CULTURES OF CHILDHOOD, CULTURES OF INQUIRY[1]

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This chapter presents a historical and conceptual review of the literature in early childhood studies, showing a trajectory from individual and psychological orientations to contemporary sociocultural orientations.

AN OVERVIEW

An interest in children as a topic for newly emerging social sciences began attracting attention during the later decades of the 19th century, when issues of children's welfare, resulting from industrialization and urbanization, became a public issue in Western Europe and North America. More than ever before, urban centers were about masses of children, in factories, in overcrowded slums, in streets, and, for some, in schools. By Gillis's account (2009), a social, religious and political movement of "child savers" emerged who campaigned on behalf of the introduction of compulsory education beginning in the second half of the 19th century. Via the institutionalization of schooling, children became a distinctive category of persons within society. In the developing course of 19th century urban life, children's lives were separated from those of adults:

> By 1900, children were segregated from adults in the spheres of both production and consumption. There had evolved a whole new set of times and spaces for children, initiated and policed by self-proclaimed 'child savers,' who were quick to transform themselves into professionals acting on the name of children and adolescents (Gillis, 2009: 118).

In these ways, the construction of childhood as we know it today was underway (Aries, 1962; Gillis, 2009; Qvortrup, 1987; Woodhead, 2009). Children became known not only by their name, gender, religion, class, and other social categories, but for the first time in history, their age increasingly became a relevant category of identification. Childhood institutions were increasingly becoming age-calibrated. According to historian Philippe Aries (1962), an age-based hierarchy and eventual dichotomy was becoming institutionalized in the relationship between adults and children, and the defining criteria for children and adults were increasingly becoming oppositional. By Aries's account, by the mid-18th century, adults in particular social classes were increasingly beginning to think of themselves as not of the same order of beings as their children. In the course of time, children's lives and activities were compartmentalized in separate childhood institutions, established to serve varying functions, for which schools and classrooms

were central. In these ways children's times and places were increasingly separated from those of their elders. In the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries they came to have less access to the times and places of adults in general (James & Prout, 1990; Qvortrup, 1987; Gillis, 2009).

Through these social and cultural developments, children began to be regulated using age as the metric to identify the beginning and the end of their childhoods, to designate school ages, and to separate, matriculate and assign responsibilities accordingly. In this fashion, childhood became a closely marked passage that individuals walk through in their preparation for adult social life (Davies, 1940; Qvortrup, 1987; Woodhead, 1999). According to Gillis (2009), by the end of the 19th century, new rites of passage had been created to assist, for example, young men in distancing themselves from their times and places of childhood, and the marking of their entrance into adulthood.

To administer these new social organizations, new professions emerged, whose practitioners' tasks were to identify children's distinctive needs for care, discipline and teaching; for protecting children's welfare and promoting their learning (Gillis, 2009, Qvortrup, 1987, Woodhead, 1999). Other developments included the invention of practical and conceptual tools for these professionals to do their work. There has, of course, always been a normative order of childhood, regardless of culture or history. But with the developing professionalization of childhood institutions and services, "normative expectations" developed to regulate the lives of children, and childhood experience took on an articulate, measured and measurable normativity, displacing the cultural measures and wisdoms that had been in place for generations (Gillis, 2009; Qvortrup, 1987).

According to Lowe (1982), the Protestant middle classes were the first to embrace the idea of development, organized around the stages identified for each age category. In these developments we find the point of Aries's historical analysis, when he maintained that previous societies lacked our conceptualization of childhood (1962).

CONCEPTUAL AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The transformation and regularization of childhood were also among those developments that followed the technical and conceptual revolutions in the biological sciences. As new languages for describing social life and order were being invented, new scholarly and technical interests in childhood as-a-topic emerged (Ryan, 2011, Woodhead, 1999). Applications of Darwin's evolutionary theory radically altered ideas about development on a grand scale (Ryan, 2011). Darwin's was a paradigmatic innovation, popularized by Hall and others, and re-wrote ways of taking interest in children and their development. The implication was taken that both individuals and societies moved through a sequence of unrepeatable stages, that ontogeny recapitulates pylogeny. These now familiar mis-readings of Darwin then held that these stages

showed a path, a trajectory and an end point. Thus, childhood and development became a topic for a scientific investigation, and the new conceptualizations fundamentally altered the lens through which scholars, experts, and then the public, viewed children.

Development was perceived as a natural "progression" from immaturity in infants to adult maturity. Once childhood was established as a 'passage,' interest turned to the discovery of the stages of this progression (Ryan, 2011; Woodhead, 1999). The life course was initially organized around childhood, youth, adulthood and old age, and was later extended to include new and finer categories like infancy, adolescence, and middle age. The developmental sequence was seen both as a voyage through time, complete with beginnings, middles and end-points, and the movement through space, starting with a fixed point associated with the family home, and always moving upward and outward into the world. As Walkerdine states,

> Children's bodies were weighed and measured. The effects of fatigue were studied, as were children's interests, imaginings, religious ideas, fetishes, attitudes to weather, to adults, drawings, dolls, lies, ideas and, most importantly for us their stages of growth… Children as a category were being singled out for scientific study for the first time (1984: 171).

Thus, early modern interest in childhood studies took up the task of describing the major milestones or benchmarks of children's development, to identify the organic processes underlying this progression, and, subsequently, to identify the environmental factors promoting or delaying it. It was a "maturationist" perspective, a view of development as a natural force with a natural trajectory and outcome. The program became, in the hands of Hall, Gesell, Piaget and others, studies in developmental psychology (McCullers, 1976; Woodhead, 1999; Qvortrup, 1987 Ryan, 2011).

These early studies brought a new energy and technical language to their inquiries, although we can note that the vision of childhood as a preparation was itself not novel. It seems to be quite continuous with pre-modern cultures as well (Benedict, 1976; Mead, 1928). However, when social and cultural factors are considered in these modern studies, they are included in the analysis as secondary or auxiliary factors, either promoting or hindering developmental forces that are more or less naturally or biologically disposed.

With these epistemic developments, as childhood became a topic for new, modern and scientific descriptions, we observe re-conceptualizations of children, their childhood experiences, development, and social lives. (Qvortrup, 1987; Ryan, 2011; Woodhead, 1999). Although these new alternative descriptions were different than commonsense conceptions, they still preserved children's place within the adult world as "incomplete beings" (Qvortrup, 1987). Thus, the fundamental cultural assumption that the aim of childhood was for children to become like adults

was not challenged. In these ways, early modern social science unavoidably borrowed cultural wisdoms and then re-wrote them in scientific terms, as scientific facts, thereby scientizing the culture in multiple different ways. The subsequent developments of these conceptualizations find their expressions in the two major disciplines that traditionally take interest in childhood studies: On the one hand, there are the child development studies of developmental psychology. And on the other, there are the socialization theories of sociology and social psychology. In both camps, however, development is conceptualized in individualistic terms, providing accounts of individuals arriving at adult skills and knowledge, depending on a given approach. The tendency of both accounts is to treat childhood as an environment for development; neither closely considers childhood as an integral form of life (Corsaro, 1988; 1992; 2005; Mackay, 1974; Qvortrup, Speier, 1976; 1994; Walkerdine, 1993).

In the next section, I will review the child development studies of developmental psychology, and the socialization theories of structural sociology. The review focuses on the two most widely known theorists in the field of developmental psychology, Piaget and Vygotsky, whose formulations of development as a movement from an immature state of being to fully developed capacities is later taken up by socialization theory.

The review then presents a consideration of recent critiques of these traditional models. The critiques have emerged as part of the "qualitative" shift in the social sciences, under the heading of a "new sociology of childhood studies." The shift puts meaning at the center of analysis, rather than biology or formal structures of socialization. The shift introduces interest in early childhood *experience*. The chapter concludes with a summary discussion of these new directions for studies of children's everyday worlds.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Throughout the 20th century, development has been understood as the physical and psychological growth in the young, as they transform from fetus, to infant, to child, to adolescent, and finally to adult. Development is thus viewed as being about change, with a sense that the changes are organic or "naturally" disposed, and thus they follow an ordered, rule-governed projection whose "outcome" will be the more advanced, complex or sophisticated level of being an "adult," like us. A paradigmatic conceptualization of development as a "progression," projecting a movement from the "immature" to the "fully developed" is the subtext we find across developmental studies, was set out by the early founders (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Qvortrup, 1994; Walkerdine, 1993; Woodhead, 1999).

In North America child development studies began with the pioneering work of Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1924). Hall's thinking was deeply influenced by Darwin's evolutionary theory, particularly the version found in Ernst Haeckel's recapitulation theory, from which we

have the phrase, and conceptualization that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny." Thus, Hall believed that the child's development recapitulates the history of human evolutionary development. He identified the primary task for the future students of child development as identification of the evolutionary stages in a child's development. Thereby, the agenda shaping the child development studies throughout the 20th century was established. Taking up Hall's intellectual heritage, Arnold Gesell, one of the early pioneers, established the Yale Clinic of Child Development in 1911, and began to identify "normative summaries" representing stages of normal development in children of different ages. He assembled a massive data bank of young children's behavior at various ages and stages. These standards were taken as benchmarks of "normal" development and used to evaluate individual children's developmental progress (Handel, Cahill, & Elkin, 2007; Skolnick, 1976; Walkerdine, 1993; Woodhead, 1999).

Within these early programs, children and 'savages' shared a same development space; they lacked the mind of civilized men, and thus needed "correct" training to develop the "reasoning" required to enter the adult social world. If not trained correctly, they were seen as potential treats to the integrity of adult civilization, to which children in time would learn to aspire (Qvortrup, 1987; Ryan, 2011; Thorne, 2000). Hall, for example, believed that the child needs a good dose of authoritarian discipline, including corporal punishment, to discard the vestiges of evil in his nature. In these ways, early formulations show the cultural dispositions of theological writings. In time, such conceptions of children and of their nature have been transformed and displaced by new models of theorizing childhood in the disciplines. However, the core of the program, identifying developmental stages and a future-oriented pathway, remained as the compelling engagement. Especially via the comprehensive theories of intellectual, moral and personal development constructed by Piaget, Kohlberg, Erickson and others, child development studies became an established and highly influential field during the 20th century; shaping the ways childhood has been understood and constructed in contemporary societies. In these ways, developmental psychology colonized childhood studies.

JEAN PIAGET (1896-1980)

Perhaps the most influential among them all, Piaget, the Swiss developmental psychologist, was concerned particularly with understanding how children develop adult cognitive processes. He set out to map the child's thinking from her earliest days, and the changes in her cognitive operations that occur, as she grows older and become a more formal cognitive operator (1968). Piaget laid out the most clearly articulated and invariant step-wise sequence of cognitive development. By his account, children progress from reflexive responses at birth through "sensory-motor" operations and the development of object permanence, through pre-operational thinking, to "operational" intelligences. He understood this work as a "genetic

epistemology," or how the child "self starts" transformations of cognitive organization that yield her knowledge of the world. In this progression model, the stage sequence is fixed and universal, and particular attention is paid to the transformational organizations and environments where we find the passage from one to a next. (Handel, Cahill, & Elkin, 2007Ryan, 2011; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Walkerdine, 1993)

Piaget's model framed development in cognitive-constructivist terms, conceptualizing development as a biological maturation, stimulated by the child's activity in the world. The stages are marked by periods of "equilibrium," but the stage sequence progression is marked by disturbances too. Thus, in Piaget's account the child constructs internal representations (schema) of the environment as he/she engages in activities in the world. In the "secure" phase of the stage, she "assimilates" her encounters within the operational routines she possesses; in infancy, for example, many things become "suckables." Subsequent encounters, however, yield conflict or discrepancy, to which the child "accommodates" the self. This "accommodation" generates new organizing principles with which to overcome the "dis-equilibrium" of encounters that cannot readily be assimilated into the existing schema. This alternation—assimilation and accommodation—drives the step-wise progress across developmental stages. [2]

Thus, we observe in Piaget's account that children are assigned an active role in the developmental process. More properly, *activity* is assigned an *active role*, the site for the activation of cognitive processes that are owned by no one, but are rather a *genetic* endowment. In Langer's (1969) account, his approach is an "organic lamp theory" of development, in which the child comes into the world already possessing the lamp, whose light glows more brightly as the developmental process unfolds.

In these ways, Piaget's conceptualization was groundbreaking in producing a cognitive-constructivist account. However, perhaps because his concern was to understand a universal genetic epistemology, he could easily assume that his own cultural context, one of Western, scientific rationality, and the cultural forms that sustain it, was definitive. He desired to understand how children become formal, logical-operational adults, as they *sometimes* grow up to be in Western societies. Children were studied and assessed for their stage achievement, in order to formulate a "gold standard" for development, which was widely used in turn as a benchmark for assessing individual children and their developmental possibilities. [3]

Thus, what we find in Piaget is further evidences for the vision that the child is biologically endowed with a grand potential to become *not* just anything, but quite specifically something, to which anything else is implicitly a lesser state. He provides an account of intellectual development as a progression through a series of *qualitatively* distinct stages of intellectual ability. In these ways, Piaget, similar to earlier founders of child studies, provides further analytical and cultural grounds for establishing differences between adults and children,

and differences among children, and places them in a domain of not yet fully developed forms of mature, adult competence. He continues the program of constructing a modern conceptualization of childhood initiated by Hall, Gesell and others, and brings precision to the exercise. Because his studies teach us that children perceive and organize worlds in ways qualitatively different from adults, they lead us not to notice how we might take interest in these differences in their own right. In Piaget's view, childhood is a precursor to the fully developed human being, the adult state, and the task of childhood studies becomes identification of this progression in its most fine detail. In Piaget, childhood becomes a more closely marked passage; he measures the passage more finely than ever before, expanding on the project formulated by the early founders (Qvortrup, 1994; Qvortrup, Corsaro, Honig, 2009; Woodhead, 1999)

Thus, Piaget serves as another model for Morss's (1992) formulation that developmental psychology sets out to discover what may be determined in advance, meaning how it begins its research with a developmental trajectory at hand; it knows in advance what things will come to. And though Piaget's account also provides a place for experience in shaping how natural dispositions realize their potential, his subjects were positioned outside of culture and social context. When it is taken into account, the cultural aspect of social life is introduced only as environment for the developmental progression. Thus, in Piaget's account, the social, cultural and historical contexts of childhood are of interest only to the degree that they either support or hinder development. We could instead take interest in them as forms of life, constituting the very possibility of development. As Light and Perret-Clermont remark,

> Within academic developmental psychology the dominant view of cognitive development has always had a more or less maturationalist flavour… Any essentially maturational view of cognitive development necessarily relegates social factors… to a secondary role. Such factors may facilitate or inhibit but they have no genuinely constitutive function (1989: 99).

Piaget has been criticized for creating a pyramidal structure of cognitive development, in which Western forms stand at the top. His constructivism was cognitive, rather than social, and his premise of a universal developmental trajectory has been effectively disputed by studies showing how development and its operations have their origins in life forms, in how people live as urban dwellers, pastoralists, school children, etc. (cf., Donaldson, 1978; Light and Perret-Clermont, 1989; Rogoff, 1990). The critiques gained momentum in the social-cultural turn of the last 30 years, but a critique of Piaget's cognitivism was developing in the 1930s. To a contemporary of Piaget, the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the social, cultural and historical aspects become indispensable for understanding development.

LEV VYGOTSKY (1896-1934)

Vygotsky's approach to human development is formulated differently than Piaget. He locates developmental processes and knowledge acquisition in the context of the developing child's social world. Similar to Piaget, Vygotsky viewed the prods to development as resulting from the child's activities in the world. However, Vygotsky made no genetic assumptions to account for what drives the child's activities, as we find in Piaget's notion of equilibrium. Instead, Vygotsky attributes development to children's attempts to deal with everyday problems. For Piaget while the child progresses through naturally sequenced cognitive stages as he/she engages in his or her physical and social environment, for Vygotsky, the child finds her development in social relations and activities with others. Thereby Vygotky positions the child as a social actor. In his account, in their dealings with the everyday problems children develop collectively in interaction with others. In sum, while for Piaget development is primarily individualistic, resulting from the activities of the alone child, it is primarily social and collective for Vygotsky. He argued that it is through social interaction that children appropriate, internalize, and acquire the skills and competencies that they observe in others (Vygotsky, 1978, 1987). In these ways, Vygotsky acknowledges that social and cultural features fueling development are already in place, located in society, and that children find their developmental resources in the everyday activities of their worlds.

Two of Vygotsky's concepts are especially important to see, *internalization* and the *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD). Regarding internalization, he argued that all human activities are thoroughly social in origin, that is, all of our psychological and social skills are always acquired form the external, social world through interaction with others. Children acquire and use these skills at the individual (intra-personal) level only after they internalize them at the interpersonal (social) level. Thus, for Vygotsky, "…every function in development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level: first, *between* people (interpsychological) and then *inside* each of us (intrapsychological)" (Vygotsky, 1978: 57). Similarly, Vygotsky argued that inner speech (or the intra-personal thought) appears as a result of transformation of outer self-directed speech in young children. By self-directed speech, he is referring to the tendency of young children to speak out loud to themselves that is observed frequently in early language acquisition, which was characterized as *egocentric speech* in Piaget's account. Vygotsky observed that such speech occurs especially in problematic situations, for example when children are given a task, such as drawing a picture or building a construction out of blocks. Based on these observations, he concludes that self-directed speech is a form of interpersonal communication, except the child is addressing self as other. In problematic situations, directing and advising himself through self-directed speech is transformed over time,

or internalized from interpersonal experience to the intra-personal plane, eventually becoming a form of thought that is inner to individuals.

In a second and interrelated concept, which is more familiar in education circles, Vygotsky argues that development occurs as a result of children's interaction with adults or more capable peers during their participation in everyday activities with them. This is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978: 86). He maintains that interactions in ZPD allow children to participate in activities that are not yet possible for them acting alone.

> What lies in the zone of development at one stage is realized and moves to the level of actual development at a second. In other words, what the child is able to do in collaboration today he [or she] will be able to do independently tomorrow (Vygotsky, 1987: 211).

Thus within the social contexts of the ZPD, children are viewed to be always a "step ahead" in their development. Further, in Vygotsky's account, development takes place through participation in cultural activities and events and is mediated through use of cultural tools, of which language is the most significant one. Internalization of culture occurs gradually over an extended period of time as children interact with others through language.

Thus, in Vygotsky's account we also find a model in which children appropriate adult culture and values. Yet although the role of children's play and collective activities are given great significance, the model of development proposed is once again an "end-point" oriented one. In his account too, children are conceptualized as *adult-becomings*, living their everyday lives so as to become fully developed adults in their respective societies. Especially in his concept of ZPD, we find a controlling interest in what the child can do in the presence of a more competent other (adult or peer). His account too shows a normative interest, an interest that orients to children's futures as adults (and treats childhood as a state of being that is lesser than, inferior to adults), in which adults scaffold children in their integration to the society guiding them in their journey to become productive members of society. An interest in childhood experience in its own right is set aside in preference for a practical orientation to children's "correct" training. Thus, although Vygotsky is to be celebrated for his deep conceptual innovations, pointing to the activities of children situated within their sociocultual contexts, his conceptualization is transitional, and still aligned with a view in which development becomes a *progressive* approach to a higher form of being in the world. An interest in children's lives and activities in their own right has been omitted from these future-oriented accounts (Handel, Cahill, & Elkin, 2007;

Morss, 1992; Qvortrup, 1987; Ryan, 2011). This is of course un-exceptional in the landscape of our cultures of childhood. In common culture, in religious texts, in every parable of childhood, there is something that they are not yet. In that way, the research literature relies on those un-examined foundations.

In summary, during the first part of the 20th century, maturationist theories were the predominant approach, within which child development was conceived in organic terms, as reflected in such commonly used terms as "maturation" and "growth." By these accounts development was a naturally, or biologically unfolding process, and children were going through this preparatory period called childhood as they looked forward to becoming adult members. Although each new theory introduced innovative ideas in their conceptualization of development, children, and childhood, the *progressive* nature of a development with an endpoint was the subtext underwritten through each new approach.

During the second part of the 20th century, the concern shifted strongly to an interest in the social-cultural context of development. The "maturationist" perspective of biological development gave way to the influence of "social-culturalist" accounts, and we can see how Piaget's constructivist theory, and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory show elements of each. Piaget's model can be considered closer to the nativistic orientation, although he proposes that development is prodded by human activity in the world. Vygotsky, on the other hand, is regarded as closer to the social-cultural end of the continuum because his account points not only to the effects of the external world in developmental process, but the primacy of social worlds as the developmental context. They both believed that development progresses through a trajectory to an end, their difference was about the kind of trajectories that takes children to a same end-point.

Yet, in their shared orientation to the end-point of development, both Piaget and Vygotsky can be characterized as future or outcome-oriented developmental theorists. And in this forward looking, it is easy to lose sight of the *constitutive* (formative) nature of children's everyday lives in human development. Led by developmental studies, the 20th century literature of early childhood education has been equally forward-looking in its orientation, and when we view children this way, we tend to fail to take interest in their participation in everyday activities in their own right. We lose sight of early childhood experience. It is this interest that has marked the literature of the *late* 20th century.

SOCIALIZATION THEORY

Socialization theory began as a project of sociology, bringing to childhood studies a language and conceptualization different than psychological accounts. It begins with sociology's interest in social order, stability and integration, and the larger question of social reproduction, or how society's members come to reproduce the order and familiarity of worlds in common. In this

sense, socialization theory begins with a well-established concept of society, and a sociological interest in children as its future members. Socialization theory takes interest in understanding how society inculcates its rules of order, conduct and competence, into the consciousness of children. In this respect, sociology's understanding of social order and its reproduction depend largely on the efficacy of socialization, involving the successful transmission of social forms from one generation to the next.

Thus, the socialization model is not so much about what the child "naturally" is, than what society "naturally" needs and expects of the child. In these ways, socialization theory sets out alternative arguments to the familiar nativistic accounts of developmental psychology, an alternative which inverts the direction of influence. That is, society shapes the child. Socialization is the process of this shaping, in which the child internalizes the social constraints through external regulations. And, through socialization, the individual child's personality becomes continuous with the goals and means of the society. In these ways, the model points to the importance of social structure for understanding children and their development. It resists explanations of organic propensities or dispositions, thereby introducing a conceptual break with maturationist models of development. However, the interest in children and their lives still shows a forward looking, anticipatory approach that views childhood as a preparatory period for adulthood.

According to the most influential and pervasive model, structural-functionalism, the order and balance in society depends on successful training and preparation of children to fit in society. The focus is on specifying what needs to be internalized, and which parental childrearing or training strategies need to be employed to achieve effective internalization. According to Inkeles (1968), socialization must be inherently "forward looking," specifying what the child must become to meet the requisites for the continued functioning of society.

> …both the practice and study of child socialization are 'forward looking.' It seems obvious, furthermore, that of the various later stages which socialization looks forward to, it is the personally relatively enduring and socially important adult stage which is the critical one to consider. Therefore, a central task of the study of socialization is to enquire into the effects which the experience of the child has on the shaping of the adult (Inkeles, 1968: 76-77).

Parsons was perhaps the most influential and persuasive exponent of socialization; the child must be successfully socialized, and a failure to do so poses a threat to the society. In his account, society is defined as the "intricate network of interdependent and interpenetrating" roles and consensual values (Parsons & Bales, 1955: 36), and the child is to be brought within it, and can be only if successfully socialized. Thereby, the child is likened to a "pebble thrown by the

fact of birth into the social 'pond'" (Parsons & Bales, 1955: 36-37). The family is treated as the initial point of entry, and as the child grows older, the effects are seen as succession of widening waves that expand to the other parts of the system.

Socialization theories begin with a model of social and cultural formation. Society strives to recruit and restructure the child's potential for disruptive difference into a form that fits the society's normative order; it deals with the child's incompetence, inadequacy and dependency with appropriate training. The idea of development is not a natural but a social task, and the child is constituted purposefully to facilitate a solution to the puzzle of how society is possible. In this way, however, and although socialization theory is placed in opposition to the tradition of child development studies, it is still oriented to the outcome of development. As with the concepts and models of developmental psychology, the socialization theorists turn childhood into a preparatory passage, with an anticipatory outlook. The child is taken over by the society and trained, to eventually become a functional member within the social system. Children are treated as "human becomings" rather than human beings (Morss, 1992; Qvortrup, 1987).

In this way, the socialization approach still shares certain assumptions with the developmental model. It directs our attention to the social and cultural aspects of childhood development, while at the same time it simplifies a highly complex process, and overlooks the importance of everyday lives and activities. It theorizes childhood. Thus, it has also been characterized as a transitional model. In its orientation to outcomes, socialization theory fails to see childhood as a social structure in its own right, and does not recognize the significance of children's everyday lives apart from the fact that they are all heading to adulthood. Not until the arrival of the "qualitative turn" in childhood studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, do children and their everyday lives became topical. (Mackay, 1974a, 1974b; Mehan, 1974; Speier, 1970, 1976)

A BREAK WITH TRADITION

The interest in childhood and childhood experience is a modern interest. Rousseau (1712-1778) took interest in the child's nature on the eve of the French Revolution. The child was understood as a window for understanding human nature as a social-moral expression of innocence. Relieved of the burden of churchly accounts, interest in the child's nature was reformulated in the 19th century, under the influence of newly developing biological science and evolutionary theory. Childhood became an ontogenetic recapitulation, in which the child is conceived as an expression of every stage of maturation and rationality that is manifest in the "developed" adult. Children came to be seen as "becoming" adults. These early conceptualizations set the tone for later developmental theory, in which children were conceptualized as living a state of "potentials," a "project in the making." The disposition was no

different in socialization theory. In these theories "the adult member [was] being considered naturally as mature, rational and competent, the child [was] viewed in juxtaposition as less than fully human, unfinished or incomplete" (Jenks, 1982/1992: 19). Again, these dispositions derive not from social theory, but from social life. They are borrowed from everyday life.

Beginning in 1970s (e.g. Mackay, 1974a, 1974b) and in growing numbers during 1980s and 1990s, however, there were increasing critiques of these traditional perspectives on children. Some critiques emerged from within developmental psychology. Donaldson (1978) for example critiqued Piaget's developmental stage paradigm. Through variations on Piaget's classic experiments, Donaldson demonstrated young children's capacities for reasoning and pointed to the role of social context and social processes in shaping children's development. He was among the first to show how the social context of the laboratory experiment, which was unfamiliar to children, inhibited their responses. When this context was changed young children's thought and reasoning was much more sophisticated than Piaget had claimed. Thus, "what appear to be 'faulty' reasoning actually indicates children's ingenious attempts to create sensible meanings for what are, to them, nonsensical situations and contexts" (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000: 25). Light and Perret-Clermont (1989) similarly deconstructed the Piagetian conception and investigations of "conservation," finding it "not as transcendent logical entities but as historically elaborated products of certain practical and social purposes" (1989: 109).[4]

Similarly radical critiques also began to appear about how childhood was being represented in developmental accounts. The foundational concept of "child development" itself came under increasing scrutiny. Critics from "social constructionist" approaches argued the terms "child" and "childhood" were not interchangeable (Corsaro, 2003, 2005; James Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Morss, 1992; Qvortrup, Corsaro, & Honig, 2009; Thorne, 2007; Woodhead, 1999). Childhood is a structural and cultural component of societies, within which all children (individuals) spend their personal childhoods. Thus, childhood exists in society as a social space to receive any individual (child) throughout their childhood periods. That is, childhood has a permanent structure in society, and its existence does not depend on particular members' entering or leaving it. It is a framework, within which children lead their lives. This point is crucial because it opens our considerations onto the multiplicities of childhoods across societies, and within a given society, as well as through history. It establishes both the regularity and the socio-cultural and historically situated nature of childhoods. As suggested by Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, children in different societies assume different relations with respect to adults. This changes nothing in the fact that children are heading towards adulthood. However, the conditions and circumstances under which they do, and the adulthoods achieved, differ among different cultural groups. The topic of interest shifts form children as an unfinished model of adulthood, to childhood studies which focus on studying children's everyday life as lived within a

particular childhood among many others. The focus of new sociological interest in childhood studies is on cross cultural and historical variations, and its stability within society, rather than on individual dispositions. Early childhood *experience* takes the center stage.

THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF CHILDHOOD

The issue was not just about a sensitivity to other people's childhoods 'out there'. It was about acknowledging the complexity of childhood within modern societies, and also about childhood experience as a due topic for study. Children were increasingly seen as "subjects with concerns" as well as "subjects of study and concern" (Buhler-Niederberger, 2012; Prout, 2000). Around the time when Berger & Luckmann (1967) were advancing an argument about the socially constructed nature of reality, new interpretive and interactionist approaches emerged in social science. In such an intellectual climate, childhood could no longer be seen as just the early part of a familiar life-course. Instead, it was proposed that the field of childhood studies be engaged in research for understanding the everyday life of children in their constitutive, meaningful detail. Thus, children's social relationships and cultures increasingly became a focus of study in their own right, without regard to the perspectives and concerns of adults.

Following these developments, British anthropologist Charlotte Hardman was among the first to suggest that children too, might inhabit a "self-regulating, autonomous world" (1973/2001: 87). She proposed an anthropology of children, and an agenda to investigate children's games and rituals as documents of an autonomous system of meaning in itself. Hardman brings into view oral traditions, interactions and iconic representations, which are exclusive to children.

> My proposed approach regards children as people to be studied in their own right, and not just as receptacles of adult teaching. My search is to discover whether there is in childhood a self-regulating, autonomous world which does not necessarily reflect early development of adult culture (Hardman, 1973/2001: 504).

In Hardman's lead, childhood studies became a matter of understanding an autonomous segment of social-culture distinct not just from other segments, but also from the individuals who populate this segment. This is the autonomy of culture.

> The children will move in and out of this segment into another, but others take their place. The segment still remains. The segment may overlap with others, may reflect on others, but there is a basic order of beliefs, values and ideas of one group which bounds them off from any other group" (Hardman, 1973/2001: 504).

In the emerging field of Childhood Studies, Hardman's formulation of children's culture produced the distinction between children and childhood. Thus, no longer could development be seen in naturalistic terms, in which children individually progress through stages to become adult members of their respective societies. Rather, as children express their distinctive culture as a collective system of meaning, they were seen to become competent actors in their world, and generate at the same time the pathway towards becoming competent in the adult world.

The American sociologist Matthew Speier, a student of Erving Goffman and subsequently Harold Garfinkel, also proposed the study of the everyday life of children (1970, 1976). Following the lead of Harvey Sacks, the founder of the sociological program of Conversation Analysis, Speier also argued that the child's world is a distinctive world.

> Children's cultural activities have a viable organization of their own and it is this organized world that is not very visible to adults. The nature of the child's organized world is hardly understood as yet (Speier, 1976: 172).

According to Speier, this distinctive culture poses an epistemological problem, because it is *not* simply a province within a larger social reality. Rather it is a coherent and distinctive world of meaning. He observes how traditional child studies have assumed a stance in which "the sociologist has incorporated his status as an-adult-in-society into his thinking about childhood" (Speier, 1976: 170). He proposes to take interest in childhood studies that transcend the "adult ideological viewpoint" to gain insight into the world of children. In these ways, he outlines a division between the world of children and that of adults, and calls for studies that are concerned with understanding the world of children *per se*. He maintains that both of these two cultures engage in a process of meaning making. Thus, he proposes that the new childhood studies be engaged in two distinctive problems,

> [T]he first problem is to examine interactional events in children's cultural activities, such as talking, play and games. The second problem pertains to the distinction between children's and adult's culture (Speier, 1976: 174).

Thus, Speier set the terms for these new studies via two central concepts, the child as "social actor" and the "generational order." The concept of the child as a social actor clearly implies a turn away from the future-orientation of the conventional approaches to an orientation to present, from concerns about children's learning and gaining competencies for preparation to adult life to their ongoing interactions in everyday life worlds. The conception of the child as a social actor has also offered a solution to the paradox implicit to socialization theory: on the one hand, children are to be socialized to become competent social actors. On the other, interaction between adults and children is required for socialization to take place. They must, then, *already*

be competent if socialization is to proceed. Socialization not only promises competence, it requires it. Thus, the concept of socialization itself turns on the notion of "interactional competence," a competence even very young children own. Following these analytical transformations, several studies turned to studies of children's everyday life interactions, peer interactions, adult-child interactions, analysis of their peer cultures and so on (Corsaro, 1985, 1988, 2003, 2005; Kantor, Elgas, & Fernie, 1993; Kantor & Fernie, 2003; Mehan, 1974, 1979, 1980, 1982; Merritt, 1982; Payne & Hustler, 1980; Phillips, 1972). These new childhood studies have been showing children to be social actors, capable of enacting, constructing, transmitting, repairing a distinctive culture, proper to childhood, which is partly invisible to adults, but lived in juxtaposition to the adult culture. Through the concept of generational order, adult-child relations are conceived as a social arrangement between two generational orders. The interactions between them, including what each does and does not know of the other, becomes central for understanding children's eventual reproduction of adult culture.

In short, the conventional conceptions of studies of children, both the naturalistic perceptions of the developmental psychology and the socialization models of social theory, view childhood as a passage from incompleteness to completeness, disorder to order. However, there is no deficit of order in children's cultures; it is rather that their worlds contain different kinds of order that remain hidden in the dominant approaches to childhood studies due to the "the adult ideological viewpoints" that the literature brings to its studies of children. Committed to childhood as an active expression of our human nature, and children as competent interactionalists, the new sociology of childhood sets out a different vision of children and childhood, to be recovered from the close study of childhood experience.

NOTES

1 This paper has developed from Yahsi, 2011.

[2] Piaget defined equilibrium as the "compensation resulting from the activities of the subject in response to external intrusions" (Piaget, 1968: 101).

[3] Again, the interest in and exercise of assessing the possibilities for children is not new. We find parents and grandparents, community elders speak of their children. Teachers speak of their promising students. But these are local assessments without the authority or need for science or universal claims. They are only thoughtful, considered and disciplined. The accounts provided by the 'scientific' theories, such as Piaget's, however have functioned to scientize local cultural, thus write universal benchmarks for children in *everywhere*.

[4] They continue: [In] place of a Piagetian focus on cognitive development as a sequence of emerging logical competences, pragmatic, intersubjective agreements-in-meaning are seen as lying at the heart of the developmental process (Light & Perret-Clermont, 1989: 110).

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