

# Biographical Ruptures and Their Repair: Cultural Transitions in Development

reviewed by [Colleen A. Thoma](#), [Lauren Puglia](#), [Holly Whittenburg](#), [Gabrielle Pickover](#) & [Whitney Ham](#) – June 07, 2016

**Title:** Biographical Ruptures and Their Repair: Cultural Transitions in Development  
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*Biographical Ruptures and Their Repair: Cultural Transitions in Development* is part of a series devoted to advances in cultural psychology. Editors Amrei C. Joerchel and Gerhard Benetka invite contributing authors to explore biographical ruptures and repairs experienced by adolescents and emerging adults. In the book's preface, the editors describe this volume as "an attempt to depict heterogeneous approaches, alternatives to mainstream psychology, with the aim of further developing and broadening one's own understanding of the notion of ruptures and repairs linked with an explicit cultural psychological focus" (p. xiii). As an emerging perspective, some of the concepts included in the volume may be unfamiliar to many readers. However, they certainly apply to the challenges faced by youth as they assert themselves as adults and face the multiple developmental transitions of their lives. *Ruptures* is a term referring to the events in an individual's development that result in a significant change or disruption (Zittoun, 2006; Zittoun et al., 2012) while *repairs* are the attempts to overcome those disruptions.

Chapter One provides an historical overview of transitions faced by adolescents and focuses on developmental psychological theories. This includes the ideas posited by Stanley Hall, Erik H. Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Urie Bronfenbrenner. It also discusses our current understanding of adolescence and the transitions and developmental tasks faced during this period. The second half of the chapter focuses on how a cultural psychological approach could be applied to gain a more interdisciplinary understanding of the transitions faced during adolescence with the goal of understanding how youth experience ruptures and attempts to repair them.

In Chapter Two, Gelo introduces dynamic systems theory, a theoretical framework that allows individuals to gain a better understanding of ruptures and transitions over life development at varying levels. Gelo argues that life changes are both linear and nonlinear relationships within one another where ruptures occur. To conceptualize this theory, Gelo defines a multidimensional longitudinal design where the individual uses adaptability, variability, stability, small change, and complete restructuring to overcome these ruptures. The second half of the chapter investigates the relationship between dynamic systems theory, the individual, and levels at which transition occurs. Gelo defines the individual as his or her own dynamic system and the Big Five Theory approach identifies ruptures at the higher and lower levels within the system.

Chapter Three examines the central tenets of biological ruptures and repairs in the field of developmental psychology. This is examined from the overarching concepts of intersubjectivity and engagement. The process of becoming is tied to the act of being in the world. Ruptures and repairs demonstrate the importance of the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) and are based on the process and outcome of therapy involving the collaboration between client and therapist. Hviid & Villadsen view WAI as a step toward incorporating the act of being with personal meaning making. However, there has been little examination of the processes involved in the ongoing dynamics of the therapist and client. Ruptures in this context are seen as breakdowns in the relationship while repairs are the process of client and therapist addressing these challenges in a constructive manner.

In Chapter Four, Stephan Dietrich critiques the application of Heidegger's concept of being in the world to existing psychological theory and proposes a new way of imagining psychology and psychiatry. To that end, this chapter extends Chapter Three's argument that it is through being in the world that people engage with the world, themselves, and others within specific cultural and historical contexts. Heidegger's philosophy is heavy stuff and Dietrich's comprehensive and nuanced discussion of the fundamental ideas contained within this chapter is useful to readers especially those from different academic backgrounds.

In Chapter Five, the authors explore the disruptions and obstacles that occur in the lives of emerging adults from the ages of 18 to 30. Disruptions occur in their various spheres and include inner biological, individual psychological, cultural social, and outer physical. These disruptions bring about transformation and are critical in developing the individual. Individuals tend to have a do it yourself approach when resolving personal goals with

institutional requirements. Obstacles are barriers getting in the way of young adults' goals or pathways and the authors perform two analyses to examine the challenges emerging adults face.

Wrbouschek's Chapter Six focuses on exploring employment from multiple theoretical perspectives and ends with cultural psychology. This chapter is a departure from others in this volume in that it is not primarily focused on adolescence and the transitions that occur during that developmental stage. Instead, various management practices, current debates, and/or aspects of work life are explored more generically such as balancing work and life, lifelong learning, and employee motivation. In the second half of the chapter, Wrbouschek discusses the application of a cultural psychology perspective in understanding biological ruptures and repairs related to employment and outlines a series of challenges faced by wage dependents in their work and private lives.

In Chapter Seven, Zittoun and Gillespie introduce the gap in the research investigating transitions occurring between varying domains of experience (e.g., context, cultures, and social systems). After referencing and summarizing the work of Alfred Schütz, the authors introduce a theory derived from his research. Schütz's theory (1962) includes the notion that what may be acceptable in one culture may be inadequate in another but that the shared social world (actions that can be observed by a third person) is known as cultural patterns of group life. This includes the rules that are taken for granted or are transparent for local people such as dialect and everyday tasks. As life's obstacles occur and ruptures in transition, a person's development of new skills through experiences may determine the individual's development of goals, ideas, patterns, and values within themselves and cultural patterns surrounding them.

Chapter Eight explores the underlying effects of racism and its subsequent impact on the educational attainment and opinions of the social system from the perspective of Austrian-Turkish women. The chapter begins with an introduction to racism and how it impacts society. The authors' viewpoint is that while the word racism is taboo, elicits defensiveness, and prohibits discussion of the phenomenon it also continues to exist and underlies many aspects of society. This chapter shares three case studies to demonstrate how being perceived as coming from a culture of *otherness* has shaped Austrian-Turkish women's personal biographical ruptures. It has led to various ways of repairing these ruptures in regard to the development of these women's education and careers. Attempts at repairs are diverse and a product of how each woman internalizes and responds to her personal experiences with discrimination.

In Chapter Nine, Gekeler and Howarth view the biographical narrative research discussed in Chapter Eight through the lens of social representations theory (SRT). This chapter explores how social groups construct and share a "universe of commonsense knowledge" (p. 198). It also looks at what it means for Western societies and migrant groups when racist assumptions by the majority group held about migrants are unchallenged and unchanged. This chapter does not focus solely on a discussion of theory. Researchers, practitioners, and policy advocates will find their attention held by the authors' thoughts on how to recognize, explore, and challenge institutionalized racism in schools.

In Chapter Ten, Hampl focuses on the relationship among visual video composition, content, and media. For example, Hampl uses music videos to describe a recorded woman as an example of a confident character fixing her biographical rupture in a dishonest relationship. By using two videos as examples, Hampl argues that biographical ruptures and their repairs may not be universal but reflect sociohistorical contexts of meditated and habitual practices.

Summarizing previous chapters, Diriwächter's Chapter Eleven classifies ruptures as abrupt halts in our natural development through experiences indicating a new beginning or direction as opposed to everyday transitive changes. Following up on Chapter Ten, Diriwächter explains the importance of examining psychological experiences as a whole in relation to the Turkish music videos. While highlighting the work of Ganzheitspsychologie, Diriwächter discusses the importance of accounting for as much of the whole phenomenon as possible when finding meaning. Diriwächter argues that the music video can be used as an example of the biographical ruptures during the development process humans face. Finally, Diriwächter criticizes Hampl for concluding that biographical ruptures are universal. Instead, he posits that it is important to take into account each individual's development process to identify ruptures and provide a better understanding of the human development process.

In the final chapter, Traversa analyzes two case studies as explorations of ongoing transformations with abortion as the rupture in human experience. The author introduces the concept of sensuo-ethics to overcome this rupture. The term is defined as a way of deconstructing the politicization of nature based on permanent states of exceptionality. This includes human rights and procedures of arbitrary inclusion and exclusion and Traversa suggests a new way to interact with the world. Decision making requires individuals to examine their preexisting ideology when making a choice and the decision to have an abortion or move forward with the pregnancy is the

point when the rupture occurs. The repair consists in identifying your rights as an individual while also understanding the political stances and ethics that shape your decision.

Overall, *Biographical Ruptures and Their Repair* adequately introduces the cultural psychology approach to those who are unfamiliar with its tenets and demonstrates how it can be applied to understand the challenges faced by adolescents as they transition to adulthood. As with any introduction to a new framework, there remain many unanswered questions about how this particular framework addresses multiple changes. It provides direction for researchers, clinicians, teachers, and other professionals who provide specific services and resources to address some intended and unintended ruptures. However, it provides a perspective that could address changes that occur in the individual and his or her environment and the interconnectedness between the two. The authors call for further research and broader application of the framework will hopefully guide future work to understand this period of great transformation in an adolescent's life.

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## About the Author

Colleen Thoma

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

[E-mail Author](#)

COLLEEN A. THOMA is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Counseling and Special Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her research focuses on the transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities, including self-determination, teacher preparation, policy development, postsecondary education and application of universal design to transition. In 2014, was received the Oliver P. Kolstoe Award for contributions to transition other than teaching from the Division on Career Development and Transition. She was awarded a Switzer Distinguished Research Fellowship (NIDRR) in 2012, which provided the opportunity to conduct a qualitative study of postsecondary programs for individuals with intellectual disability. She has authored over 150 articles, books, book chapters, and national/international presentations at professional conferences. She is a Fellow of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, and is the current President of the Education Division of that organization.

Lauren Puglia

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

[E-mail Author](#)

LAUREN PUGLIA, M.Ed. is a doctoral student in Special Education and Disability Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University and a member of the Research to Policy Advocacy leadership cohort. Her research interests include the use of assistive technology and transition outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Holly Whittenburg

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

[E-mail Author](#)

HOLLY WHITTENBURG, M.Ed., M.A.Ed., is a doctoral student in Special Education and Disability Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University and a member of the Research to Policy Advocacy leadership cohort. Her research interests include transition planning and employment for young adults with autism spectrum disorder.

Gabrielle Pickover

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

[E-mail Author](#)

GABRIELLE PICKOVER, M.Ed., is a doctoral student in Special Education and Disability Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University and a member of the Research to Policy Advocacy leadership cohort. Her research interests include secondary and transition education for youth with emotional and behavior disorders.

Whitney Ham

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

[E-mail Author](#)

WHITNEY HAM, M.S., is a doctoral student in Special Education and Disability Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University and a member of the Research to Policy Advocacy leadership cohort. Her research interests include supports that facilitate the transition to employment for youth with autism and other developmental disabilities.