoms than girls, symptom patterns vary with developmental level and the resilience of adults around the child seems to ameliorate stress. Instances of post-traumatic stress disorder have been reported in young children who witness violence (Pynoos & Eth, 1986). The evidence from studies of children in politically violent contexts suggests as well that where the child identifies in some way with the political context of a particular struggle, this may give some meaning to the stress events and possibly reduce their impact.

The whole question of children's vulnerability or resilience to stressful life conditions is a matter of some debate (Garmezy, 1985; Swartz and Levett, 1989). It is clear that some children are remarkably resilient in conditions of adversity and the reasons for this are likely to be a function of a number of factors including the child's physical robustness, temperament and the existence of some supportive mechanism in the community.

It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to enter into these debates. But it is possible that they are influenced to an extent by the lack of systematic data particularly in the area of political conflict. This study hopefully helps to provide an empirical base for further commentary on these issues.

RESEARCH METHOD

A sample of 71 families was drawn from the 100 who initially agreed to participate. They qualified for inclusion if they had lost their homes in the fighting and if they had at least one child of between 2 and 18 years living with them at the time. Sample characteristics are presented in Table 1. (See end).

As far as possible, both parents were interviewed and one child from each household was selected for an in depth interview. These children were between the ages of 7 and 17 years and selection was simply based on which children were present at the time of the parental interviews (The child interviews will not be discussed here). The interviews were conducted by black Xhosa speaking persons who were trained for the purose. They had completed two years of undergraduate psychology courses. Comparability of the two interviewers' approach to data gathering was checked during a series of pilot interviews.

It should be noted that throughout the interview period, the squatter areas

and the townships were in a state of tension. Residents feared further vigilante attacks and the police frequently cordoned off the area. This rendered the research process problematic at times and subjects were afraid to answer certain questions on occasion, fearing that the questionnaires would fall into the hands of the authorities.

QUESTIONNAIRE PROCEDURE

The data reported here covered a small section of the questions asked. For example the children's perceptions of those involved in the attacks and those defending the area are not considered here. They form the subject of a separate report (Dawes, Tredoux and Feinstein, in press). For this section of the study the following were considered:

1. Incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Adults (following D.S.M. III, 1980).
2. Parental reports of symptoms of psychological and physical distress in their children which had not been present before the attacks, but which were still in evidence up to two months thereafter.

The questions regarding the children's reactions were informed by literature on childhood stress reactions. Parents were asked firstly:

1. Did your children behave any different to how they are normally, during the weeks after the destruction of their homes? If so how were they different?
2. How long did it take for these problems to go away?

Parents then responded to a child problem checklist covering the following areas:

1. Emotional status (quality of emotional expression).
2. Problems with eating
3. Fears
4. Illness (e.g. frequent minor illness)
5. Regressive behaviour (e.g. enuresis; clingyness)
6. Somatic complaints
7. Sleep problems
8. Social/interpersonal difficulties
9. Thoughts (concentration, memory, etc).

Where symptoms were reported, further inquiry was undertaken so as to establish the occurrence of child Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Benedek, 1986; Eth and Pynoos, 1985).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the question of whether children whose mothers are affected by pronounced stress reactions, are likely to be more prone to behavioural

disturbance than those whose mothers are less affected, the results in Table 2 indicate that where the mother has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the child is more likely to develop multiple stress symptoms than single symptoms. (Table 2 - see end).

Children may develop at least one symptom of stress regardless of the mother's psychiatric status (in this case P.T.S.D.). But more serious problems in the mother which would be associated with a reduced ability to be psychologically available to the child are predictive of more serious child distress.

The pattern of symptom expression and the incidence of P.T.S.D. in the children is presented in Table 3. (See end).

Whereas other studies have indicated that boys are more prone to the expression of stress symptoms than girls (Barker, 1986) the present study indicates that a higher proportion of girls than boys had symptoms. However if we examine the relationship between gender and age, we find that the boys were more prone in early childhood, they were similar to girls in middle childhood, but by adolescence, the girls were more at risk. A chi squared analysis of this data revealed a significant relationship between age category and gender with respect to the incidence of symptoms. ($X2 = 8.595$; $DF = 2$; $p = 0.025$).

Inspection of table 3 shows that for all the children across age, some forty one percent of the children showed at least one symptom of stress (Nine percent showed more severe disturbance).

What sorts of symptoms tended to be associated with sex and age? These results are displayed in Figures 1 and 2. (See end).

For purposes of clarification, "Emot" refers to changes in emotional expression, "Regress" to regressive behaviour, "Somat" to somatic problems and "Thght" to problems with thought processes. The rest of the categories are self explanatory.

Figure 1 shows that Fears were most frequent across all age groups and this was so for both sexes as Figure 2 indicates. The most frequently expressed fear was of security force personnel and this was particularly so for children older than 7 years. Younger children also feared these people but were more concerned about renewed attacks on their homes. This was displayed in play according to their mothers, where the traumatic events were frequently relived with considerable emotion. Freud and Burlingham (1943) noted this form of defensive play in their study of war. Others would be easily startled by sounds reminiscent of the attacks and run and cling to their mothers saying "they are

coming again". The older children also expressed fear of future attacks. One mother described how all her 4 children ranging in age from 8 to 15, both boys and girls, used to sleep with clothes on under their beds as a protection against attack. If there was a knock on the door after dark, they would climb out of the window and run away. Another mother stated: "my nine year old boy was frightened a lot. He was afraid of strangers when they entered the house or the (squatter) camp".

Next most frequent across all age groups were changes in emotional expression. The mother of a four year old described her daughter as: "always trembling and often crying". Weepiness was common in the age group 2 - 6 years, while older children were reported as commonly withdrawn or apathetic and listless. Others in this older group were frequently irritable and restless. Links were often made in younger children (below 7 years) between emotional changes and regressed behaviour which was not unexpectedly more common in this group. For example a mother of a six year old stated: "He wants to be always near mother. If mother wants to leave him he would cry". Another mother reported her 10 year old daughter to need her presence constantly. Other signs of regression such as enuresis were very uncommon.

Difficulties with sleep including nightmares about attacks and fear of falling asleep were most common in children under 7 years. Difficulties with concentration and memory were most prominent in those older than 7. Some parents noted that when their children returned to school, they felt tired easily and could not concentrate in class.

Eating problems (refusal to eat; loss of appetite etc) were not common for adolescents, but did occur in younger children. Somatic complaints in the form of headaches and stomach aches were generally not common and were more likely to be present in children older than 7 years. Illness was also not frequent.

Finally, the 7 to 11 year old group showed evidence of social difficulties. These manifested as aggressive interaction with peers or very low interaction. Some previously socially active children withdrew from peer interaction. This was associated with fear of strangers and clinginess on some occasions. Males appeared more prone to these symptoms than females.

In concluding this section it is important to note that the adults and children under study here were still living in threatening conditions when the interviews were carried out. It is not as if they had experienced a normal life since the initial attacks, because the security forces remained active in the area while the parents were rebuilding their shacks. Our results therefore reflect symptom patterns that were probably a function of this ongoing situation rather than simply being a result of the first attacks on the children's homes. Ongoing tension is more likely to produce a higher frequency of distress in adults and children than single episodes.

CONCLUSIONS

The principle source of the data in this study was parental reports, and not detailed mental status examinations of each child in every family. The latter would obviously have been more desirable, but was not feasible in the conditions under which the work was conducted. The finding that some forty percent of the children showed stress symptoms must therefore be accepted with some caution. This figure is slightly higher than that commonly reported in children exposed to natural disasters (Bloch, Silber and Perry, 1956).

The higher figure found here may be due to over-reporting, or it may be a function of the fact that these children had been exposed to an ongoing period of disruption or trauma. I am inclined to this interpretation bearing in mind the fact that they all spent some 6 weeks in refugee centres which were threatened (in some cases destroyed) by further vigilante action, and once they had returned to newly built shacks, the threat of attacks and police raids continued.

This study also reveals the importance of taking into account developmental levels when comparing the incidence of symptoms in boys and girls. It is probable that patterns of socialisation requiring greater resilience on the part of males becomes more entrenched by adolescence, hence the clear difference between boys and girls in this age group. The greater involvement of the adolescents (particularly boys) in active political activity (e.g. membership of Comrade groups) may also explain this finding. Studies of civil conflict elsewhere (e.g. Punamaki, 1987) have shown that involvement and identification with the political content of the events may produce a resistance to stress, although she notes that **long exposure** and defiant political attitudes are associated with stress reactions. Garmezy (1985) also considers involvement to play a role in stress reduction during times of trauma.

The finding of a link between more serious child disturbance and maternal P.T.S.D. is similar to results of other studies. We should however be cautious here because we did not assess other forms of psychological disorder which may also have been associated with child stress patterns. There is enough evidence here to conclude however that maternal stress increases the risk of

child problems.

More in depth discussion of the qualitative comments of subjects are discussed by Dawes, Tredoux and Feinstein (in press). That analysis showed clearly that the children's exposure to the conflict had shaped their attitudes to the Witdoeke, police, army and comrades. The events did not just have emotional repercussions, but as is common in conflicts of this type, they contributed to the political socialisation of the participants.

What happened to these adults and children was not an accident of fate, but the product of conflict over land resources and political power. To have it portrayed as a case of "black on black" violence (as the state was wont to do) is to mystify its roots which are embedded in the system of apartheid.

Note: This paper was first presented to the 7th National Conference of the South African Association for Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines, 19 March 1989.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to research assistants Osborne Minyi, Margaret Mathew, Bonganyi Kupe and Andrew Feinstein.

Financial support was provided by The Surplus People's Project, the University of Cape Town Research committee and the Institute for African Studies at the University of Cape Town.

TABLE 1

Sample Characteristics

Households interviewed	67
Mothers Interviewed	67
Fathers Interviewed	26
Total Male children aged 2-17 years in households	98
Total Female children aged 2-17 years in households	109
Total Male children interviewed (aged 7-17)	27
Total Female children interviewed (aged 7-17)	38
Average Education Level - Mothers (years)	5.92
Average Education Level - Fathers (years)	5.90
Percentage of Mothers employed (all households)	28.79
Percentage of Fathers employed (all households)	40.97

TABLE 2

Independent t tests on Maternal P.T.S.D. as a predictor of single and multiple stress symptoms in their children.

	Average number of children in the family with single symptoms		Average number of children in the family with multiple symptoms	
	X	SD	X	SD
Mothers with P.T.S.D. (N = 42)	0.643	1.01	0.952	1.01
Mothers without P.T.S.D. (N = 23)	0.347	0.831	0.435	0.99
t	1.22		1.99*	
DF	63		63	

*Significant at the 0.05 level, t crit = 1.671 (one tailed)

Note: Criterion for multiple symptoms - cases with more than one symptom

TABLE 3

Incidence of P.T.S.D. in Children compared with those without P.T.S.D.

	All Children		Boys								Girls							
			All		2-6		7-11		12-17		All		2-6		7-11		12 -17	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
P.T.S.D.	19	9.2	7	7.1	3	9.7	3	9.0	1	2.9	12	11.0	3	9.4	5	11.9	4	11.4
Symptoms but no P.T.S.D.	67	32.4	32	32.7	15	48.4	13	39.4	4	11.8	36	33.0	7	21.8	16	38.1	13	37.1
No Symptoms	121	58.4	59	60.2	13	41.9	17	51.6	29	85.3	61	56.0	22	68.8	21	50.0	18	51.5
Total	207	100.0	98	100.0	31	100.0	33	100.0	34	100.0	109	100.0	32	100.0	42	100.0	35	100.0

FIG 1: PROBLEM TYPE BY AGE

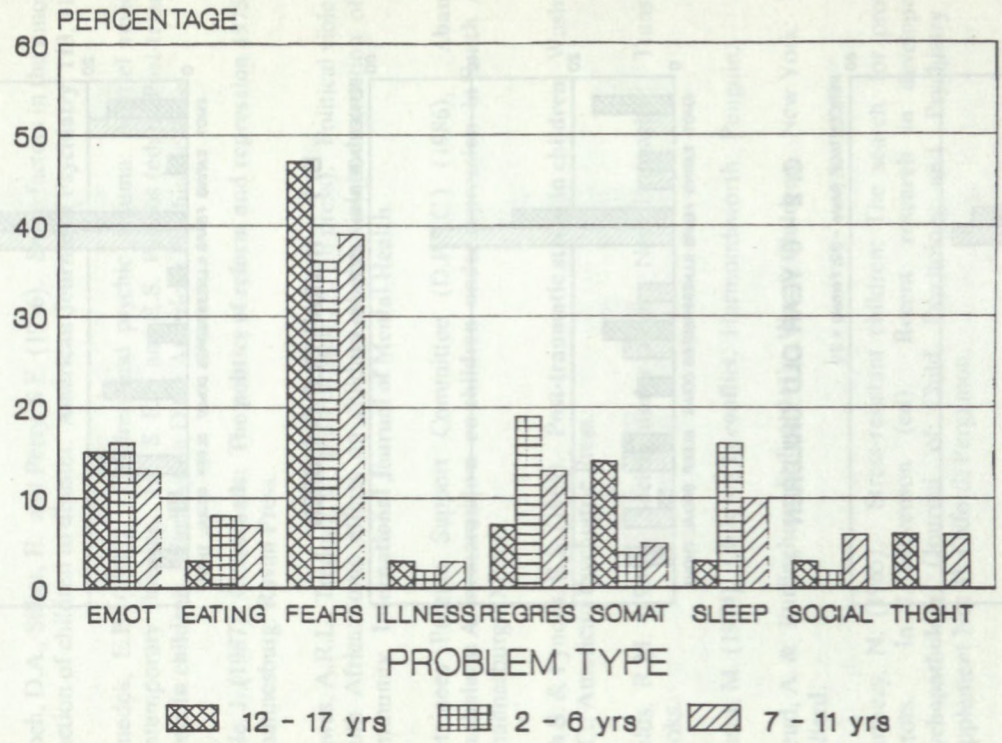
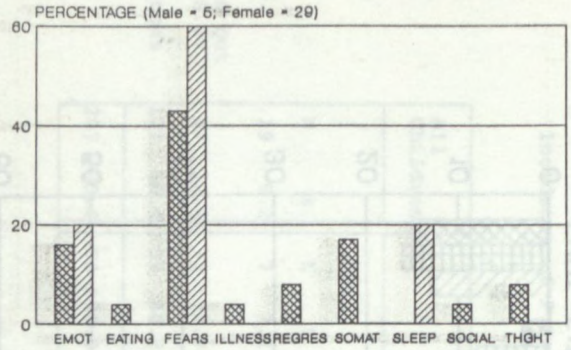
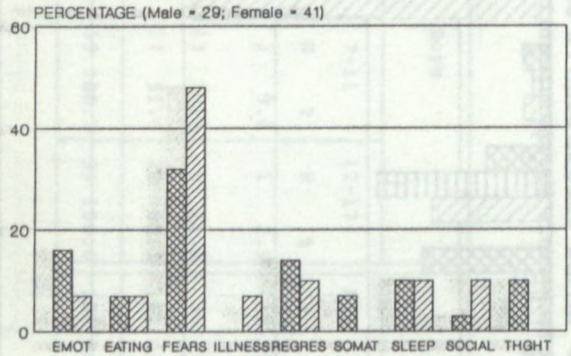


FIG 2: PROBLEM TYPE BY AGE, SEX

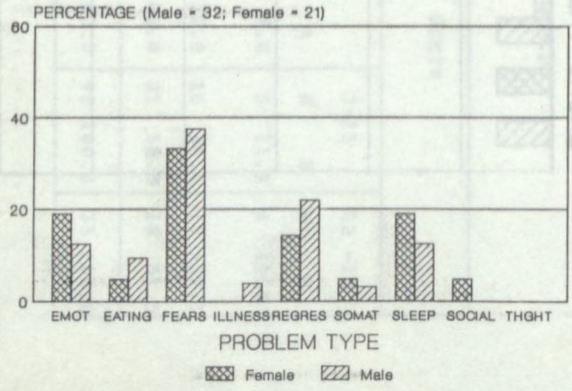
A: 12- 17 YEAR OLD CHILDREN



B: 7 - 11 YEAR OLD CHILDREN



C: 2 - 6 YEAR OLD CHILDREN



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Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 48-50

Debate

Making sense of the psychology of detention

David Edwards
Department of Psychology
Rhodes University
Grahamstown

I am writing to express my disappointment at the article in **Psychology in society - 11** (December 1988) entitled "A Contribution to a Theory of the Dynamic Mechanisms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in South African Detainees" by Kevin Solomons.

At a time when the manifestations of and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is of such serious concern, I am sure that many mental health practitioners within the country reach with interest toward any article written on the subject by people who have had practical experience. I certainly did, and therefore my disappointment on reading the article was the greater. The article contains some interesting and useful case vingettes, but it certainly does not do what it claims to do: that is make any contribution to theory. What it does is to rehash a lot of psychoanalytic concepts which are irrelevant and confusing and which make no contribution at all to our understanding of Post Traumatic Stress, let alone the particular manifestation of it found among ex-detainees.

The major achievement of contemporary psychoanalytic theory is, to my mind, in the area of the nature of the relationship between client and therapist and in the analysis of projection, projective identification, transference, and counter-transference. This analysis has been particularly valuable in the treatment of some personality disorders, although I am personally concerned that exclusive focusing on these phenomena is not always the most helpful approach to treating personality disorders. Although very sophisticated (and involving major developments since the writings of Freud) this approach as well as the more traditional psychoanalytic concepts, fail to offer much of value in the conceptualisation and treatment of a wide variety of disorders

including most of the DSM III-R anxiety and eating disorders. These are all areas where, whatever the interest and theoretical value of psychoanalytic conceptualisation, it is the conceptualisations developed by cognitive behavioural therapy that have resulted in most clinically effective treatment. In practice, psychodynamic concepts have contributed little to providing usable models of short term therapy or crisis counselling.

What is needed in the case of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a description of the development and course of the disorder which starts with a phenomenologically faithful account of the experiences and behaviours of the sufferers, and then which provides a conceptualisation which is sufficiently clear and operationalised to offer meaningful treatment strategies. I cannot see how the approach taken in this paper can even begin to do this.

A major concern for me is that this type of language and theorising is damaging to the image of the psychologist. As a clinical psychologist myself, I was only more confused by reading the article. How much more confused must non-psychologists be who pick up the journal and want to learn something about the psychology of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. As you know, a major concern for psychologists is the need to establish their credibility with disadvantaged and oppressed communities. Of course, one major aspect of credibility is simply being a trustworthy person, but another is being able to offer ways of thinking about and solving problems which make sense to the communities we are working with. The language of this article is only likely to damage the credibility of psychologists.

Surely we don't need to understand anything about libidinal withdrawal or narcissistic injury, nor do we need to appeal to Freud's notion of the repetition compulsion to understand the high anxiety levels, waking flashbacks and nightmares experienced by PTSD sufferers. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder sufferers frequently mis-attribute their symptoms. They may believe that they are going insane or that they have some sort of brain disease, or even that they are bewitched. They may feel guilty that they are unable to function effectively in the political and social milieu within which they were previously active. Psychologists would need access to theory which they can share with their clients so that they can have an accurate understanding of their condition and an accurate understanding of the appropriate attitude to take to it and the appropriate methods of managing it. The type of theoretical concepts mentioned in this article make no contribution to this enterprise whatsoever.

However, I would be more than willing to be open to the idea that this theory is useful if it were validated against case material. Unfortunately, in this article this doesn't happen at all. Some case material and some theory is presented but there is no dialogue at all between the two. Nor is the case

material used in any way to test the theory, or to examine whether the theory does, in fact, apply to the specific cases discussed. The cases would, of course, need to be discussed in much finer detail to do this. This article provides an example of a sort of writing which discredits psychological research in general. The use of case material to advance theory is a really important feature of clinical research (Edwards, 1989). However, in order to do this, a great deal of rigour and care is required. This paper assumes that as readers we will take the theory for granted and blindly trust that somehow the case material validates it. There is simply no way that any evidence is provided by the case material for any of the theory, nor is there any cogent argument to interlink the two.

I hope that my comments won't be seen as an attack on psychological work with detainees. It is not. Indeed, I greatly admire those psychologists and other workers who devote their time to this difficult and demanding work. But it is a big step from doing the work and assisting people to developing theoretical models which will make their work more effective and improve the quality of training of people learning to do the same work. I submit that the theoretical contribution in this article merely obfuscates the issue and is likely to do a great deal of damage to the process of understanding the disorder, developing effective treatments and communicating these treatments to people in training programmes.

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Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 51-52

Debate

Making sense of the psychology of detention: A rejoinder to David Edwards

Kevin Solomoms
Detainees Counselling Service
Johannesburg

Professor Edwards is hostile to psychoanalytic concepts and models, particularly as applied to the modern range of psychiatric disorders. On this basis he discounts the experience of those like myself for whom a psychoanalytic framework provides a measure of comprehension in the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He seems to believe that his own preference for a cognitive-behavioural explanatory model automatically invalidates a psychoanalytic one, ironically and revealingly providing no evidence or arguments to support his personal preferences or to refute the model to which he is antagonistic.

On a more serious note, he assumes an adversarial stance between the psychoanalytic and cognitive-behavioural models as though they were mutually exclusive and only one had the monopoly on psychological explanatory power or truth. This may well be Edwards' opinion and he is entitled to this view; it is not a view I share. Working clinically with ex-detainees suffering the PTSD syndrome has been a vexing, perplexing, baffling experience from the point of view of understanding as well as effective intervention. The service is provided by a number of therapists who represent a wide variety of differing theoretical approaches. We have been able to share our views and insights and enrich our understandings on the basis of a cross-fertilization of ideas. This has been and remains a particular strength of our service. Does Edwards wish us to amputate one limb of our body of understanding because it doesn't coincide with his theoretical preferences, because "psychodynamic concepts have contributed little to providing usable models of short term therapy or crisis counselling"? This latter absurd contention reveals the extent to which Edwards' distaste for things psychodynamic blind him to the distinctions between a theoretical framework and a practical way of working clinically that is able to draw on a variety of different theoretical models that are useful in a particular situation.

Confusion is not lacking in Professor Edwwards' letter. He confuses the theorizing in a professional journal with direct contact "with disadvantaged and oppressed communities". He seems to fail to understand that credibility is earned by work, by providing a service that meets needs in a community, rather than by the linguistic style of a theoretical article in a professional journal, or as he rather arrogantly suggests, by "being able to offer ways of thinking about and solving problems which makes sense to the communities we are working with". If Edwards wishes to provide solutions for communities and become credible thereby, good for him. My concern is to stimulate thought among therapists in the field that may enrich the service work we are providing to a particular population (in the scientific sense) group.

Edwards also ignores - is this a matter of convenience? - the obvious fact that in clinical work, we therapists communicate with our clients in language that is accessible to them; the style used to communicate with colleagues is not necessarily the same we use in the therapy room. This is so obvious that I can't help wandering whether Edwards is not setting up men of straw to knock them down, that he is looking to score trivial academic points in something that is not a contest.

The only substantive and constructive criticism I could find in his letter was that the case material does not support the theoretical propositions elaborated in my article. It is true that I refer to vignettes rather than detailed case studies and I accept that this may not be as helpful as the method suggested by him. The reason for the choice of method was straightforward; our clinical work has familiarised us with the symptomatology and phenomenology of the PTSD; the standard therapeutic interventions written about by experts in other settings proved inadequate in our situation; we needed to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in the disorder to help us develop new techniques and approaches to meet the problems we faced. The ideas in this article represent the condensation of insight that evolved over time drawing on work with many ex-detainees. It represents just one attempt to elucidate some of the elusive dynamics involved in this disorder, one which is so difficult to treat.

I am nevertheless grateful to Professor Edwards for drawing my attention to his work which shows that "case material to advance theory is a really important feature of clinical research". It is very thoughtful of him to share this epistomological gem with us. I for one, would never have known this but for his self-reference to the obvious.

It may be a matter of some surprise that there is a place for such ideas in our service; I'd be interested to learn of Edwards' approach to the understanding and treatment of PTSD - I'm sure his careful descriptions of his observations and interventions will be most instructive.

Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 53-57

Book Review

Not either an experimental doll (1987)
edited by Shula Marks

Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert
African Studies Institute
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

The country is South Africa, the year 1948. In response to an impassioned letter from a deprived Xhosa girl (Lily Moya), pleading for assistance with furthering her education, Dr Mabel Palmer an educationist known for her substantial contribution to and interest in black education in Natal, and earlier work with feminist issues eventually arranges and pays for Lily's travel, board, plus schooling at Adams College - (a leading black school in Natal). Having attempted the matriculation examination in less than optimal conditions at Saint John's College in Umtata, Transkei and failed to gain university entrance, Lily was convinced that given a different set of circumstances she could do better. Her written appeal charmed and enthused Mabel Palmer sufficiently to afford her that second opportunity. At a superficial first glance this scenario all looks humane, touching and straightforward enough.

Shula Marks having recognised the richness in quality and value of the correspondence between and surrounding the two women, lets their letters speak for themselves. In the introduction she prepares the stage with her illuminating construction of the social context with respect to issues pertinent to the smooth reading of the letters and lends the necessary historical and social perspective.

As the correspondence moves back and forth over a three year time span, it becomes apparent that the relationship between these two women is far from straightforward however. Things culminate to a point where it becomes blatantly obvious that these two individuals have slightly different expectations

of each other and their situation.

Lily for her part expects a benefactor who is also emotionally supportive and affectionate towards her. She in fact seeks a parental figure in Mabel. Dr Palmer on the other hand expects a diligent and grateful protegee who is keen to get ahead but otherwise unassuming in any way other than financially.

They both misunderstand and mistake two issues, that of kindness and material provision. The two are not interchangeable yet both Mabel and Lily make that mistake. When sent money for linen and bedding by Dr Palmer for example Lily writes "Your love has tongue-tied me". Lily becomes demanding and presumptuous in her need for parental guidance in addition to the financial assistance she is being afforded. Although sometimes inappropriate in her hints at the existence of a mother-daughter relationship between them, one cannot entirely blame Lily for at least hoping for such a development, since she was living with relatives, and not her own parents and went so far as to describe herself as orphaned. She at some level perceived herself as emotionally unprovided for.

In her rejection of Lily, Mabel Palmer's detachment belies and contradicts her material generosity: yet she uses the word "kindness" when referring to how much material provision she has given the "ungrateful" Lily. At best Mabel is only comfortable with being mildly affectionate from a distance and on paper. Later on she candidly writes to Lily that her kindness "...does not necessarily involve any personal or intimate friendship". Here Mabel in a typically liberal fashion commodifies the concept of kindness and at the same time uses it to maintain her distance from Lily.

Dr Mabel Palmer is as much a victim of her society as Lily Moya. She brings into sharp focus the pitfalls of white liberalism in South Africa which hold very true even to this day. She is "sincerely" condescending if that is at all possible - prepared to give Lily the change of a lifetime without getting involved, without rocking the boat and without threat to the maintenance of the status quo. As the editor comments "Despite Mabel's liberalism this . . reveals her racially stereotyped thinking: black people should automatically find their friends amongst other black people, whatever their cultural or class differences". Mabel does not believe that she can have an intimate relationship with a young black woman "Even if you were a European girl of your age it would be nonsense". She invests nothing of herself in relating to Lily. Mabel Palmer exposes her covert racism.

As perhaps the title (which comes from Lily's own words) suggests, the manner in which Mabel relates to Lily is abhorrent. It is as though Lily is indeed a doll, an inanimate object. On several occasions she refers to Lily as the "little thing". Mabel Palmer, guardian of black education on the one side,

is on the other a typical representation of what many white South Africans are even to this day - complacent in their paternalism. She does not question or challenge her society's social order at all in relation to herself and Lily. In other words she accepts it and therefore tacitly supports it. As a result when Lily becomes more needy emotionally Mabel responds by introducing the third major figure Sibusiswe Makhanya. In doing so she is "passing the buck", and shifts the responsibility by providing a substitute black mother figure for all that is not material and writes to Sibusiswe of Lily "I feel she could be more effectively helped by a woman of her own race ... I would gladly pay any charges necessary for her ...".

Sibusiswe Makhanya is perhaps the most logical choice Dr Palmer could have made. One of the first black social workers and a woman of remarkable achievement in her own right, this person had access into both the black and white worlds of South Africa's artificially constructed racial reality. Acceptable to whites because she was a professional and a travelled individual, confident enough to interact with white liberals yet at the same time being black, Sibusiswe possessed an appreciation for the essence of black experience. Despite this not much more is known about Sibusiswe's character or why she chose not to do more to help Lily.

Lily's story is a series of flights from one unbearable situation to the next. She repeatedly showed initiative however. One example was when she was sent to teach for a quarter of the school year at a recently established institution with an enrollment of 35 children, in a rural Transkei village far from civilization. Lily insisted on and provided sound educational structure for her unenlightened pupils. Another incident was when she was threatened with the prospect of being married off by her guardian uncle to a man she found objectionable. Lily took herself off to Durban using communication and transport systems she had never been exposed to before.

She had internal resources which eventually fail her when (and not totally because) Mabel also withdraws her assistance and support of her. Lily despite having attended the same school for well over a year was not able to form any lasting relationships with other youths. One's deductions of her character from her inability to relate to peers is not positive. She then runs away a day early from the much hated Adams College, to visit Sibusiswe at Umbumbulu. After a short spell Lily leaves abruptly and disappears to Sophiatown in Johannesburg where she is supposed to visit relatives. Following two cryptic notes to Mabel and one to Sibususwe nothing more is heard or seen of Lily.

Shula Marks then goes about tracing Lily and after approximately five years unravels the mystery, to reveal a tragic end to Lily's missed opportunities which evidently led her to the depths of despair. Marks came into contact with Lily and her family in Soweto and found out that soon after arriving in

Sophiatown in 1951 Lily became confused, incoherent and had a mental breakdown. The family sought the help of both traditional healers and Western medicine to no avail, until it was seen fit to admit her to a psychiatric institution where she spent the next twenty-five years of her life.

In the epilogue the editor not only picks up on the, by now, glaring issues but sensitively discusses the broader issues raised as a consequence of Lily's story. Amongst others she discusses the contribution of social factors in the deterioration and breakdown of the individual psyche; the interpretations African cosmologies give to psychiatric illness and its aetiology and describes the grossly inadequate psychiatric facilities available for blacks in South Africa in an effort to help the reader appreciate what those twenty-five years could have meant - without losing sight of Lily.

Although Shula Marks makes mention of Lily's personal frailty and shows an acutely sensitized awareness of the interaction of both social and personal factors, she almost unwittingly falls into a similar trap as Mabel Palmer did regarding Lily. Perhaps being a black South African gives me more licence to criticise the black heroine and the editor's portrayal of her. It would seem that the temporal factor between Marks' and Palmer's perception of Lily has only served to alter the form in which it manifests. Both are actually the same. Yesteryear's colonialism took a somewhat cruder form than it does today. The pressing questions to ask are: Does Marks represent today what Palmer represented in the late 1940's? What present day forms of colonialism exist in South Africa? I tend to agree with Ivan Evans (1989), who in his article entitled, "Intellectual production and the production of intellectuals in the South African racial order", discusses the dominance in research of the academic left as a new form of colonialism.

Marks' view of Lily is over idealised. This over idealisation of the "underdog" blinds her to Lily's shortcomings. There was nothing outstanding about Lily who lived and grew up at the same time and in the same area as my own mother. Many young women with a similar background could easily have made much more of the whole situation if they had had access to opportunities like Lily's. Indeed Lily's most distinguishing feature was her relationship with Mabel Palmer and little else. She, unlike Sibusiswe, was a failed product of missionary education. In addition the editor does not give any indication that Dr Palmer's unconscious motivations and sources of generosity must be questioned. Clearly Lily was sick in her latter years but nobody picked this up sooner. If anything Mabel colluded to some degree in the process. Was it just a case of extreme paternalism on Mabel's part or could she have been fulfilling other personal needs? Her tunnel vision regarding Lily is both lacking in insight and singularly inconsonant with the background, history and orientation (Fabian and feminist leanings) that Mabel had. We are all aware of the old phenomenon of colonialism

"experimenting in the uncivilized world". I do not believe that the descendants of colonialism have stopped experimenting in the third world. Only that today's forms are more subtle.

Ultimately one has to ask oneself why Shula Marks found it important to write this book. In attempting to answer that question, the fact that she is a white South African born historian provides a lead. The editor reveals her broad view of history in the way she responds to the exchange of letters in her book. This outstanding correspondence is without doubt an authentic form of documentation that is alive, vibrant, interesting and accessible today. The letters provide a way of bringing history to life. They do not only enable Marks to describe what that particular era was like but they also allow her to illuminate what that meant for these women. It is a bit disappointing however that Marks does not develop the obvious alienation of these three women and the issues surrounding the emancipation of women to a greater extent. In fact it is interesting that both Marks, and Eagle in her review of the book in **Psychology in society - 10** (1988, 92-97) fail in their writings to elaborate on women's issues in an exploitative society. I find myself asking how the relationship of class exploitation today compares with what occurs in the book. It is surprising that Marks, an established Marxist scholar who is obviously aware of firstly, exploitation and being South African, secondly, of race, fails to clearly raise a class-race debate. This argument only vaguely emerges and is masked in a liberal mould. In fact Marks presents us with only a critique of the liberal.

In her book she does two very important things. Firstly she introduces us to three representatives of women living in South Africa in that epoch. Mabel the well intentioned white liberal, Sibusiswe the upwardly mobile black professional crossing barriers (and viewed with the potential of building bridges) and lastly Lily, heroine turned victim, the black underdog. Secondly, by providing this book, she invites us to review and perhaps join her in the re-interprettion of South African history. A worthwhile read!

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Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 58-64

Book review

The psychological complex: Psychology, politics and society in England, 1869-1939 (1985)
by Nikolas Rose

Susan van Zyl
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

Psychology as social work: A response to Nikolas Rose's "The psychological complex"

There may be something perverse about basing a deliberately polemical review upon a work which is neither significantly wrong nor surprisingly and originally right. Certainly Nikolas Rose's **The psychological complex** (1985) is neither of these controversial things.

In fact at the outset Rose makes it clear that his study is a history, perhaps a genealogy, not a critique of individual psychology and it is certainly not intended to be provocative. I would like to think that this is because he is a rigorous but modest Foucauldian who knows that the master has already made all the important demonstrations with the controversial consequences perfectly intact before him (1). But perhaps it stems from the fact that he is after all both British and a psychologist.

Be this as it may, despite himself what Rose does has unmistakably controversial consequences. By way of a detailed and admirably coherent account he demonstrates that anything which might lay claim to the status of an indigenously psychological enquiry arises (in Britain at least) in the period 1869-1934 when the fact of individual variation comes to be perceived as a problem for social transmission -- that is, as a problem for power.

Psychological modernity he argues, may appear to be "traceable through a long tradition of reflections on the human psyche stretching back across the span of written history" (Rose, 1985, p2), but not so. While psychology to-day

may be aligned to general concepts of the mental and is both enlivened by and relevant to everyday life, its status as a knowledge is quite independent of either. What is coherent and individuated in psychology as a discourse emerges by way of quite another history, that of what Foucault calls the closed institutions: the prison, the asylum, the hospital and their more respectable counterparts, the school and the army. It is to these institutions that we must look for the first truly psychological subjects and to the task of their delineation and assessment for the first specifically psychological method.

If Rose is right and there is every reason to believe that he is, then the inescapable conclusion is that psychology both originates in and is formulated upon, what we would now call its applied or clinical wing. Its fate in other words devolves upon the validity of its diagnostic status. While it may appear to be a knowledge of variation per se, only implicitly concerned with that class of variation which is problematical or erroneous in some sense, the historical facts demonstrate that we should view it the other way round. That population which is a privilegedly psychological one is picked out by way of sociological or political criteria - those targeted for study and crucially, for potential rehabilitation, are those upon whom the social as normalising has failed to take.

Psychology is then minimally the individual study of those with "social problems". And the title of this journal is strictly tautologous for there is no other psychology but that in society and no discourse appropriately called psychological that is not socially implicated. Which is one of the reasons Rose's work warrants reviewing in this context.

If it is true that psychology is constituted in direct relation to the social why then is it precisely the social or political function of the psychologist which regularly emerges as questionable? Is the crisis for psychology which South Africa's political and ethical crisis is seen to have precipitated simply the result of confusion or forgetfulness? Or is psychology's problem no different from that which confronts all disciplines not explicitly structured as interventionist on the political level?

Two responses suggesting that the problem is internal to psychology as a knowledge of individual variation, emerge. The first argues by way of an ethically grounded pragmatics that when an unjust political system generates human misery on an extreme and widespread scale, then intervention confined to the individual level is an unjustifiable luxury. Psychologists who wish to construe themselves as activists must know that activism cannot be psychologically based.

The second, characteristic of the anti-psychiatry movement, attacks the foundations of psychology's knowledge and practice by suggesting that the

construal of variation itself as somehow unacceptable and therefore as a site for intervention is at best unjustified and at worst unethical. Where psychology practices as curative at all it is necessarily psychiatry; it then ceases to be purely descriptive and its selection criteria because socially determined, are suspect as both value-laden and relative.In fact the more suspect the society the more suspect the psychology.
Both these views raise the important and inescapable question as to whether a radical psychology is possible and each suggests correctly in my view, though for different reasons, that it is not.

The psychological complex provides the kind of backing for the view that I respect. Rose's faultless account demonstrates that psychology is constituted in contradiction because while it is enjoined at the outset to make claims to the status of a diagnostic discourse its object is produced by way of descriptive human science procedures.

To count as diagnostic at all, a discourse must minimally be able to do two things. Firstly, it must be able to provide a consistent explanation (but not necessarily a theory) of pathology as different from variation. And secondly, aligned to it, it must suggest a rationally defensible practice of the cure.

The human sciences, as we know, have enormous difficulty meeting these criteria for if the first cannot be met then the second necessarily also flounders. Here psychology's difficulty is especially acute on grounds implicit in Rose's work. In so far as it derives its results from the statistical accumulation of a myriad empirical measurements (carried out primarily in the closed institutions) psychology emerges with the abnormal in the place of the pathological and no way to tell the difference. The problem is that mesasurement alone as a quantitative operation cannot provide the logical or qualitative grounds which are necessarily required in order to distinguish abnormality from pathology. A world which includes both surgeons and obsessionals does not allow us to determine by means of counting alone how many handwashes a day indicate pathology. And a world which also includes both nuns and prostitutes finds it very difficult to decide when an orientation to the sexual which could be determined by ideological or economic factors alone can legitimately be described as pathology.

The result is that those whom psychology knows and upon whom cure now more appropriately called remediation can be practised, are strictly deviant and not necessarily sick. The normal becomes by these means transparent and the abnormal surfaces only as the arbitarily determined tailenders or forerunners on the bell curve.

There is perhaps no need to point out and it is almost embarrassing to do so, that what we are dealing with here is a vitiating circularity. The title

"Psychology as semantics" might have done just as well at this point. What is meant by abnormal is confined to those who vary "significantly" from the norm and if the norm is success in the social then abnormality is obviously that very failure of socialisation to which prisons and special schools attest. And the number of abnormal individuals, the number of prisoners, failing scholars or people in need of psychotherapy, directly reflects the degree of abnormality of the society producing them. At some arbitrary point this body of deviant individuals slip illegitimately into a class now labelled sick, and after some equally unspecifiable number of individuals have entered this class the society which produced them is described as pathogenic.

The difficulty psychologists encounter when called upon to justify any form of intervention is, by way of this analysis, shown to be a serious and predictable one. Any discipline which can only specify its object (individual variation) by way of a descriptive apparatus and that of another discipline (sociology) to boot, has no coherent way of defending the particular expertise which can alone support a particular intervention. Psychology is of course, not alone in this; all human science knowledges, sociology, economics and liberal politics share in this dilemma.

The three characteristic itineraries taken by committed South African psychologists make this quite clear. Each direction reveals more or less explicitly that uneasy amalgam of abnormality and pathology as object, which demonstrates that psychology cannot think the difference between (extra)ordinary human unhappiness and neurotic misery and cannot therefore choose between the need for compensation or cure.

The first itinerary is that of a surreptitious return to a loosely medical model. South African society is pathogenic in much the same way as a society at war is. Its victims be they of direct political repression, economic hardship or moral doubt, are seen to suffer variations of executive anxiety and post-traumatic stress. The psychologist's role then, in her or his dealings with individuals approximates that of the enlightened prison or family doctor. And on the wider or group level, psychological intervention takes the form of rethinking and then attempting to implement alternative mental health delivery systems.

The second response is to move directly towards a terrain where political and psycholgical questions can apparently be aligned. The topic may be a psychological one on the surface but the work is done by way of political or historical analysis and critique. Nicolas Haysom's extra-ordinary paper on the vigilante phenomenon under the auspices of the Wits "Psychology and violence" series is a case in point. All the discussion which his analysis gave rise to, bar one question, was correctly political in orientation. The one psychological question -- that as to why vigilantes were quite so violent could

not under the circumstances yield an indigenous answer - the psychoanalytic one available since **Totem and taboo**, that a question of this kind should rather be framed the other way round: Under what conditions is human violence held at bay?

Haysom's analysis had of course, made it absolutely clear that these conditions are strategically undermined by the state precisely because black on black violence is practically and ideologically in its interests. Neither the ego attributes of black South Africans in the Pietermaritzburg district nor the the fact that the existence of the superego is sufficient precondition for violence has anything to do with the particular situation this analysis explained. The phenomenon therefore has nothing to do with psychologists or psychoanalysts for that matter.

The final route is that involving a shift in direction within a classically psychotherapeutic model. It takes the form in South Africa of training an increased number of black clinical psychologists orientated towards the needs of an increasing number of black patients. But even here, the problem refuses to disappear.

Again a concrete example is revealing. A psychotherapist called upon to treat a black hospitalised patient suspected of suffering from delusions (those of writing a book!) reported great success. However, it was clear that this success admirable as it was, only occurred when the perfectly straight-forwardly stressful events associated with the lack of work, humiliating accommodation and a quarrel with a lover came to an end and the psychologist was also able to point out to the medical staff that the suspicious book was in fact, being written.

This classic victim of apartheid was not suffering from neurosis but from South Africa; from more than the usual amount and an undoubtedly unfair share of ordinary human unhappiness. The therapist's success was probably attributable to time, commonsense and most important, good social work. If poor social conditions rather than intrapsychic conflict (which may or may not be implicated in these conditions) account for the "patient's" difficulty then the appropriate intervention is one directed towards changing those conditions, that is, to do social work.

This outcome, polemical as it might be is a perfectly logical one. In diverging from psychoanalysis (certainly the first and perhaps the only thought to date able to think and then operate on the basis of an essential distinction between abnormality and pathology in the mental), psychology must make do with abnormal behaviour as its object and give intervention over to politics and its clinical practice over to social work.

As Freud has made absolutely clear, there is no excuse for treating the vicitms of the real as though they were neurotic and certainly no hope of curing them by clinical means (2). Nor is there any excuse for pretending that the equally real political conditions which sustain injustice and victimisation and thereby produce an extraordinary amount of ordinary human unhappiness, is not the major target for any strategic intervention.

The apparent correlation between unjust, discriminatory or violent societies and the psychological state described as stress is probably correct. It would not be commonsensical to assume otherwise. However, a distinction between stress which is simply a slightly more technical sounding term than unhappiness and slightly less so than psychosoma, and neurosis has to be made. No diagnostic discourse can do without it, a point which Rose's work explains and the political conflicts of South African psychologists reveals to be true. A psychologist not concerned with pathology coherently defined, that is with psychoanalysis and who wishes to function as both activist and psychologist had therefore better be prepared "to dwell in contradiction without irritable searching after fact and reason", a fine ability, but only for a poet.

Notes

(1) See in particular **Mental illness and psychology, The birth of the clinic,** and **Discipline and punish.**

(2) See in particular **Studies in hysteria, Mourning and melancholia,** and **Beyond the pleasure principle - Part 2.**

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Psychology in society, 1989, 12, 65-70

Book review

Against therapy: Emotional tyranny and the myth of psychological healing (1988)
by Jeffrey Masson

Nico Cloete
Careers and Counselling Unit
University of the Witwatersrand
Johannesburg

An archive of the misdemeanours of psychotherapy

The following two passages come from the conclusion of Jeffrey Masson's latest book entitled **Against therapy: Emotional tyranny and the myth of psychological healing**: "Every therapy I have examined in this book (with the exception of radical and feminist therapies, which are beset with other problems) displays a lack of interest in social injustice. Each shows a lack of interest in physical and sexual abuse. Each shows an implicit acceptance of the political status quo. In brief, almost every therapy shows a certain lack of interest in the world" (p240); "Psychotherapy cannot be reformed in its parts, because the activity, by its nature is harmful. Recognizing the lies, the flaws, the harm, the potential for harm, the imbalance in power, the arrogance, the condescension, the pretensions may be the first step in the eventual abolition of psychotherapy that I believe is, one day in the future, inevitable and desirable"(p254).

From the above quotes it is clear that the controversial author of **The assault on truth: Freud's suppression of the seduction theory** (1984) (for which he was fired as archivist of the Freud library) and **A dark science: Women, sexuality and psychiatry in the nineteenth century** (1986) should be prepared for another salvo from the multi-billion dollar profession that "profits from other people's misery" (p239). The argument against therapy consists mainly of identifying a fundamental theoretical flaw that underlies all therapy, of illustrations of the abuse of clients and the reactionary politics of certain prominent therapists.

Masson posits that the basic problem of analysis is the coupling of a "situation in which there is a superior and a subordinate" with the assumption that patients "cannot distinguish between what really happened to them and what they imagined happened to them" (p83). In the treatment of Dora (which is often regarded as the beginning of modern therapy) Freud did not believe that the friend of her wealthy industrialist father had really tried to seduce her, but that she was suffering from "internal fantasies". The origin of her illness was internal, not external; fantasy not reality; libido, not rape. To assume that the cause of mental suffering is in the person and not in the external world laid the basis for the denial of sexual abuse in childhood and the general retreat from the world "out-there" into the isolated intra-psychic world of the individual. In the **Assault on truth** Masson disclosed unpublished papers about the dispute between Freud and his earlier disciple Sandor Ferenczi over the reality of sexual abuse in childhood. Masson regards the abandonment of the "seduction theory" as the great initial error which set psychoanalysis in the wrong direction; not only did it give therapists licence to ignore the reality of the client, it also contributed directly to the concealment of child and women abuse within families.

Apart from collaborating with the cover-up of abuse in male dominated society, male therapists themselves violate children and women. Masson starts the catalogue of abuse by citing examples of famous psychiatrists like Carl Emminghause and Hermann Oppenheim, who at the turn of the century sent children to mental institutions for "paranoia" or "sexual hallucinations" when they were fearful of their parents. To illustrate how psychiatry contributed to the social control of women during the nineteenth century the cases of two exceptional women who were institutionalized (for amongst other things "moral insanity") while clearly struggling with emancipation from male oppression, are cited.

Celebrated therapists like Freud and Jung continued the tradition. Freud not only disbelieved Dora, he thought that if she had reacted differently, a possible solution for all the parties would be for her to marry the lecherous industrialist (p55). When Dora left Freud's analysis in disgust, Freud blamed Dora for transferring qualities of the industrialist onto him. Masson argues that in reality, Freud had deceived her in a manner not dissimilar to the industrialist. When Jacques Lacan calls the Dora case a "misalliance" and claims that the fundamental problem for Dora (and all women) is to accept herself as an "object of desire for the man", Lacan "merely substituted prejudices of his own for those of Freud" (p73).

The sexual abuse of women patients by male analysts takes a different dimension in the case of Sabina Spielrein and her "affair" with Carl Jung. During analysis Sabina fell in love with the married Jung who had been

preaching polygamy to his client. Romantic ideology turned exploitative and Spielrein wrote to Freud claiming that Jung was the first man to kiss her and that he had written a letter demanding that "a kiss without consequences cost 10 franks". Freud immediately sent the letter to Jung and enquired: "What is she? A busybody, a chatterbox, or a paranoiac?" It is to Freud's credit that he wrote an apology to Spielrein after Jung himself confirmed her version. Fritz Perls ("father" of Gestalt Therapy) was quite explicit about his "therapeutic" sexual exploits, apart from writing in his autobiography about "thousands" of women who are "..provoking and tantalising, bitching, irritating their husbands and never getting their spanking" (p213).

The reluctance of the profession to deal with the sexual exploitation of women is demonstrated by the fact that it was only in 1974 that the American Psychological Association adopted a resolution that "sexual activity with a patient is unethical". Less then twenty-five years ago a petition demanding the resignation of an established analyst was circulated in New York because he had requested a study into therapist-client sexual relationships. The most recent survey (1983) shows that fifteen percent of therapists acknowledge that they have sexual contact with their "patients", which must be an under estimate because imagine "..attempting to find the number of incest victims in a community by asking all the fathers in that community how many of them had committed incest" (p181). Masson must be credited for attacking psychotherapy for the way in which it participated in the oppression of women and children and for criticising the feminists for their reluctance to take psychoanalysis to task for its chauvinism. However, demonstrating the chauvinism of therapists during an age of rampant male domination is not a valid argument against psychoanalysis; it merely shows how embedded therapists are in the prejudices of their time. A much more serious charge would be to demonstrate the chauvinism inherent within the theory of psychoanalysis. It is not only with regards to the exploitation of women and children that psychotherapy has lagged behind progressive movements and even other professions; it has been reactionary with regards to most other social concerns, which is understandable when reality is determined within the four walls of the consulting room.

The indifference of the profession to abuse, even of a criminally certifiable nature, is illustrated through the cases of John Rosen, the American Academy of Psychotherapists' **Man** of the Year (1971) and Ewen Cameron, president of both the American and the World Psychiatric Associations. Rosen in his radically new "direct psychoanalysis" argues that the therapist must use "cunning, guile, shrewdness, and seductiveness" to hunt out the secrets of the patient. In 1983 Rosen surrendered his medical licence in order to avoid prosecution on over 100 accusations of violations of rules and regulations of different medical boards and pleaded guilty to abandoning a woman patient to the care of his employees who had beaten her to death (after Rosen had

used her as a prostitute for a prominent judge), to keeping a male patient shackled and bound in a security room and to "being unable to practice medicine with skill and safety for his patients". Apart from a lack of public condemnation by the profession (and no criminal prosecution) a well-known analyst from Rosen's university said in an interview that the issue is comparable to the phenomenon of trying to sell the New York Brooklyn Bridge; what is interesting is not the seller, but the psychology of the buyer - a typical, but diabolical example of blaming the victim.

The American Journal of Psychiatry ascribed Ewen Camerons worldwide success to a combination of his intellectual brilliance and the "softness (even loveliness) of his personality" (p245). One of Camerons innovations was to give more than fifty patients (mostly women) megadoses of "sleep therapy" - up to 65 consecutive days of intense electroshock treatments in order to induce complete amnesia. This "research" was funded by the CIA who hoped it could be used to obliterate the memories of agents who had undertaken sensitive missions. In December 1988 the CIA was ordered to pay approximately 10 million dollars compensation to those patients who were still alive. Masson concludes by asking whether these are exceptions "or is there something in the very nature of psychotherapy, that tends toward such abuses" (p147).

In trying to demonstrate the fundamentally harmful "nature " of therapy Masson slides between attempting to develop a theoretical argument and citing examples of abusive therapists. By not developing the theory, the practise of abuse becomes the cornerstone of the argument. Even on this foundation a more powerful case could have been constructed by teasing out some of the more subtle manipulations (and abuses) of clients that occur during most routine therapy sessions; describing modern day Frankensteins gives the book a sensationalist tone which provides the possibility for superficial dismissal. It also does not counter the argument that all professions have "madmen" and that most are ultimately censored or discredited. The selective use of famous or prominent therapists does not overcome the problem, because the question still remains how widespread is abuse amongst the ordinary do-gooders who are "just" making a living by listening to peoples "everyday unhappiness". Analysing the professionalization of therapy (which would explain why therapists can be so disproportionately remunerated for the limited services offered and why there is such inordinate reluctance to institute controls to detect and prosecute abuse) would have been a much more fruitful basis for an attack on the privileges and abuses of the "therapeutic" profession. Such an analysis would also shed light on the inequality and potential abusiveness in all relations between experts and lay people. This would have prevented Masson from slipping between naive ideas of democratising therapy (mutual analysis in which the therapist gives up authority - as if it is some commodity you hand

back) and calling for the abolition of all therapy. One cannot help but feel that while Masson diagnosed a serious malady, his superficial analysis of the problem leads to quackish remedies.

The third theme deals with the politics of famous therapists such as Jung and Rogers. Starting with "Jung among the Nazis" he convincingly demonstrates the complicity of the famous therapist with the nazi regime as well as his racism. About South Africa Jung wrote : .." the Dutch, who were at the time of their colonizing a developed and civilized people, dropped to a much lower level because of their contact with the savage races" (p115). Masson asserts that Jungs "innovative" lack of interest in the past of his patients was a repression of his own unsavoury past.

Skipping the implicit fascism of Skinner (the omission of an easy target) Masson turns to the benevolent despotism of Carl Rogers, who certainly never abused clients himself; but also never challenged abuses in his acceptance of the status quo. The cases quoted by Rogers reveal either little or no reports of abuse in the history of the clients or shows a lack of sensitivity when it occurred. In commenting on the plight of a group of inmates in a mental hospital who he had treated with client - centered therapy, Rogers stated "to stand up for the patient or to fight for what are perceived as his rights is to intrude on the hospital administration in a way that will surely and naturally be resented" (p200).

Since the resentment of the administration would have scuttled the research project, the violation of patient rights is conveniently ignored. The political naivete of Rogers is demonstrated by his belief in the potential for constructive personality change in repressive institutions such as jails and the American military (which he claimed had undergone a "deep transformation"). Another example is his attempts to bring "together racist whites and angry blacks in South Africa in American-style encounter groups: one cannot but question the lasting effects" (p194).

Masson's own ideology is apparent in the way he treats these examples - both he and Rogers share a belief in liberal humanism within a capitalist system. It is erroneous to depict Rogers as "naive"; Rogers is an important proponent of bourgeois individualism and an active agent for adjustment within exploitative systems - a classic example of what Althusser would regard as being part of the "ideological state apparatuses" that help to reproduce the existing relations of exploitation and domination. Masson's lack of understanding of politics seriously undermines the potential power of his attack. Trapped within the same paradigm that he discredits, his call for the abolition of therapy rings hollow and is difficult to take seriously. His suggestion that within modern, alienating industrial societies therapists could easily be replaced by "well-informed friends" can be dismissed as naive romanticism,

particularly since it is not located within another conception of society.

Masson's critique also does not address how one would dismantle an industry in which it is estimated that in the USA alone in 1980 there were more than 50 million visits to psychiatrists and therapists. A multi-billion dollar industry is not dismantled because of the sensational revelations of even an insider, rather it will simply discredit the one who cries wolf (which is what happened previously when he was viciously attacked for amongst others his physical appearance, his relationship to his father, his analyst and Anna Freud). By not being located within a movement (or an organization) that aims to bring about social change, individual challenges to an established, self-interested institution ends either with nasty dismissal or is accommodated as part of the diversity of liberal critique which ultimately strengthens, rather than weakens, exploitative institutions in liberal capitalist societies.

Masson's book is essential reading for people who want to confirm their suspicions about how bad the entire "enterprise" of therapy is, the countless women who have been abused by their therapists and to find out how venal certain "great men" in the history of therapy were. It should also be required reading for starry-eyed MA clinical students. **Against therapy** is however not recommended for those who want a serious analysis of how to control the abuses by therapists or how to transform psychotherapy into an emancipatory project.

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PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIETY NUMBER 12 1989

CONTENTS

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