



Introduction to Developmental Psychology



Beliefs about 'development'

What sorts of beliefs might people have?

- 'Development':
The sequence of changes over the full lifespan of an organism

Where do our beliefs about development come from?

- Psychological research filtered through books/media
- Wider beliefs - social, cultural and religious
- Specific family beliefs/practices; personal experience

Historical Foundations

- **4th century**

Original sin (Hippocrates)

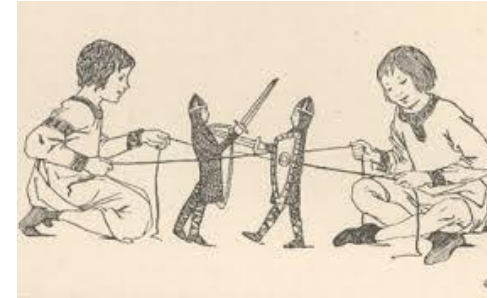
- **6th-15th Century**

Medieval European pictures

Class? Wealth?

Written texts - childhood different from adulthood

By **14th century** – the legal system recognized difference



Historical Foundations

- Religious writings – contradictory
 - Child = evil
 - Child = innocent (angel/cherub)



- Puritan dogma – **16th Century**
 - Child innately evil (Hendrick, 1997)
 - 'Original sin'
 - Purging

Early Philosophers

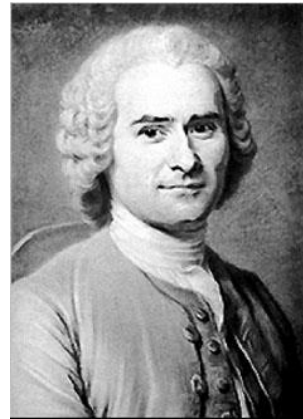
- John Locke- British philosopher – **Late 17th Century**

- '*Tabula rasa*' - experiences



- Jean-Jacques Rousseau - **Early 18th Century**

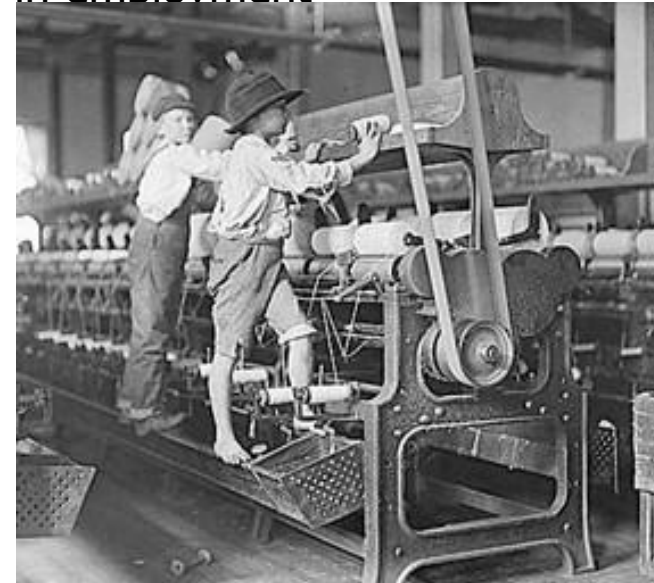
- Innate innocence – '*noble savages*'
 - Innate nature for healthy growth and development
 - Stages of development



Historical Foundations: Modern influences

- Industrialisation – **Early 19th Century**

- Wealthy middle classes – childhood 'to be enjoyed and protected'
- Working class families – children as young as 5 in employment



- Industrialisation

– Access to traditional 'men's work'

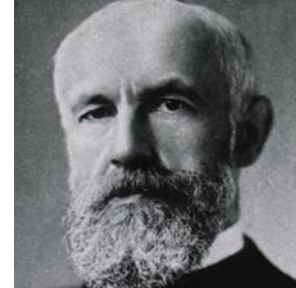
- Child = an important economic commodity
- Concept of 'childhood' - minimized until mid 19th C.

Historical Foundations: Modern influences

- **Social reform – Mid 19th Century**
 - 1842 Mines Act – no under-10s
 - 1844 - half-time working - school aged children
 - 1880 - compulsory schooling
- Child 'economically worthless' but 'emotionally priceless' (Zelizer, 1985)
- Reality?
- Many low-SES children still 'economically essential'

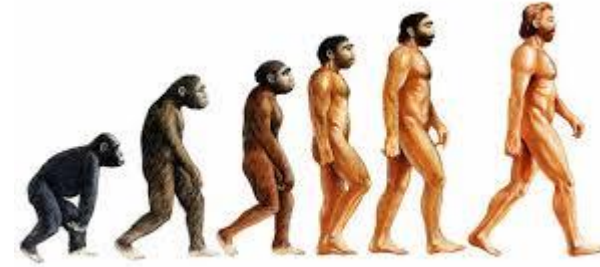
Historical Foundations: Modern influences

- G. Stanley Hall - child study to scientifically study development
- **Social reform** – **late 19th Century** onwards
 - After WW1 – children = 'future of the nation'
 - Fall in rate of infant mortality **Why?**
 - Persisting class inequalities - further reform
 - Schooling more state organized



Theoretical Influences

- Darwin - theory of evolution (1859)



Genetically predetermined individual differences

- G Stanley Hall (1844-1924)

Genetics; maturation

Detailed investigation of child development

= beginning of child psychology

Two key influences in child psychology

- Psychoanalytic perspective (1900's+)
 - Sigmund Freud
 - Stages - conflicts between biological/sexual drives and social expectations
 - Resolution determines future mental health
- Cognitive developmental theory (Piaget 1930's+)
 - Active construction of knowledge
 - Cognitive adaptation
 - Consecutive stages of development

Major Themes in Developmental Psychology

- Nature and Nurture
- The Active Child
- Continuity/Discontinuity
- Milestones
- Mechanisms of Developmental Change
- The Socio-cultural Context
- Individual Differences

Nature and Nurture

Nature - biological endowment

Nurture - range of environments

'The nature-nurture debate' – is it nature or nurture that supports development?

Nature – e.g. inheritability of schizophrenia (Kety et al, 1994)

Nurture – e.g. PM and JM – abused by step-mother (Koluchova, 1972, 1991)

Nature and nurture working together

Example:

Schizophrenia (Tienari et al, 1990) – Finnish study

Adopted children

Substantial likelihood of developing schizophrenia were those with both....

- a schizophrenic parent

AND

- who were adopted into a troubled family

The active child: contributions to own development

- 'Easy' or 'difficult' babies
- Contributions increase with age

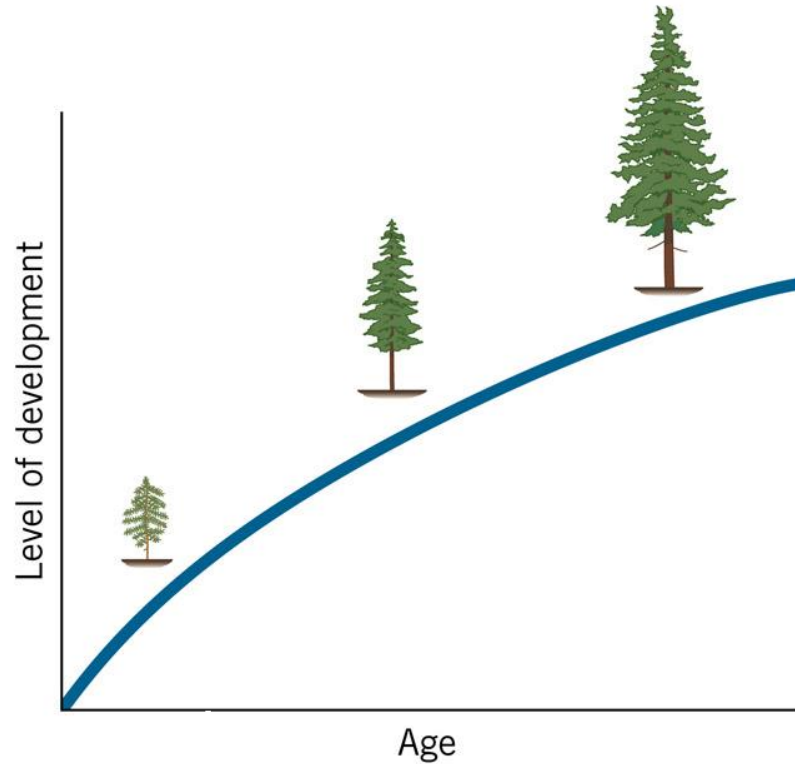
Why?

- Choice of environments, friends, and activities



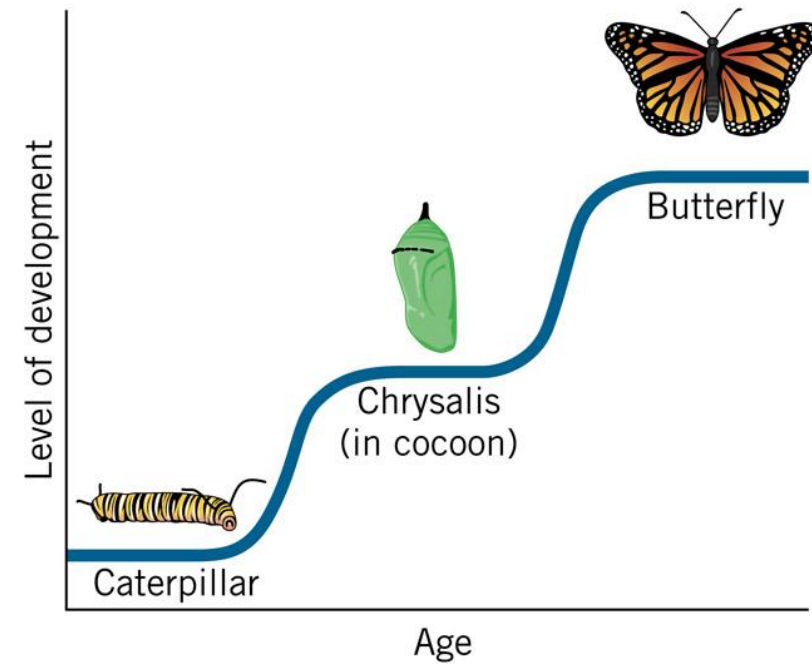
Continuity vs. Discontinuity

Pine tree: Developmental continuity



Continuous development

Butterfly: Developmental discontinuity



Discontinuous development

Milestones

- Parental beliefs and expectations about 'milestones' (e.g. Goodnow and Collins, 1990)
- Are milestones useful?

3 months	7 months	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Begins to develop a social smile	Enjoys social play	Enjoys imitating people in his play	Walks alone	Climbs well	Goes upstairs and downstairs without support	Swings, climbs, hops, somersaults
Raise head and chest when lying on the stomach	Transfers objects from hand to hand	Reaches sitting position without assistance	Points to objects or pictures when it's named for him	Turns book pages one at a time	Draws circles and squares	Says name and address
Watches face intently	Ability to track moving objects improves	Bangs two objects together	Begins make-believe play	Uses 4 - 5 word sentences	Tell stories	Can count 10 or more objects
Smiles at the sound of your voice	Respond to own name	Responds to simple verbal requests	Demonstrates increasing independence	Sorts objects by shape and colour	Cooperates with other children	Likes to sing and dance
	Finds partially hidden objects					

Mechanisms of developmental change

- Maturation
 - The growth of relevant brain structures (e.g. Piaget)
- Cognition e.g.
 - Cognitive conflict (e.g. Piaget)
 - Cultural bases of cognition (e.g. Vygotsky)
- Environment
 - The influence of the wider world
 - e.g. 'shaping' or 'scaffolding' learning
(e.g. Bronfenbrenner; Vygotsky; Bruner)

The socio-cultural context

- Between cultures

Interdependence and society vs. independence and self-reliance
e.g. Mayan and US families

Value of formal schooling – no schooling, early start, later start

- Within cultures

Socioeconomic status

Why?

e.g. nutrition, resources, quality interaction time, opportunities.....

- Across time

Changes in cultural beliefs, values and practices

Individual differences

- Scarr (1992)

Genetic uniqueness (except 'identical' multiple births)

Treatment by others – children's characteristics?

Subjective reactions to responses of others

Choice of environments - associated niche/role (Scarr and McCartney, 1983)

Lifespan Development

- For example
 - How and when a “sense of self” is developed
 - Development of moral reasoning
 - Adolescence - a time of “storm and stress”?
 - Coping with challenges in young and middle adulthood?
 - Facing old age



Useful reading

- Berger, K.S. (2007). *The developing person through the lifespan*. New York: Worth. Chapter One (pp 3 – 32)
- Berger, K.S. (2007). *The developing person through the lifespan*. New York: Worth. Chapter Two (pp 33 – 60)
- Santrock, J. W. (2009). *Life-span development* (International Edition). London, McGraw-Hill. Chapter One (pp 4 – 42)
- Miller, P. H. (2008). *Theories of developmental psychology*. NY: W.H. Freeman and Co. Introduction (pp 1 – 23)
- Thornton, S. (2008). *Understanding human development*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter One (pp 1 – 43)

