# THE WAR AGAINST THE POOR

Gibson, Nigel, C (2011) **Fanonian practices in South Africa. From Steve Biko to Abahlali baseMjondolo.** Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press / New York: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-1-86914-197-4. Pages xxii + 312.

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Nigel Gibson claims that without the establishment of the shack dwellers' movement *Abahlali baseMjondolo*, he would not have been able to write **Fanonian practices in South Africa**. This is true, for while the book contains much of considerable theoretical value from one of the world's foremost Fanon scholars, it is its grounding in the South African context, and particularly, in the struggles of *Abahlali*, that really underlies the force of the arguments presented.

Let me start by outlining the conceptual grounds from which Gibson proceeds. Praxis, the solidarity-forming consciousness of lived social contradictions, is a central term in his description of Fanonian practices. Drawing on Gramsci and Fanon alike, Gibson asserts that it is in the shared experience of "the damned of the earth" from which new forms of humanism, new practicable concepts and theorizations emerge. Most noteworthy perhaps – certainly for theorists of the psychosocial - is a passage in which Gibson qualifies the political meaning of subjectivity as he understands it. "Subjectivity" is not to be taken in an individualist or non-materialist sense "as an emanation of pure will" but as "an organised self-consciousness … a praxis emerging from the lived experience of the colonised". Fanon, he says, comments:

"that the starving 'natives' don't need to discover the truth but *are* the truth, since they experience the truth of the colonial system – its violence and dehumanisation … Yet this identity of truth and experience has not yet fully moved to self-acting subjectivity. Rather than simply a for-itself 'subject-position', subjectivity here is understood as an actional and conscious subject. Fanon's challenge … [was to] unravel how this subject-position can become a self-determining, actional subjectivity that can absorb and change not only itself, but also the objective material world into a free, inclusive, democratic space" (Gibson, pp. 8-9).

That is to say, rejuvenated forms of humanism begin precisely from the solidarity of the damned of the earth, who, as Fanon repeatedly noted, "have been emptied of humanity and excluded from the human community" (Gibson, p. 9).

Gibson yields dialectical forms of critique in order to upend many of the commonplaces of post-apartheid governance. The important point is made that so-called "service-delivery" strikes need to be understood as *social revolts*, "products of the broken promises of liberation" (p. xiv) rather than, as de-politicizing neoliberal discourse would have it, a breakdown in provision of services. Gibson is unafraid to run against the grain of ANC rhetoric, bolstered as it is "by a homespun authoritarianism and anti-intellectualism" (p. 2). Post-apartheid politics, he regrets, has been "reduced to an elite project of capturing the state and the means of governance, in contrast to creating an expansive and inclusive democracy" (p. 2).

More cuttingly yet, "the two words 'neoliberal' and 'post-apartheid' … [may be] considered synonymous" (p. 13). A case in point is what Arundhati Roy (2004: 36) calls "the NGOisation of resistance", a view Gibson wholly endorses, citing the fact that such NGOs, typically cut off from grassroots contacts, often undermine incipient democracy, playing instead "a significant role in shoring up neo-colonial globalisation" (p. 33). NGO activity, in short, is premised not ultimately on the hope of democratic representation, but on relations of patronage. The point made repeatedly by Gibson and the "shack intellectuals" of *Abahlali baseMjondolo* is that the poor don't simply want things; they want to be recognized as human equals. The vast majority of NGO rationality "fails to historicize suffering" and thus "reinforces the idea of 'these people' as sufferers, and thus naturalizes and objectifies them" (p. 34). The agency of the poor is endlessly thus deferred while the position of such organizations to feed, provide for, and take care of, such groups is continually reproduced. It is with this backdrop in place that Gibson can speak of "neoliberal South Africa's war on the poor" (p. 101).

A significant section of **Fanonian practices** is devoted to the question of xenophobia, which, for Gibson, cannot be understood as an instance of mindless mass rage but must instead be seen precisely as a politics. More than this, it is a politics "channelled by factions of the government elite and its civil servants" (p. 191). From here Gibson segues into a critique of the disparities and greed underlying current strategies of Black Economic Empowerment. He is likewise scathing of "nativist" presumptions that claim an essential black unity and that justify the pursuit of wealth on the basis of black suffering. Here again, it is worth quoting him at length:

"[T]he black bourgeoisie is essentially a neo-colonial comprador class … the new class of 'Black diamonds', donning a hollow mask of African nationalism and looking for quick profit has a 'White soul'. We cannot assume that being Black, or living the Black experience of suffering and rebellion, insulates Black people from desiring or taking advantage of the social mobility afforded by living … in a capitalist society … South Africa's new Black middle class asserts its Africanity, often [thereby] privileging a narrowly ethnicised politics (pp. 191-92).

It is the book's fourth chapter, "unfinished struggles for freedom", that focuses most clearly on the shack dwellers' movement, *Abahlali baseMjondolo*. *Abahlali baseMjondolo* was born from a protest action launched by members of the Kennedy Road settlement in Durban, in March 2005. The initial act of resistance, the blockading of a key thoroughfare for business and commuter transport, was sparked by the broken promises of land by the local council. The resultant clashes with police and the

subsequent demand by the community as a whole to be arrested – occurring on 21 March, the anniversary of Sharpeville, now called Human Rights Day – forcefully invoked memories of the anti-apartheid struggle. The uncomfortable fact of such historical resonances has been a recurring feature of *Abahlali's* political practices. The symbolic impact of such a strategy is profound. The plight of the poor and landless thus articulated evokes the spirit of the anti-apartheid struggle precisely *against* today's political elite who claim it as the basis of their own political validation. "No land, No house, No vote", *Abahlali's* slogan, like their poignant celebration of "Unfreedom Day" in April of the same year (i.e. a play on South Africa's "Freedom Day" – 27 April) juxtaposes the past struggle with the present. These acts point thus to the many ways in which the new South Africa has stalled, and to how today's political leaders have failed the poor, condemning them to the status of "surplus population".

Gibson includes much valuable material on *Abahlali* including a forward by *Abahlali* representative, S'bu Zikode who, cutting to the chase, memorably remarks that "liberation has been privatized" (p. vii). Gibson emphasises the inclusive, democratic and participatory ethos of *Abahlali* pointing out that "the culture of Abahlalism" entails "a deeply rooted humanism where everyone shares everyday suffering and pain, as well as laughter" (pp. 157-58). The strength of *Abahlali's* continued growth has much to do with its rejection of donor money and patronage politics; with its collectivist practices and shared leadership; and with the fact that the shack dwellers' "knowledge derives from their existentially experienced situation … their politics from theorising their situation" (p. 159).

Zikode's own contribution to the book underscores the broader set of arguments that Gibson uses Fanon to expand upon:

"We have learnt to draw a clear distinction between those forms of leftism that accept that everyone can think and which are willing to journey with the poor, and those forms of leftism that think only middle-class activists, usually academics or NGO people, can think and which demand that the poor obey them. We have called this … type of the left the regressive left … [W]hen it comes to how they relate to us we see no difference in how they behave and how the state behaves. The tendency to treat our insistence on the autonomy of our movement as criminal is the same. The tendency to co-opt individuals and slander movements is the same. The desire to ruin an movement they cannot control is the same" (Zikode, p. vi).

In his engagement with *Abahlali's* shack dwellers, Gibson speaks a political truth that remains routinely elided in the neoliberal word: that we exist within the conditions of an ongoing war against the poor. He thus gives a new life to what is one of Fanon's most enduring lessons. This is an acute ethical and political awareness of what the category of the 'human' silently excludes, namely the 'damned of the earth', for whom the fight for the status of humanity is most urgent, and from whom the proponents of post-apartheid democracy have the most to learn.

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# INFORMAL SEGREGATION ILLUMINATED

Durrheim, Kevin & Dixon, John (2005) **Racial encounter: The social psychology of contact and desegregation.** London: Routledge. ISBN 978-0415305327. Pages 256.

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This is a marvellous book. It is sharp, clear, bright-minded and deals with a very important issue for group relations in general: the psychology of segregation and desegregation. It is a major contribution to our new era (post 1990) understanding of contact and group relations in deeply divided societies. While the focus of empirical research is on South Africa the issues under consideration are more widespread, and a good deal of the literature surveyed deals with contact and racial relations in the United States. The book sets out a series of studies on contact and segregation, on vacation time beaches of south coast KwaZulu-Natal. Why is this book so good? I will give a number of reasons.

First it demonstrates a very good theoretical grasp. The authors have read widely drawing on a range of different literatures. It is innovative; it offers a set of new ideas and adds to theory, pulling together ideas from discursive and spatial perspectives. Useful new ideas centre round concepts of "working models" of contact and "lay ontologising". As a theoretical lens it gives attention to the notion of "meaning", deeply informed by discursive approaches but in a more sophisticated fashion. In much of the discourse varieties people's voices float about without bodies, without anchors. Here voices are put back into particular racialised bodies which in turn are located in real specified places. Alternative concepts here almost create a new school or new theoretical version: the micro-ecology of experience perspective. Still on theoretical matters, this book most astonishingly reintroduces "feelings" back into psychology. What a surprise! In everyday parlance it is just commonsense to say that people have strong feelings about place, about home-space for example. But in mainstream psychology both emotions and physical space/place have been left to the fringes. Place identity surges back to a rightful theoretical centrepiece in **Racial encounter**.

Second the Durheim & Dixon book gives us some wonderful, bold and innovative methods. It enables us to look at maps of human bodies moving in both space and time, yet it also gives us indices of overall informal segregation. It is refreshing to see a study that draws on both qualitative and quantitative methods with equal adroitness. Methods here are employed as useful tools to inform and illustrate, as methods always should be used, and not as weapons to defend purported paradigms. Methods here are

properly rigorous yet are not fetishized; they are used in service of better understanding.

Third, it is a good book because it takes a critical lens to existing work. It questions received wisdom regarding the contact hypothesis, challenges a decontextualized view of attitudes and puts a new light on the thorny issue of "lived experience". It gives attention to real people and asks them to tell the researchers what they are doing, what they are thinking. It gives us more than one side to the lived experience of inter-racial contact.

Finally it is a good book because of wonderful use of language. It is well written. It maintains interest. The sequencing is smart. At times it reads like a detective novel: what next is going to happen; can the old contact-hypothesis get up from the canvas or is the knockout blow rather final? The mode of argument allows for a shift in thinking in a number of areas simultaneously: attitudes, "race" and racism; contact; desegregation; group relations. It makes a number of significant contributions. In years to come this will still be regarded as a significant step forward. Do get the book. It is a treasure.

# TROUBLING CONSTRUCTS

Durrheim, Kevin, Mtose, Xoliswa and Brown, Lyndsay (2011) **Race trouble: Race, identity and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa.** Pitermaritzburg: UKZN Press. ISBN 978-1-86914-199-8. Pages ix + 234.

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When I first started reading this book by Durrheim, Mtose and Brown the media was replete with reports on the manifestly racist utterances of the South African author Annelie Botes, and the columnist Kuli Roberts. More recently, an altercation between a white man and a black woman at a gym in Johannesburg reportedly resulted in a barrage of the vilest racist invective directed at the woman (Makhanya, 2012). This incident was also widely covered in the media.

Botes was reported to have argued that "the violence [experienced in South Africa] demonstrated blacks' anger because of their own incompetence" (Staff Reporter, 2010); while a complaint was lodged against Roberts with the South African Human Rights Commission for a **Sunday World** column in which she wrote that "[coloured] girls breed as if Allan Boesak sent them on a mission to increase the coloured race" (SAPA, 2011). The white gym member allegedly called another (black) member "a bloody kaffir [and] cockroach" (Makhanya, 2012: 4). The sheer meanness and brutality of all these utterances and the crude racism they embodied and appealed to did not fail to shock, coming as they did several years after the formal dismantlement of apartheid in South Africa.

On reflecting on these incidents I was reminded of a phrase employed by Alfred Lopez (2005: 2) in his **Postcolonial whiteness: A critical reader on race and empire***,* namely that "rumours" of the increasing sophistication of racism and whiteness and racism's imminent "demise have been greatly exaggerated". Racism appears to remain intractable and ostensibly quite resistant to the measures routinely developed and implemented to deal with it.

Given the apparent persistence of racism, from its crudest and most backward manifestations to its more obfuscated articulations as well as our apparent inability to understand and decisively deal with it in the South Africa context, the publication of Durrheim et al's **Race trouble: Race, identity and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa** was timely, particularly in view of the expressed objectives of the book, namely, "to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the persistence of race

trouble" (p. 57), and to "understand how race and racism are reproduced in the post-apartheid context" (p. 23).

Before I engage in any substantive manner with an evaluation of the book, it might be useful to provide a brief summary of the book for those who have not yet had the opportunity to read it.

Written in a relatively accessible register, **Race trouble: Race, identity and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa** consists of eight chapters. While the book coheres well and its constituent chapters fit together in a logical and fairly seamless manner, each of these chapters individually are sufficiently coherent, rich in content and "self-contained" to be read and studied as independent pieces in their own right.

After providing a cursory history of racism and opposition to the problem in South Africa from the 1930s to the present (largely introducing and contextualising the theoretical explorations that will ensue), the first chapter, *Apartheid, racism and change in South Africa,* introduces one of the central arguments and the gist of the book. In summary (and perhaps at the risk of over-simplification), this argument essentially holds that because racism, as a theoretical construct, "is no longer monolithic" (p. 23), and because the construct "today conceals as much as it reveals", it is "no longer useful in dealing with South Africa's legacy of [racial domination]" (p. 23). Consequently, a new concept to replace the now-less-than-useful (according to the authors) concept of racism is required. The authors therefore introduce the concept of *race trouble*, which they argue is much more appropriate for analysing and making sense of the social difficulties generated by processes of racialisation in contemporary South Africa.

The second chapter, *Experiences of race trouble,* according to the authors, aims to "convey a sense of the meaning, patterning and the breadth of experiences of race trouble" (p. 31). Much of the content of this chapter, and specifically the sections, *Troubling blackness* and *Troubling whiteness* appear to be based on aspects of the (evidently informative) doctoral research of Xoliswa Mtose, and Lyndsay Brown, respectively. One of the key arguments made in this chapter (and sustained throughout the book) is that in order to begin to understand racism, it is important to understand how the phenomenon (or *race trouble*, in the words of the authors) manifests in practice between racialised groups and the points of contact between individuals. A particularly valuable element of this chapter is the section on dilemmas of interpreting instances of racism, which results largely from the changing manifestations of racism, as well as the inevitable denial of racism when it does occur.

The third chapter in the book, namely, *Theories of racism won't do*, commences with an examination of a series of recent events (including a spate of complaints by white South Africans in 2007 about the ostensible increase in crime in South Africa and the Zapiro cartoon portraying President Jacob Zuma about to rape Lady Justice), which evoked ongoing debates about whether these events were racist or not. A cursory exploration of these debates serves as the backdrop for the focus of the chapter, namely an examination of the adequacy of various extant theories of racism. Unsurprisingly (given the arguments proffered earlier in the book), the authors conclude that these theories are simply not adequate in making sense of contemporary manifestations of racism.

Chapter 4, titled *Discourse*, provides a broad examination of some of the qualities of language and discourse and how these are deployed in the service of racism or *race trouble* to understand and deal with racism or *race trouble*. Appropriately re-emphasising a notion that was firmly established in the social sciences during the 1980s, Durrheim et al correctly argue that "the history and the use of the discourse are essential additional factors that must be taken into consideration in analysing race trouble" (p. 108). Two features of discourse that feature prominently in the chapter are *recitation* and *accountability*. Using a range of pertinent examples to which most readers will be able to relate, the authors employ these concepts to illustrate how in contemporary society racist discourses frequently adopt and build on articulations that had previously been formulated (*recitation* / re-citation); but also how the authors of these discourses are inevitably held accountable for their utterances (*accountability*).

The fifth chapter, *Practices,* sets out to examine the nexus between discourse, place and practices. Additionally, it examines two articulations of practice, namely talk and embodied routines and how they contribute to the instantiation of racist stereotypes. According to the authors, this chapter attempts to develop an understanding of "the conflicted contexts of race trouble as located and embodied contexts of discursive practices" (p. 116).

The sixth chapter, *Subjects,* endeavours to answer the question posed by Chabani Manganyi in his seminal 1973 text, *Being-black-in-the-world,* namely, "Is being-black-in-the-world different in fundamental respects to being-white-in-the-world"? (p. 138). In pursuit of an answer to the question, the authors undertake an illuminating examination of aspects of the work of Louis Althusser, Erving Goffman, Judith Butler and Michael Omi and Howard Winant. At the end of the chapter Durrheim et al conclude that owing to history, lived practices, the use of space and spatial arrangements, inter alia, being-black-in-the-world and being-white-in-the-world do differ in important ways. It is in Chapter 6 too that Durrheim et al. start engaging in a substantive manner with what they mean by the notion of *race trouble.* Here they inform us that while they use Omi and Winant's notion of racial formation as a point of departure, their notion of *race trouble* differs in at least two significant ways from the former. Firstly, according to them, the notion of *race trouble* allows for an analysis of social interactions that extend beyond racism, the purported focus of Omi and Winant's notion of racial formation. Secondly, while the concept of *race trouble* is concerned with racialised practices, racial formation is concerned first and foremost with representations. Despite these substantial differences, however, Durrheim et al. argue that the two concepts are similar in the sense that they both acknowledge the importance of racialised asymmetrical relations of power in analysing race related phenomena.

In the seventh chapter, *Repression,* Durrheim et al explore various theories of repression and apply the insights emanating from these theories in an effort to understand some of the features of contemporary expressions of racism. One of the interesting elements of this chapter is its examination of the embodied nature of racism-related repression, using domestic work as an exemplar of racism-related repression.

Chapter 8, *Race trouble versus racism*, reprises and consolidates the argument developed throughout the book for why the notion of *race trouble* is preferable to the concept of racism. Among several arguments proffered in support of the use of the notion of *race trouble* to study racialised patterns of interaction, Durrheim et al contend

that while the "language of racism misses all the complexity, contradiction and nuance" (p. 201) characterising complex or fraught race or racialised interaction patterns, the concept of *race trouble* does not. Instead, it provides opportunities for the study of "the forms of subjectivity that support racial privilege" (p. 201) in ways that racism cannot.

This brings me to my overall impressions of the book. In general, there are many aspects of the book that I find tremendously useful, some of which are listed below.

In the first instance, given the persistence and indeed apparent recalcitrance of racism, this book is a welcome addition to the extant repertoire of resources available to assist us in making sense of and dealing with issues of racism. The fact that the book endeavours to extend our thinking beyond the theories and explanations that are routinely trotted out to account for issues related to racism makes it a particularly welcome addition to the available literature. Secondly, I find the book useful because of its manifest commitment to burrowing below the surface of that which is frequently described in an overly simplistic and shorthand manner as racism. Thirdly, through their analyses of the increasingly nuanced and complex manifestations of racism, the authors provide us with several invaluable insights into the evolution and functioning of the phenomenon. Lastly, the analyses and insights offered by the book in relation to the micro-ecologies of race-related social interaction and the importance of examining the points of interpersonal and intergroup contact more closely certainly add depth to the way racism-related issues are often viewed and understood.

Despite the generally favourable impression that **Race trouble: Race, identity and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa** makes, the book does (as most books do) reflect a few lacunae, three of which I discuss briefly below.

Firstly, I am not convinced that all the readers of the book will find the argument proffered by the authors for the replacement of the concept of racism with the notion of *race trouble* particularly persuasive. In effect, the authors argue that because we now "live in a democracy with majority rule […] because it is unclear who is responsible for the persistence of racial segregation and inequality […] because the object of critique [racism] is no longer monolithic […] [because the] boundaries delineating us from them have become blurred" (p. 23), the theoretical concept of racism is no longer useful. Obviously, there is sufficient evidence to contradict this characterisation of contemporary South African society, including extensive evidence provided throughout the book itself. As this book amply illustrates, sharp social divisions based on race still prevail in South Africa (see also the unexceptional incidents described in the introduction of this review). Admittedly, the lines may be blurred within a small sector of South African society, but for the majority, the lines are as strong today as they were in the past. Then too, the idea that the notion of racism does not accommodate for the constantly shifting form of racial oppression does not quite hold. Certainly most of the extant theories of racism as an ideology to varying degrees account for the changes the phenomenon is forced to undergo. I am reminded here for example of the work of Essed (1991), Hall (1992, 1995) and Rattansi (1992), amongst many others.

Then too it is implied in the book that because it is always very difficult to accurately judge intentions in cases of purported racism, the notion of racism has become less than useful. It is certainly true that it is becoming increasingly difficult to judge intention in cases of racism. However, when we analyse racism is it not best to look at the

consequences of people and institutions' actions? As Essed (1991) argues, when attempting to understand and deal with instances of racism, it is perhaps most constructive to deal with these instances in terms of their consequences rather than intentions, simply because while it is generally difficult to accurately gauge people's intentions, the consequences of their actions are relatively easy to discern.

Furthermore, Durrheim et al argue that "the language of racism … wants to identify racists to judge them" (p. 201), whereas the language of *race trouble* does not. I am not sure that the intention of those scholars employing racism as a theoretical construct essentially is to judge rather than also to understand the phenomenon so as to change it. Nonetheless, if one assumes a critical stance then certainly racism in all its manifestations is to be judged, condemned and countered.

In this regard, I wonder whether rather than holding the promise of a more progressive alternative to the notion of racism, the concept of *race trouble* will not be used (despite the manner in which the term is actually conceptualised by the authors; see, for example, p. 163) to evacuate power dynamics and asymmetries from the analysis of systematically asymmetrical racialised relations, that is, racism.

Secondly, to my mind the book pays insufficient attention to how one is to deal with *race trouble* or, practically, what the antidote for *race trouble* is. Given the socially disruptive nature of what is constructed here as *race trouble*, one would have hoped for a more concerted engagement with this issue. To acquire new insights and knowledge, Martin-Barò (1994) argues, it is not enough to simply prioritise new perspectives, but it is also necessary to involve ourselves in a new praxis, an activity of transforming reality that will let us know not only about what it is but also about what it is not, and by which we may try to orient ourselves to what ought to be" (pp. 28-29). I am not convinced that the book pays enough attention to what needs to be done to go beyond the "what is" of *race trouble*.

Thirdly, as indicated earlier, in the main, I find the register in which the book is written accessible. Furthermore, most issues dealt with in the book are explained in a language suited to their complexity. Nonetheless, at certain points one cannot quite decide whether the book is written for the general public or for the academic community. For example, I find the explanation of what the Gini index is overly simplified. Sections of the book (for example, the beginning of Chapter 3) are also distractingly "chatty". While one would obviously not want to criticise any authors for writing in a register that is accessible to as wide an audience as possible, what I did experience as somewhat distracting as I read this book is the lack of consistency in the register employed.

Despite the last three points raised above, I find the book both interesting and useful and I have no doubt that it will prove to be an important resource for scholars in the field of racism, particularly in South Africa. Indeed, the book presents the reader with a rich array of insights into current research on, and constructions and manifestations of racism. Importantly, the book embodies and thereby encourages scholarship that endeavours to go beyond the tried, tested and obvious. Undoubtedly, the book will also evoke much debate, but that is why we write and that is what academia is about, is it not?

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# DOCUMENTING OUR TRAUMATIC PRACTICE

Kaminer, D & Eagle, G (2010) **Traumatic stress in South Africa**. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. ISBN 978-1-86814-509-6. Pages x + 222.

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It is symptomatic of the state of South African society that we have been a leader in the area of trauma support for several decades. During the 1980s various organisations emerged to provide support for victims of political and gender-based violence. The political changes of the 1990s substantially changed this situation, but while the repressive state violence of the Apartheid era came to an end, other patterns of victimization have continued. There is little evidence to suggest that violence against women and children has decreased, and there is continuing widespread anxiety about violent crime. In addition, the AIDS epidemic has increased experiences of anxiety and loss, and other patterns of violence such as nationwide xenophobic attacks have emerged. One consequence of this constant state of crisis is that despite the advanced state of interventions, trauma workers have had relatively little time to reflect on their experiences, which explains why it has taken so long to produce this first major book on traumatic stress in South Africa.

Eagle and Kaminer are both long-standing experts in the field of trauma. They bring together activist, academic and clinical backgrounds in a comprehensive overview of the state of trauma studies in South Africa. From the outset they explain that the activist nature of trauma work, and the seemingly perpetual state of crisis around violent victimization, has meant that much of the wisdom in this field has existed in applied practice rather than published texts. This books aims to correct this lack, and does indeed make a vital contribution to formally documenting the field of traumatic stress in South Africa.

Before launching into an exploration of the psychology of traumatic stress responses, Kaminer and Eagle explore the forms of violence and injury that characterise contemporary South African society. This is an area in which there is considerable, if sometimes contradictory, research. The rates of many forms of violence are notoriously difficult to establish because they occur outside the official crime statistics, and even in the confidential research surveys participants conceal their victimization because of shame, fear and a range of other negative emotions. Nevertheless, considerable research exists and it points to what most South Africans already believe: there are very high rates of violence in our society. While this book offers a wealth of information

about these forms of victimization, perhaps what could be strengthened is the presentation of a clear overview of how we should make sense of the patterns within this data. One important finding revealed in this data is that violence does not follow the commonly imagined patterns. Specifically, violence at the hands of criminal strangers is less common than might be assumed, and violence between people who know each other is more common. This includes child abuse, bullying, fights between young men, domestic violence, and sexual abuse at the hands of family and known community members. Another important finding is that victimization is linked to other forms of social inequality, and that the poor, children, women and members of minorities such as gay people and African foreigners are at higher risks of traumatic violence than the more privileged members of society.

The effects of traumatic experiences are commonly associated with the diagnostic category of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. While the psychological study of trauma dates back at least to the end of the nineteenth century and the early work of Freud and Janet, PTSD was only formally defined in the DSM-III in 1980. This definition was derived largely from work with specific US American psychiatric populations, namely war veterans and rape survivors. While it captures very usefully the three broad symptom clusters of re-experiencing, avoidance and increased arousal, there has been considerable debate around its adequacy as a comprehensive diagnostic category, especially in contexts such as South Africa. Kaminer and Eagle show both the value of the official DSM definition of PTSD, and provide a useful exploration of some of the critiques that have been offered. In the 1980s Straker had already proposed the notion of Continuous Traumatic Stress Syndrome to account for the way in which, for many South Africans, traumatic events are not a single isolated moment of crisis but part of an ongoing experience of danger and multiple victimization. Several other theorists have advanced similar ideas, most notably Herman's (1997) formulation of Complex PTSD. Despite being controversially omitted from the DSM, this formulation of the effects of ongoing traumatization has become widely accepted as a useful way of understanding the psychological sequelae of situations such as protracted child abuse, domestic violence and political persecution. The category of Complex PTSD differentially identifies clusters of changes in self and social relations that are in danger of being misdiagnosed as personality disorder or other underlying pathology if their connection to traumatic experience is not recognised.

Understanding the consequences of repeated and ongoing traumatization seems particularly important in South Africa where it is not unusual to find cases of multiple victimization, including situations of diverse and unrelated traumatic events at different points in the life span. The cumulative effects of these situations require clear articulation, especially where they are not covered by the dominant definition of PTSD. The authors highlight the need to conduct further local research with contextually appropriate tools in order to clearly identify the nature and prevalence of traumatic stress syndromes in South Africa, given its specific multicultural and fractured social structure. One challenging alternative formulation not discussed by Kaminer and Eagle, but perhaps also relevant to South Africa, is Root's notion of Insidious Trauma. Here the victim does not even have to have experienced a specific incident of violence, but rather identifies with a social group that is at such high risk that the resulting constant experience of fear and powerlessness are in themselves traumatic stressors.

Beyond the question of formulating appropriate diagnostic categories, there is also a

need to explain the psychological processes at work in traumatic stress reactions. While initial understandings of trauma were developed primarily from psychodynamic perspectives, the increasing dominance of cognitivist therapeutic approaches has allowed this perspective to add to the field. The authors provide an overview of the influential work of Janof-Bulman, who explains trauma as a crisis of meaning in which the assumptions about self and world are shattered. The beliefs about safety and self-efficacy are frequently replaced by debilitating negative assumptions of generalised danger and helplessness, which can be the focus of cognitive therapeutic interventions. Wastell (2005) however, cautions against exclusively cognitive approaches, showing how this overlooks the primacy of emotion in traumatic reactions, and instead arguing for a more integrated approach. The widespread recognition of dissociation as a central aspect of traumatic stress responses, also suggests that approaches oriented towards integration are at least as important as strategies directed towards modifying dysfunctional beliefs.

Kaminer and Eagle provide a thorough overview of the wide range of approaches to the treatment of trauma. There are a number of different axes that can be used to conceptualise the various interventions: brief/long term, individual/group, and the various major theoretical orientations. One range of interventions specific to trauma work, and often used primarily for emergency workers who are regularly exposed to distressing experiences, are debriefings. These tend to stress immediate, very short term, highly structured intervention, and are usually collective. While trauma debriefing approaches are popular, recent research findings have questioned their effectiveness. The authors outline various short to medium term individual cognitive interventions that have fared better in showing demonstrable success, and further explain the often controversial "power therapies" such as Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) and other therapies with roots in Neurolinguistic Programming and applied kinesiology. Longer term psychodynamic approaches are also explored, showing how these relate the trauma to earlier experiences, and provide a theoretical framework for understanding the specifics of post-traumatic reactions.

The authors raise the particular problems of delivering therapeutic services in South Africa, where most clients do not have the resources to pursue the kinds of treatment that might be preferred in developed countries. They also raise the need for further research on indigenous support and healing practices, and to explore ways of integrating these into more formal psychology. There is a clear need to develop and roll out appropriate and sustainable services, as many community-based organisations have tried to do. Unfortunately between the worlds of private therapy and public services there remains a large divide that has not been adequately bridged.

The book provides an additional focus on children and trauma, given both the extraordinarily high rates of child victimization in South Africa, and the greater psychological vulnerability of the young. It explains Terr's seminal distinction between Type-1 and Type-2 childhood trauma. The former refers to the conventional single traumatic event, while the latter has similarities with both Herman's Complex PTSD and Straker's Continuous Traumatic Stress in exploring the consequences of chronic traumatic stressors. This distinction again reveals the limits of the DSM account of PTSD, which is geared primarily towards identifying the effects of isolated distressing events rather than ongoing victimization such as protracted child abuse. These forms of trauma are now known to produce significantly different psychological effects to the

conventional accounts of PTSD. With children there are additional problems in their ability to both symbolize and articulate their traumatic experiences, so the signs of distress and the forms of treatment have to be reconceptualised in age-appropriate ways, such as the use of play - both a space for the expression of distress and a site for therapeutic intervention. While giving an excellent introduction to working with children, this book does give very much attention to one of the challenging new themes within the field: the issues of early attachment and trauma, and the emerging category of developmental trauma.

It is likely that many support workers will find the chapters that explore trauma syndromes, issues of meaning, and the focus on childhood extremely useful. While providing a very useful framework for understanding these areas, and highlighting key theories and findings, the book should not be expected to provide a detailed manual of therapeutic techniques. Readers seeking to hone their clinical skills should combine this book with other applied texts and training programmes that exist in the field of trauma studies. They should should go further in exploring the critical issues of vicarious traumatization and the related problems of counter-transference raised by Kaminer and Eagle, and increasingly recognised as major issues in this line of work.

There is no doubt **Traumatic stress in South Africa** is an important work, and a major contribution to local trauma studies. This field is so large and diverse that it is possible to fault any work for its omissions, but Kaminer and Eagle have produced a dauntingly comprehensive work. Yet perhaps this is exactly where the book reveals a possible weakness. While researchers and advanced postgraduate students should find it an invaluable resource, clinicians, activists, undergraduate students and the many lay- and semi-professional trauma workers may find the sheer detail overwhelming. These audiences might wish such a work to read as more of a narrative and less of an encyclopaedia of theories and research findings. Seminal works such Herman's (1997) **Trauma and recovery** serve as exemplary models of the integration of solid theoretical conceptualization with a strong narrative style that are compelling for a wide range of audiences. The same is true of South African writers such as Gobodo-Madikizela (2003) in **A human being died that night**. Yet the former work does not offer the local specificity of Kaminer and Eagle's contribution, and the latter does not attempt the broad overview of South African trauma studies that they bring together. In fact, the book rests well in the space between these and other existing works, and as such, makes an extremely valuable contribution, and should be required reading for everyone in the field of trauma in South Africa.

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# ON RESISTANCE, REFLEXIVITY AND RECIPROCITY

Steinberg, J (2008) **Three-letter plague: A young man's journey through a great epidemic**. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball. ISBN 978-1-86842-288-3 pbk. Pages viii + 342.

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Early on in Jonny Steinberg's **Three-letter plague**, a narrative account of Sizwe Magadla's journey through the HIV/Aids epidemic in a rural Eastern Cape community in South Africa, he initiates this conversation:

> "What are you afraid of? What is it you think people might do to you?"
>
> "There have been things happening in my sleep," [Sizwe] said, looking down at the floor. "Twice now, I have woken up in the morning and I have been wet and sticky. I am twenty-nine. Wet dreams are for boys, when you are maybe thirteen or fourteen. I have Nwabisa sleeping next to me. I am a man."
>
> "So what is happening to you when you sleep?"
>
> "Some people have maybe sent a demon to have sex with me: a demon with HIV. That is why I am scared to test. I think I will test positive."
>
> At the time of this conversation with Sizwe, I was taken aback by what appeared either to be a confessional outburst or a moment of exhibitionism. I couldn't decide which. I asked him immediately whether I could write about him. He told me he would think about it; it took him more than a month to say yes." (p. 15)

Within the heterogeneous genres of writing about HIV/Aids in Africa, auto/biographies about HIV-affected lives are diverse in authorial voice, subject matter, context, intent and audience. Steinberg's **Three-letter plague** occupies an uneasy South African sub-genre of life-writing about black experience of HIV/Aids by white authors (see also Ashforth, 2000; McGregor, 2007). With varying degrees of reflexivity and trepidation, such texts discursively rehearse colonial acts of objectification of black people based on difference; and their writing interprets these incomprehensible African Others for *another* audience – probably a white, western, middle-classed, well-educated, English-speaking, book-reading

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audience. Furthermore, such texts cannot approach HIV/Aids in an ideologically neutral way, where any situated set of knowledges, beliefs or behavioural practices is equivalent and interesting on its own terms. The acts of representation of individual lives and their communities of practice grapple with so-called "cultural barriers to public health" – participation in myths and witchcraft, refusals to use condoms, or non-adherence to antiretroviral (ARV) treatment - within a hegemonic biomedical truth-regime of HIV/Aids. They become cautionary tales with a didactic edge. Here, the rhetorical conventions of auto/biographical or ethnographic writing seek to present, explain and justify issues to others in order to reinforce (or occasionally unsettle) taken-for-granted truisms, and to critically examine problematic questions relevant to the practice of subjective or social life (Van Maanen, 2011).

Steinberg's three-year ethnographic project in **Three-letter plague** produces a nuanced, complicated biographical weave of journeys, stories, voices and languages of HIV/Aids. His narrative "translates" sex and masculinity, social status and money, health practices and beliefs, illness experiences and death – everyday lives in the communities around Lusikisiki – for a wider audience of readers. Steinberg is drawn to this setting, action and set of characters through his own perplexity about the recalcitrance of stigma around HIV/Aids even while the increasing availability of biomedical technologies promise to extend life. To explore this perplexity, he casts his narrative plot as a "stage" on which "there are two figures" (p. 320).

First is a culture of silences, suspicion and resistance to "Aids Science", and Sizwe Magadla – a pseudonym to conceal his identity, a recurring theme of negotiation in the book – becomes the central figure / voice which embodies these fears. Sizwe secretly suspects that he, his partner, and their infant son are HIV-positive, but he resists testing. His home and *habitus* is in Lusikisiki, and he becomes Steinberg's guide to local kinship and community networks and customs, his interpreter/translator of *isiXhosa*, and the subject of the story. Steinberg's (sometimes thwarted, always reflexive) attempts to "get inside" Sizwe's skin/psyche and his *Mpondo* culture constitute another powerful theme of the book. Steinberg draws his experiences as a gay, Jewish man into the narrative – including his own anxiety about an HIV-test – to plumb and refract masculine subjectivities.

Second is the *Medicins sans Frontiers (MSF,* also known as *Doctors Without Borders)* ARV treatment programme in Lusikisiki, which in 2003 was boldly experimenting with a decentralized healthcare arrangement of multiple smaller (nurse-led) clinics for HIV-testing and ARV-treatment, and community-participation in awareness, counselling, treatment-education and support. This programme was forged in a partnership between MSF and the *Treatment Action Campaign (TAC),* a progressive, grassroots social movement dedicated to the rights of people living with HIV and Aids to appropriate (biomedical) treatment in South Africa. The seemingly miraculous work of service provision, patient activation and community involvement in this rural-Lusikisiki intervention in the poorly-resourced Eastern Cape, and its sister ARV treatment site in urban-Khayelitsha in Cape Town in 2001, set a daring precedent for the South African Department of Health's national ARV rollout policy and programme from 2004. The gritty politics of these groundbreaking MSF interventions and their somewhat unsteady aftermath are well

trammelled in **Three-letter plague**, and have been extensively documented elsewhere (see Robins, 2009). Dr Hermann Reuter – his real name - led the Lusikisiki project, and he embodies the pragmatic, rational and effective biomedical science, MSF/TAC model. Reuter becomes a key figure in Steinberg's didactic narrative in that he provides a credible, workable, community-participatory intervention against which to critically counterpoise both Sizwe's resistance to testing and treatment, and the South African (Mbeki) government's stuttering record of Aids denialism and ARV non-treatment at the time (O'Shaughnessy, 2008).

**Three-letter plague** is a narrative account of the collision between different health belief models or "languages" about HIV/Aids and healthy/sick bodies, and the tangled responsibilities for rights and reflexivity that come with translation of those languages for various audiences. It is a narrative account that is populated with "talk" in sprawling surfaces of dialogue and silence. Sizwe's translation between *isiXhosa* and English lubricates Steinberg's entry as ethnographer into innumerable support groups, interviews and conversations. The MSF programme stands on its nurses, community health-workers and treatment-education activists (many of whom are HIV-positive and ARV users themselves) discussing and sharing expertise and experience as talk-technologies to defeat silence, ignorance, myths and stigma. As Steinberg discovers "their talk is about far more than drugs: it encompasses sex and love and work and the course of life; it is by definition political and ideological; it carves out friends and enemies, it scorns and it praises and it excludes" (p 88-9). Reuter is proud of the knowledge and power he transfers to patients; and he insists on the obligation to install a "language" - of condoms, CD4-counts, ARV pills, doses, side-effects – that will enable people living with Aids to save their own lives (cf. TAC rhetoric: Geffen, 2010). Sizwe's admiration of patients' ability to "talk" western biomedicine is not without ambivalence. His confessional communication to/with Steinberg about HIV/Aids is cast against his silence on these matters in his daily life, and within the MSF programme.

Steinberg has spoken elsewhere of the difficult issues inherent in telling someone else's life-story, and of what reflexivity means in this task (see Attree, 2010). In **Three-letter plague**, the figure/story of Sizwe is slowly, meticulously and complexly drawn: tracked through multiple, sometimes contradictory conversations over the years of his ethnography and their deepening relationship, and in recursive loops of dialogue/writing that revisit these conversations from different vantage points. This interviewing and writing work is akin to genealogy where a problematic in the present – Sizwe's HIV-test - is tracked back and forth in riffs that explore critical life events and his experiences of these. It is a narrative approach that powerfully resists linearity or essentialism (cf. Tamboukou, 2008). The reader learns of how Sizwe's father practiced as an *inyanga* (traditional herbalist), and was called by ancestors to become an *igqira* (traditional diviner), resulting both in the family's penury and in their openness to metaphysical ontologies of health/illness. As a young man, Sizwe's linguistic and business skills have marked him out in his community – he has acquired a spaza shop on the proceeds of his translation work for tourists. These experiences resonate through the scaffolding of his acknowledged social standing as a man who is able to secure a family, and he had begun the traditional negotiations regarding *lobola* (bridewealth) with the family of Nwabisa, the woman he hopes to marry, the mother of his son. In his patrilineal culture, marriage is the means by which his children

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carry his name into the future as heritage. The arrival of HIV-infection and testing at this juncture of his life's narrative, with its concomitant social disgrace, is calamitous for Sizwe, and cuts to the root of his masculinity, and the patriarchal masculinity of his generation.

Epstein (2008) has sharply noted that denialists, dissidents and alternative health practitioners – who dare to stand outside a biomedical regime of truth – are frequently caricatured as irrational crackpots, charlatans and buffoons in recent writing about the HIV/Aids epidemic. Steinberg avoids these traps of buffoonery for Sizwe. His ideas and beliefs about HIV/Aids are patiently drawn out and contextualized throughout the book; sometimes returned to later to interrogate them, but without stereotypy or flippancy. For example, Sizwe mentions several times his deep suspicion of western colonial medicine and the hidden agendas of white doctors in suppressing traditionally known cures, or deliberately injecting black people with "Aids infected needles" (p 147). In a later conversation between Steinberg and Sizwe about the steady decline in the quality of healthcare service patients were receiving following Reuter's departure from the MSF programme in Lusikisiki, Steinberg asks whether he [Sizwe] still believed that Reuter was "part of the conspiracy of the *umlungus* to kill the blacks" (p 320). Sizwe upholds his suspicion of a white-plot, but uneasily excludes Reuter and ARV treatment from it – "He wants to do good with those pills. He is not part of the plot. He doesn't even know about it." (p 320)

The power in this shifting, unsettling narrative structure lies in the running commentary it produces on the relationship between Steinberg and Sizwe. They are collaborators and co-constructors, but are also at times in conflict over the meaning of what they see, and they feel (in Steinberg's nuanced representation of this) the awkwardness of the inequalities of their worlds and the flinty limits of reciprocity in research and representation endeavours. In the process of writing **Three-letter plague**, Steinberg offered Sizwe the opportunity to read draft chapters, and to push back against misrepresentations. Steinberg reflects these difficult conversations around interpretation with sensitivity, exposing his assumptions for readers and allowing himself to be "caught out" doing what he so carefully abhors/resists. The interstices of power between them become, in moments like the following, fluid and dialogical:

"When you wrote about Mabalane [Sizwe's cousin] in your book," [Sizwe] says, "why did you say that the fence around the property was knee-high?"

"I don't remember. Did I say it was knee-high? Is it knee-high?"

"It is about the height of the stomach. You exaggerated. You wanted to show that the man's place was fucked up. What fool wastes his time and money building a knee-high fence? Anything can get over it, even a small dog."

He had said nothing of this when he had first read the chapter about Mabalane. That was some weeks ago. It was one of those thoughts, I guess, that one holds back. Now he is telling me he has seen his world through my eyes, and what he saw was people with useless fences around their gardens and useless bottles of herbs in their rooms …

I have rubbed his face in it. I went to Mabalane's place, and what I saw was a knee-high fence. (pp. 224-5)

What Steinberg's **Three-letter plague** innovatively explores (and embodies) is how a biomedical "language" of HIV/Aids is not a neutral technology in a post-colonial, post-apartheid context; and neither is it without voices of resistance and alternative places for agency. It is easy to infuse such voices and places with the exotic strangeness of traditional African beliefs/practices, and to run quickly on into caricature, ridicule or pity for ignorant victims. But Steinberg's narrative strategies wittingly engage *multiple* voices, which unsettle the dogma and authority of truth regimes by opening uneasy narrative spaces for ambiguity, uncertainty, and grey areas of commonality and resistance between taken-for-granted facts. As his didactic project, he draws readers into complicit configuration with another understanding of the HIV/Aids epidemic. It is an understanding that works from underneath to worry at our assumptions of whiteness, rightness, manhood and choice; and what we think we are doing when we intervene to save lives. It is a book that *must* (continue to) be widely read.

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# THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

Denis, Philippe & Ntsimane, Radikobo (eds) (2008) **Oral history in a wounded country: Interactive interviewing in South Africa.** Pietermaritzburg: Universtiy of KwaZulu-Natal Press. ISBN 978-1-86914-147-9. Pages vii + 196.

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Students of psychology should take note of this book; lecturers of methodology modules in the discipline should too. Published in 2008 already, this edited volume seems to have disappeared under the radar somewhat – at least in psychology. It is as if our exposure to research methodology texts is still mediated through disciplinary formations (or should I say fortifications?!). This is a pity, because even though not written by and for psychologists, many of the issues discussed in this book are pertinent to psychologists – to researchers, community practitioners and psychotherapists alike. It certainly belongs on the methods and methodology reading lists we provide our students with.

Interviewing has become ubiquitous in psychological research. In fact, it is probably safe to call it the default mode of "data collection" in the great majority of qualitative research projects undertaken by students and professional academics and researchers in the discipline today. How frequently do we pause, however, to consider the epistemological, political and ethical dimensions (and implications) of interviewing? Or to consider the historical emergence of interviewing as an intellectual *practice* (not just a research technique) within the development of social sciences and their self-understanding in relation to things like culture, politics and subjectivity? My answer would be: "not frequently enough". It is too easy to simply classify interviewing as just another data collection technique (as the qualitative correlate of the structured questionnaire, for example) and so to position it as external to the epistemological, political and ethical concerns we deal with. The consequence of this is that students are introduced to interviewing as simply another technical skill to be mastered, not as a theoretically significant dimension of their research practice.

That such reductionism should characterise psychology is not surprising. This discipline has always had strained relationships with subjectivity, language, and the moral-political dimensions of knowledge production. Most mainstream (especially American) textbooks still eschew qualitative research, erect their ideal of scientific practice in *opposition* to the subjective and the linguistic / discursive, and sidestep the moral-political aspects of knowledge production by "outsourcing" it to the institutional ethics review. Positivist psychology seeks to *deal with* subjectivity, language and ethics (as

threats to a study), rather than to *engage it* productively. Although interviewing (and qualitative research as such) can be incorporated into positivist conceptions of psychology, it remains something of a Trojan horse in this regard: it opens psychology to epistemological debates and transformations that undermine its citadel of pseudoscientific mystification. The interview, as an encounter between two or more agents, dramatizes many of the principles of alternative psychologies: the co-construction of meaning, the dialogical nature of cognitive processes, the performative and rhetorical quality of words and statements, and the discursive mediation of psychological phenomena.

This book, as mentioned earlier, was not written by and for psychologists. It considers the art of interviewing in the context of the development and practice of oral history, as this discipline has taken root in South Africa over the last few decades. In other words, rather than a decontextualized method, interviewing is introduced here in relation to a *particular* history of social scientific practice. As such it offers an illuminating context within which many of the neglected dimensions of interviewing that are mentioned above can be explored. The book starts with an introduction to and overview of oral history in South Africa (by Philippe Denis), focusing on the intellectual debates that characterised its emergence and the major signposts in its development. On the surface this intellectual history may seem somewhat irrelevant to psychologists, but there are lessons to be learned from this neighbouring discipline: the inseparability of epistemological, methodological and political concerns, the irreducible historicity of human agency, and the political nature of knowledge.

Chapter 1 (by Julia Wells) discusses the role of oral history in the context of nation-building. Wells is keenly aware of the contradictory nature of everyday life in the post-apartheid society, and of the multiple realities that people negotiate and bring to research interviews. She explores this in a careful, sensitive manner, but the notion of nation-building itself is embraced a little too uncritically – as if the social scientist is in a position to engage nation-building as an ideal that is unmediated by new (often nationalistic) state ideologies and economic interests. Furthermore, she seems to romanticise the indigenous somewhat, positioning the oral historian in the role of midwife of cultural redemption that follows from the (also seemingly unmediated) sharing of our stories:

> "Imagine that the indigenous knowledge of Africa is known, shared, used and treasured by everyone on the planet. Imagine that all the hidden histories have been celebrated as public treasures and all the unsung heroes and heroines have been honoured. Imagine that all the stories of all the journeys from despair to prosperity have been told – then the oral historians can rest." (p. 42).

This threatens to reduce the political role of oral history to a celebration of the indigenous and the voice of the authentic other: contemporary capitalism would be more than happy to embrace such a notion of radicalism in the social sciences. What one misses here is a concept of ideology that would enable critique of how notions of heritage and popular history may also become part of statist (and nationalist) identity projects or commodified in commercial enterprises. How, in other words, does oral history insulate itself against being ideologically co-opted by the nationalist agendas of a new state and by contemporary capitalism?

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Chapter 2 (Benedict Carton and Louise Vis) provides a clear, detailed account of doing oral history – including the use of interviewing. There is no reason why this chapter should appeal only to historians; many psychologists, especially community psychologists, will benefit greatly from it. Chapter 3 (Philippe Denis) discusses the ethics of doing oral history. This is a clearly written and useful chapter, especially as it adds local favour to the familiar "universal" principles of ethical research conduct by also discussing topics like the ownership of stories and the challenge of culturally specific expectations and codes of conduct. At times the author seems inclined to the codification of ethical dilemmas pervasive in research methods textbooks, but at least he acknowledges that different phases of the research process present us with different ethical issues. Ethical matters are thus part of the research process, not something from which research can be inoculated.

Chapter 4 (Cynthia Kros and Nicole Ulrich), on teaching history in schools, will be of less interest to psychologists. Chapter 5 (Radikobo Ntsimane), however, addresses the important topic of how culture and gender shape the interviewing process. This is a detailed and thoughtful account, and should definitely be read by psychology students. Importantly, the issues of language barriers and translation are also addressed in this chapter. In South Africa research projects are always likely to pose multilingual challenges, and to confront the researcher with the pragmatics and epistemological implications of translation. International textbooks are rarely sensitive enough to these issues, so this chapter makes an excellent contribution.

Chapter 6 (Mxolisi Mchunu) takes the ethical and political consideration of oral history and interviewing in South Africa further by asking whether rural communities are open sources of knowledge. The notion of the "indigenous perspective" is theorised here within the context of South African research examples, and the end product is a chapter that especially students in community psychology will find useful. The final chapter (by Sean Field) addresses a topic that many young researchers struggle with: emotional responses in interviewing. Field makes it clear that the evocation of feeling is part and parcel of the interviewing process. The "unpredictability of human subjectivity" (p. 156) is acknowledged here, and the discussion of how researchers may deal with this unpredictability, and with various expressions of (sometimes difficult) feelings, is comprehensive and helpful.

The book ends with a number of appendices, including the code of ethics for oral history practitioners in South Africa. As I indicated at the outset, this is a useful, practical book about interviewing in South Africa, and it deals sensitively with many issues that will be just as relevant to psychologists as they are to oral historians. It provides an example of how interviewing should ideally be taught: not as an abstract, universal method, but as a practice embedded within particular contexts and modes of scholarly inquiry.

# MAKING CONNECTIONS: PSYCHOANALYSIS, ECOLOGY AND DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S PHILOSOPHIES

Dodds, Joseph (2011) **Psychoanalysis and ecology at the edge of chaos: Complexity theory, Deleuze / Guattari and the psychoanalysis for a climate in crisis.** New York & London: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-66612-1 pbk. Pages 238.

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As its title flags up, **Psychoanalysis and ecology at the edge of chaos** makes a significant contribution to current discussions around the ecological crisis by suggesting that psychoanalysis offers important insights in the problem of climate change and its effects. Now this might initially look like a difficult argument to grasp, but the challenges that the author Joseph Dodds presents us with do not stop here; the second important argument of the book is that psychoanalytic thinking is compatible with and complimentary to Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophies. Two *plateaus* of challenging suggestions and analyses then that I will try to unfold in this review.

The book comprises fourteen chapters, structured in four sections. Section One, *Climate change,* sets the context of the inquiry by looking into the *Climate crisis* (Chapter One) and the *Theoretical crisis* (Chapter Two), while the third Chapter, *Ecology at the edge of chaos* synthesizes the two previous crises by flagging up the imminent danger of failing to address the planetary crisis both on a materialistic and discursive level. What stands out in this section is the author's argument that the climate change is a psychological problem, as well as a social, political and economic one, and although it has been addressed in certain fields of psychology, it has yet to be registered in the psychoanalytic literature. It is precisely this gap that the book is attempting to fill and it does so by drawing on an extensive research project that spans a number of years as well as a range of disciplinary areas including psychology, psychoanalysis, social theory, critical geography, philosophy and cultural studies. It is no wonder that *Ecopsychoanalysis* emerges as a neologism of the overall research project of which the book is a part.

Having made the argument about the relevance of psychoanalysis in the ecological discussions and debates, Section Two excavates the field of psychoanalysis to nuance and support the argument of its close connection to "environmentalism and its discontents" (p. 27). Chapter Four takes up *Classical psychoanalysis,* as a disciplinary ground for "a psychoanalysis of ecology", by drawing on Freud's discussion of

civilization, nature and the dialectic of the Enlightenment, while bringing in Deleuze's and Guattari's critique as well as nuanced discussion of it. Dodds argues that Deleuze and Guattari knew much more about psychoanalysis than many contemporary Deleuzians (xiv) and there is therefore a need to reread **Anti-Oedipus** in the light of Deleuze's and Guattari's interest in ecological questions. Apart from its nuanced discussion of philosophical concepts, including eros and thanatos, the author considers "the rise of the eco-disaster film" thus bringing in cultural film theory in his theoretical and methodological toolbox. Chapter Five deals with the problem of "eco-anxiety" and defence, drawing illuminating analogies with classical psychoanalytic concepts. The chapter particularly highlights the role of humour in media representations of a series of defence arguments against the ecological threat and draws on the Lacanian notion of symptom as a way to theorize the role of the media in these debates. His main argument is that although psychoanalysis cannot offer a material solution to the ecological problem, it can nevertheless facilitate understanding not just of the problem but more importantly perhaps of our failure to conceptualize the critical dangers it poses and the importance of co-ordinating a multi-levelled response. Chapter Six considers object relations theory as a particularly useful psychoanalytic field in the process of understanding our relation to Earth and the way we respond (or not) to the needs and expressions of the non-human world. The human addiction to consumerism is particularly considered here, while the paranoid-schizoid position offers according to the author a useful framework within which to understand our failure to engage with the severity of the ecological crisis.

The ecology of phantasy becomes the central theme of Section Three, which more particularly deals with the possible interventions of psychotherapy in the area of the ecological problem as already charted in the previous sections. Chapter Seven particularly discusses what the author identifies as "the greening of psychotherapy", looking into the dualism of *biophilia* and *biophobia* and considering the possibility of "liberating the ecological unconscious" or at least opening up paths for its traces to be discerned. Dodds further looks into connections between what he defines as "developmental ecopsychology and climate change" and finally brings forward the argument of "ecotherapy" as a contribution of "ecopsychology" to questions of health and wellbeing. Chapter Eight makes a critical post-modern transition by positing the possibility of an "ecology without nature" and by "deconstructing the ecological imagination." The chapter then turns to Deleuze's and Guatatri's image of geophilosophy, as well as the critical links between psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis. There is no way to write about Deleuze and Guattari without referring to their often misunderstood concept of becoming-animal, and this is what Chapter Nine does, bringing in literary and cultural studies' perspectives, through a discussion of the Bakhtinian carnivalesque and a Deleuzian analysis of horror films. This prepares the ground for the last chapter of Section III, which deals with "the zoological imagination" thus completing the phantasy themes that are interwoven in this post-structuralist section.

In a concluding mode, the last section deals with complexity theory as a matrix encompassing the very diverse areas that the book has brought together by making rhizomatic connections between and amongst them. Chapter Eleven explores possibilities for research and thinking in a non-linear world and considers questions of chaos, contingent emergencies and non-linear dynamics. Chapter Twelve examines connections between psychoanalysis, ecology and complexity through the Deleuzian

concepts of coevolution and nomadic subjectivities. Chapter Thirteen looks into the ecology of mind, non-linear temporalities as well as De Landa's reconfiguration of Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory as a new science of society, while Chapter Fourteen concludes the study by returning to the neologism of ecopsychoanalysis.

What I enjoyed most in this book is the clear way that Joseph Dodds presents and explicates a range of theoretically dense concepts and the innovative way he synthesises them in building and developing his overall thesis. I also appreciated the nuanced way that both psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis are being presented, discussed and juxtaposed, since there is a tendency in Deleuzian studies to refute complex psychoanalytic concepts by naïve simplifications and crude reductions. Dodds persuasively shows that there is much more in psychoanalysis than some over excited Deleuzians are willing to admit and there is indeed worth looking carefully into both fields to unravel unseen and yet productive connections. As a reader I was further persuaded about the usefulness of a psychoanalytic reading of contemporary questions and issues around the planetary crisis. Having mostly enjoyed the book I have to say that I was not impressed by the discussion around complexity. I feel that the author should have brought in some of the interesting debates around complexity in social theory today, so chaos is in my view the only strand of the argument that could have been developed more. Overall however, this is a very useful and interesting book, carefully researched, well organized and clearly written, a very good case of truly interdisciplinary scholarship.

# DIALOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION

Hook, D, Franks, B & Bauer, M W (eds) (2011) **The social psychology of communication.** Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-0-230-24736-9 pbk. Pages xv + 371.

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As a collection of essays on the psychological study of human communication, **The social psychology of communication** is rich in differing and often even competing theoretical perspectives and practical applications, and yet it also manages to be a book of singular purpose. As stated in the introduction, the goal of this collection is to "defamiliarize" the reader with regard to human communication to a sufficient extent so as to encourage fresh reflection on everyday social psychological processes. In this way the editors are suggesting the value of what they call an *interfield* approach to the study of communication, a marketplace of ideas in which multiple perspectives are encouraged without the prerequisite of a meta-theory smoothly linking them all. The book's 15 chapters cover a wide range of topics, theoretical schools of thought and areas of applied research. By exploring communication from so many thought-provoking angles, the collection succeeds in presenting the social psychological study of communication as a diversified field, one that has seen many accomplishments over the past few decades, and one that continues to be pregnant with questions and debates calling for further research.

In the introduction, the editors are quick to identify the book's global philosophical position. This is a collection of essays, all of which treat communication as *intersubjective* (and not simply focusing on the dissemination or reception of information), as taking place within the *social psychological context* of wider human relations (not as communication separated from its wider relational framework), and as *social psychological process* (not as isolatable, entitative objects). In short, this is a book on communication as *dialogue* between various kinds of social actors, be they individuals or collectives. There is little to nothing in the book on other influential perspectives within social psychology, such as neuroscience or implicit consciousness. This same word of caution holds for the specific topics covered by the various chapters. In chapters with broad titles such as *Religion as communication*, *The social psychology of political communication*, *Evolution and communication*, etc, the reader should not expect to find a thorough review of that

particular area, but rather a summary of a handful of positions, nestled within the dialogical approach, focusing on the given topic. However, if the potential readers are aware of the global philosophical position of the book and do not expect a broader textbook-like presentation of the topics covered, they will find that this collection of essays does a wonderful job immersing them into this diverse area of research and prompting further reflection on human communication in general.

As a collection of essays by different authors, the book is surprisingly successful at cross-referencing ideas between chapters and avoiding repetition. Chapter 1, on Vygotsky, is a good introduction to the general atmosphere of the book, and it leads neatly into Chapter 2, which itself leads neatly into Chapter 3, and so on. In fact, the cross-referencing and general flow between chapters can be so good that the reader is occasionally surprised when the standard issues associated with collected essays do arise (such as changes of writing style, assumptions of previous knowledge, different or even conflicting uses of similar terms, arguing the other side of a previously argued position, and so on). The editors have also added a glossary of key terms that can be quite helpful.

In the introduction, the editors highlight several philosophical threads that link various chapters (such as the tension between communication as actually sharing information between two actors and communication as at heart being strategic and egocentric, or the tension between treating communication as informative versus phatic). The editors are perhaps a bit overambitious in suggesting that these threads can be followed individually by reading the chapters in varying orders. While these individual theoretical links become clearer as one reads and reflects on the chapters, the book does not readily lend itself to such a "choose your own adventure" format. These suggested links may very well be interesting and even helpful for readers already familiar with the ideas covered, but they would most likely be simply confusing to readers for whom the chapters are truly introductions to the given topics.

Another "modern" feature of the book, are its numerous figures, text boxes, and tables intended to present additional, complementary information. While the tables can at times be helpful, with relation to the larger texts in which they are embedded they can often seem unnecessary or can be, at times, even confusing. A number of tables come before the concepts they contain have been presented, distracting the reader from the more important surrounding text and leaving him or her wondering whether something had been missed. The text boxes containing unpublished research, snippets from interviews, or anecdotes, can be thought provoking as freestanding mini-essays, but they too can also feel a bit disjointed from the text. For example, the opening pages of chapter 1 contain text boxes and photographs related to a case study of communicative learning between two children in South Africa. The reader expects this story to form the core around which the chapter will revolve, but by page 3 the example is dropped and never resumed. What is more, the example appears to be of horizontal learning between peers, while the majority of the chapter focuses on the benefits of Vygotskian mediation within teacher-student relations and on ways in which the *zone of proximal development* can be most fully extended. Despite this minor distraction, the chapter is very well written and is a great introduction into the study of communication through a Vygotskian lens. Lest this minor critique take on too much weight, it should be reiterated that many of the text boxes

contain fascinating freestanding or complementary information, such as Cathy Vaughn's honest exploration of her use of *photovoice* as a tool for giving voice to different communities in Papua New Guinea.

In an attempt to write introductions to the various topics covered, many of the authors create lists of terms and concepts helpful or necessary for understanding the theoretical schools they are presenting. At times such lists are truly helpful. At other points however, this thoroughness is achieved at some cost to readability and didactic utility. At various points the book also suffers from a somewhat confused vocabulary, despite obvious efforts of the editors to combat this inevitable challenge. Some terms are not explicitly defined, or are defined only after having been used a number of times. As one moves between chapters and their respective theoretical vantage points, the differences in meaning between similar sounding terms are not always made clear for the reader. What is understood by such concepts as "majority" and "minority," "deviance" and "rule following," can vary greatly between theories. Since the book is largely successful in creating the feeling of a unified whole, such shifts in meaning might lead inattentive readers astray, at least momentarily. Once again, such issues are to be expected in such collected essays and with so many perspectives presented, it would be surprising if they did not appear.

A similar issue can at times be found in relation to broader constructs or methodologies discussed within the different chapters. If the reader is not already versed in the given perspective, they may find ostensibly familiar concepts being used in slightly different and unfamiliar ways. For example, in discussing the serial reproduction task used in Bartlett's classic work (chapter 8), the methodological and practical differences between the more common study of memory and the less common study of rumour and are not fully explored. In chapter 12, on religion as intersubjective practice, by treating "magic" as "strategic-instrumental" in nature, the author rather quickly dismisses it from his treatment of religion as mutual, collective communication. While the pejorative connotations of "magic" may allow some readers to quickly pass over this dismissal without pause, when "magic" is read as the more widely accepted "mystery," readers may find the definition of religious communication somewhat incomplete. In identifying deviance as inherently progressive and thereby linking it directly with minority rights of the practical, "real-world" kind, chapter 4 does not anticipate the reader, who may not be so connected with this school of thought, thinking about the many historical cases in which the rise of deviant thinking has lead to horrible outcomes for concrete minorities. Despite a smattering of such issues, by and large, the chapters do a good job of presenting the theoretical frameworks in which they each are working. By and large, they clarify potential conceptual ambiguities and anticipate classic objections by identifying and addressing them before they become distractions for the reader. Logical and practical issues with the perspectives presented are generally openly addressed by the authors. For example, in discussing the theoretical work of Paolo Freire (chapter 2), the authors point to the challenges associated with reconciling the notion of horizontal communication with a linear progression of learning. Elsewhere in the same chapter the authors discuss the difficulty of reconciling the numerous benefits seen when the downtrodden are given voice in the identification of societal ills, with the simultaneous awareness of the frequent inability of disenfranchised groups to identify elements of their own disadvantage. Rather than additionally problematizing these perspectives for the reader, such transparency makes the arguments

more palatable in their honesty, more suggestive of future research within the given framework, and more suggestive of the additive value of the various theoretical vantage points presented in previous and subsequent chapters. As identified in the editors' introduction, such broadening of the reader's thinking on these issues is the goal of the book. The goal is not to convert the reader into a supporter of any theoretical school in particular. Individual authors can, at times, forget this relatively modest goal and make arguably grandiose claims about the insight gained from a given theoretical perspective. If such occasional over-exuberant steps afield are the price for what are enthusiastically written, thought-provoking and self-reflective chapters, it is a price well worth paying.

**The social psychology of communication** contains a number of elements that would suggest it may be treated as an introductory text to the field. A wide range of individual topics are covered by the various chapters, the basic tenants of each perspective are presented, and the editors have provided a helpful and insightful introduction, as well as a useful glossary of key terms. However, it is much more than that. As an introduction to the field, the book is perhaps a bit beyond the reach of the average undergraduate or someone without some background in the social sciences. Yet, in presenting such an array of perspectives, and suggesting overlapping themes and points of disagreement between these perspectives, the book succeeds in inspiring deeper reflection on the basic issues surrounding the social psychological study of communication. This reflection may come in the form of agreement with, or objection to, the various theoretical or applied suggestions made in the chapters. Or it may come in the form of puzzlement about various aspects of communication itself, as shear wonder at the phenomenon. More likely, the reader will jump back and forth between agreement, objection, and wonder. When this occurs, the book has accomplished its goal.

# FOUR THEORETICAL LENSES FOR SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Augoustinos, M, Walker, I & Donaghue, N (2006) **Social cognition: An integrated introduction.** 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications (1995). ISBN 978-0-7619-4219-X pbk. Pages 364.

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This book, both a textbook and a monograph, is good because it foregrounds theory, often relatively neglected in mainstream books on social psychology. I liked the first edition (in 1995) and this second edition, entirely reworked, is a whole lot better. The approach is to take four major theoretical perspectives – social cognition, Social Identity Theory (SIT), social representations, and discursive psychology – and compare how each understands particular phenomena, such as attitudes, attribution, prejudice, perception, the self, intergroup relations and ideology. The brief concluding chapter suggests a path towards integration (as the sub-title states) arguing that each of the current streams is limited in terms of concepts, methodology and epistemology. At the same time the authors hold a view critical of individualism and its potentially conservative consequences; here a person cannot be grasped in isolation from social processes. One of their aims is an old Tajfellian objective: to re-establish the social in social psychology.

I will illustrate how the book works in order to point to both strengths and weaknesses. First the authors set out to describe the four theoretical positions. This alone is worth the price tag of the book; the descriptive work is done with clarity and without much fuss. Then they address a standard and central topic such as social perception (chapter 3). They show through the use of illustrative studies, prototypical theorists and various interpretations of research, how the four theoretical versions understand the topic of perception. In this case they show very tidily how mainstream views see categorisation and stereotyping as a form of simplification or heuristics in order to make cognitive overload more manageable. Often it is interpreted as automatically activated and inevitable. However for SIT, stereotypes enhance and elaborate (not simplify) perception, infusing threadbare categories with meaning. For Social Reps, categories (anchoring) emerge from groups and shared social identities and cannot be reduced to cognitive mechanisms alone. For discursive approaches neither categories nor stereotypes are cognitive phenomena inside the head / brain; rather people constitute stereotypes discursively in order to do certain things, such as blame, justify, exonerate. Categorisation is not an automatic natural phenomenon, but a flexible, and often inconsistent outcome of talk. The book does splendid work in demonstrating these contrasting and diverging ideas. The chapter summary boldly expresses these different

theoretical positions. That is one of the strengths of the book. But it does nothing with the divergences. That is a weakness. It simply reports differences in perspectives, and moves on to the following chapter.

If there are sharply diverging views, then how do we resolve them? Who is right and who is wrong? Or are they entirely incompatible "paradigms", different "language games" that do not even speak of the same things? Are there any methodological or metatheoretical positions that would be able to arbitrate, or settle the matter? And if there are sharp divergences of the sort sketched above, then a simple theoretical integration is not possible without at least tackling impediments. Yet these sorts of issues are not tackled.

What **Social cognition** does do is lay a platform. It is carefully built, and the similarities and differences of four theoretical positions are solidly put together. It pulls together a good deal of work in an engaging and always readable presentation. The chapter on ideology (so often ignored) is particularly useful and well done. But the platform has to be built upon. Theoretical conflicts cannot be wished away by a generous appeal to integration. There is massive work for all of us. In the meanwhile we should thank Augoustinos, Walker and Donaghue for their brave efforts.

# TAKING FORWARD THE FEMINIST AND CRITICAL PROJECT ON THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION

Macleod, Catriona (2011) **"Adolescence", pregnancy and abortion: Constructing a threat of degeneration.** London & New York: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-55338-4 pbk. Pages 184.

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"Teenage pregnancy" and parenting together with abortion remain stigmatized in South Africa and are controversial topics globally. Recent headlines of newspapers reporting on teenage pregnancy are testimony to the emotive and moralistic discourse that the image of a pregnant schoolgirl continues to inspire in the local public imagination. Consider for example the image of disaster and despair encapsulated in a national newspaper's loud title "Pregnancy tsunami" in an article on the pregnancy at local schools (**The Times**, 21 February 2011 - front page). Well-known critical and feminist psychologist, Catriona Macleod has for many years been invested in unpacking these dominant discourses – not only in the public domain but more importantly among scholars and policy-makers in this terrain – to expose the way in which apparently evidence-based and learned responses to teenage pregnancy are intertwined with a wide range of social stigma and serve to reflect, legitimate and rationalize continued racist, gendered and classed discourses and practices. For the most part hers has been a lone feminist and critical voice in the South African field of "teenage pregnancy", as she reflects in a recent paper, the feminist "engagement that there has been is a whisper in relation to the plethora of public health, medical and psychological writings on 'adolescent pregnancy'" (Macleod, in press).

Serving as both a compendium of her previous work but also a deepening and strengthening of her argument, this book is a solid contribution to the field of theorizing and deconstructing dominant responses to teenage pregnancy, abortion and young motherhood / parenting. At the same time it is also strongly invested in confronting a thorny developmental psychology issue, that of the normative assumption of the stage of adolescence between childhood and adulthood which she shows is pivotal to the discourse of a threat of degeneration that frames social responses to teenage pregnancy. Macleod has long provided a rigorous critique of the knee-jerk assumptions of adolescence as a coherent, discrete, essentialised and universalized stage of human development. In this book she really comes into her own, bringing together a critique that

locates the construction of adolescence as not only steeped in stereotypic gender norms but also powerfully located in the postcolony, as inseparable from racist and colonialist white constructions of the black other. The ambivalent space that adolescence occupies, played out in responses to teenage pregnancy in schools and communities, as evidence from recent research suggests (see for example, Bhana et al, 2008, 2010; Mkhwanazi 2010; Ngabaza, 2011) is nowhere better unpacked with its all its complexity than in this book. This valuable critique of the stage of adolescence in the larger task of challenging rigid and essentialist frameworks of human development cannot be under-estimated.

Macleod's primary argument is neatly framed at the beginning of the book and is woven tightly through each chapter that follows: "Public discussion of 'teenage pregnancy' and abortion, for the most part, construct a threat of degeneration, in which young women are positioned as contributing through their sexual and reproductive status, to social decline" (p. 5). Macleod shows convincingly that such a threat, indeed the overall negative and othering responses to "adolescent" pregnancy, abortion and parenting, is built on a further social construction, that of the normative assumption of the stage of adolescence as transition, which she argues contains "the seeds of its own destruction" (p. 5) since it is "inhabited from the inside by paradoxes (child / not child; adult / not adult) that require constant work in order to arrive at merely temporary resolution" (p. 5). The book proceeds to illustrate how such normative discourses are racialised, classed, gendered, framed by cultural and traditional discourses, and deeply rooted in colonialist ideologies which conflate the development of the individual with the development of "civilization". Macleod unpacks with crystal clarity the ideology of "civilization" versus "the primitive" that was endemic to colonialist discourse, and that continues to frame current constructions of the adolescent as depicting "a threat of degeneration".

The book includes 8 chapters which unpack the arguments in different but related terrains, build on each other and take the reader through a comprehensive scrutiny of the historical and contemporary context of public and academic discourse and practice on teenage pregnancy and abortion. The first chapter constitutes a "setting of the scene" which is wonderfully clear in articulating the central arguments of the book as well proving an accessible and instructive overview of the theoretical framework of social constructionism and the analytical tools of discourse analysis. The second chapter unpacks the theoretical framing of the arguments, in particular an elaboration of the invention of adolescence as a discrete developmental stage representing a transition between childhood and adulthood as well as laying bare the internal paradox implicit therein. Chapter three goes on to unpack in a practical way the way in which this discourse and paradox is played out in three different terrains: sexuality education; the construction of teenage pregnancy and motherhood; and the termination of pregnancy. It is particularly important that Macleod includes a focus on abortion in this chapter and others, since while there has been a proliferation of work on teenage pregnancy and parenting, work on abortion remains relatively marginal in South Africa, possibly reflecting the deep ambivalence in which both researchers and the public have responded to the legalization of abortion in South Africa. In chapter four the author elaborates on the invention of "teenage pregnancy", arguing that it has been set up as inevitably and unquestioningly signifying a social problem and is made intelligible and normative through the adolescence as transition discourse. The chapter reminds us of how "new" the very concept of teenage pregnancy is, and provides

convincing evidence for the way in which "scientific method is used to position young women as threatening social order and community stability" (p. 73). Chapter five provides a powerful reflection on the w ay in which social framings of abortion do exactly the same, thus arguing that the threat of degeneration is implied not only through a young women's pregnancy "but also through the possibility of her terminating her pregnancy" (p. 91). In Chapter six, Macleod elaborates on her argument that these dominant discourses on teenage pregnancy are raced, classed and cultured. She illustrates how "the threat of degeneration is not colour or 'culture' blind" but that it is particularly "black" and marginalized teenagers who are constructed as posing such a threat (p. 107). Chapter seven turns to a more practice-oriented terrain, which in a Foucauldian framing, Macleod terms "managing the threat" and indeed proceeds to outline the disciplinary and punitive framework enmeshed in these apparently caring practices. Reviewing predominantly the writings of some South African researchers that make recommendations about sex education and abortion, Macleod exposes the (inadvertent perhaps) assumptions of the "adolescent in transition" discourse and the "injunction to manage risk" which is implicit in this work (p. 129). Particularly refreshing in this chapter is the use of a popular media example in which "real" (manufactured for public viewing of course) voices of counsellors are presented and deconstructed to illustrate the underlying discourse of the threat of degeneration as well as a construction of adolescents as in transition, vulnerable and "at risk", in need of guidance and discipline to contain their unruly behaviours. In the final chapter the author brings the arguments of the book together, providing a succinct synthesis of what has been covered and makes the important argument for a shift from "teenage pregacy" to "unwanted pregnancy", basically calling for a shifting of the gaze on individualised, essentialised notions of deficiency to an acknowledgement of the "gendered and social space within which reproduction occurs" (p. 149).

The one area of silence that confronted me in reading Macleod's articulate, clear and enticing work, is that of voices of young women and men themselves. While their experiences are framed and re-framed by both academic and policy-based researchers as well as the public panoptic media, and deconstructed here by Macleod, their silence looms loud for me. Macleod preempts this critique by expressly reiterating in her final chapter that her intention was not to present the experiences of young women themselves, but rather "to understand the macro-social and cultural environment of public discourse and practice within which these young women will experience their lives" (p. 130). Such an exploration within the framework that Macleod provides remains an important project both locally and internationally. And notwithstanding her disclaimer, one creative medium of bringing further challenge might have been a juxtaposition of such voices with the critical text, not necessarily in dialogue, but simply by way of reminding us of the centrality of the sensate and agentic bodies and minds of which the book speaks. But perhaps that is a task for the future. And certainly what this book does provide is an outstanding theoretical framework for any researcher, politician and/or practitioner to approach their research and/or practice and engagement with young people in a very different way.

Many times over the years I have had bright and committed young feminist scholars approaching me to supervise their work on teenage pregnancy. And indeed there is a current flurry of work on teenage pregnancy by young researchers, some of it floundering between a more empathetic approach yet inevitably sliding towards the moralizing,

patronizing gaze of the elder scrutinizing young sexualities and buying into heteronormative versions of family. A rigorous engagement with Catriona Macleod's book is sure to correct that! Indeed also a lesson for more established researchers and authors to be ever cautious of our knee-jerk reactions and the challenges of resisting hegemonic discourses on adolescence, teenage pregnancy and reproductive health in general. In Macleod's book there are no holy cows; some well-known feminists and certainly many well-meaning social scientists come up for scrutiny for their, albeit inadvertent, reiteration of the discourses on "adolescence as transition" and others that are unpacked in this book. Macleod reminds us of the importance and power of language, of how easily we can slip into repeating the very things we seek to challenge.

Having presented such a glowing report of this book and its impact, it comes as no surprise that barely hot off the press the book was awarded the prestigious international Distinguished Publication Award by the Association for Women in Psychology, based in the USA. This award is so well deserved, not only as an appreciation of the book itself, but also for the many years of admirable work and dedication that Catriona Macleod has put into feminist and critical psychology scholarship, in particular the body of work that challenges heteronormative and patriarchal global narratives on gender, sexuality and reproduction.

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