



# ISCAR NEWS

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The International Society for Cultural & Activity Research is an association, whose purpose is the promotion and development of multidisciplinary theoretical and empirical research on societal, cultural and historical dimensions of human practices. For more information visit: [www.iscar.org](http://www.iscar.org)

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## 1. A Few Introductory Thoughts

Dear ISCAR members, dear friends and colleagues,

A series of developments is currently taking place on all levels of the ISCAR community and we are happy to announce some of these activities here: the forthcoming Il'enkov's conference in Moscow, the Bakhtin conference in Sweden, (PhD) workshops on activity theory in Europe and USA, book publications from different places of the world, the new German-Dutch webpage etc. — I will not try to summarize the very long newsletter here; it becomes clear that, more or less half a year after the 2nd ISCAR Conference in San Diego, a series of local initiatives unfolds which the Executive Committee is more than happy to bring together in what makes the ISCAR spirit of diversity and creativity.

We would like to thank all local members that sent us the announcements published here as well as congratulate the various local organizers for their engagement and commitment. Special thanks is ought to the members of the ISCAR Executive Committee Kevin O'Connor and Manuel Luis de la Mata for their support in editing this Newsletter.

The deadline for submitting information for the next Newsletter is the June 30, 2009. We remind you that the Newsletter may include short information in different languages on various topics and coming events. Please feel free to submit reports on the ISCAR section meetings, short abstracts of dissertations, event announcements

(workshops, conferences, exhibits etc.), information on recent and forthcoming book and journal publications, calls for papers and special issue proposals as well as information on grants and job positions in all languages to: [michalis.kontopodis@staff.hu-berlin.de](mailto:michalis.kontopodis@staff.hu-berlin.de)

Please feel also at ease to address any issue or idea to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of ISCAR does not aim to apply any guideline or central policy other than that of locality and diversity. In this regard local initiatives are more than welcome and the Executive Committee would be most happy to support them. **We would like to emphasize here that local initiatives from PhD students are also welcome**—please contact your local coordinator for support. We would also wish that a special section for PhD students is organized by PhD students in Rome 2011 (for example as a pre-conference workshop).

The Newsletter would also welcome news from Latin American, African and Asian countries as well as from young members and PhD students (e.g. dissertation abstracts).

At the same time that ISCAR has proven itself to be a lively and engaged community, it has become clear that we as cultural and activity researchers have a lot of work to do in acting on different levels 'in' and 'with' the world. The forthcoming special issue of *Mind, Culture and Activity* on "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory and Action Research" is devoted to exactly this (see below).

Concerning the current socio-political situation in Greece, I would like to close this short notice with the open letter of the friends of Alexis Grigoropoulos, the young boy killed on December 6, 2008 by a policeman. Taking into consideration that a significant part of ISCAR research deals with issues related to youth and education, I think that this letter concerns all of us:

WE WANT A BETTER WORLD! HELP US!

We are not terrorists, "hoodies", "the known unknown".

We are your children: these known unknown... We have dreams – don't kill them!

We have impulses – don't stop them!

Remember: You were also young once. Now you are after money, you care only for prestige, you have become fat and bald, you have forgotten! We expected you to support us, we expected you to show some interest, to make us for once feel proud of you. In vain! You live fake lives, you have bowed your head, you have your trousers pulled down and are waiting for the day you will die. You have lost the ability to imagine, to fall in love, to create! You can only sell and buy. Materialism everywhere. Love nowhere. Truth nowhere. Where have the parents gone? Where the artists? Why don't they take to the streets to protect us? They kill us.

HELP US!

Your children

P.S. Stop throwing more tear gas to us, we can cry on our own

*With friendly regards,*

Michalis Kontopodis, ISCAR Secretary

## 2. General ISCAR News

### Membership Contribution for 2009-2011

Dear ISCAR members, we want to advertise the possibility of renewing your membership. The membership contribution for 2009 is \$25 USD. It is also possible to make your contribution for two years (\$50 USD) or three years (\$75 USD). In this way you can be part of the association without going through the subscription process each year. We also like to remember that being an ISCAR member means being a part of an active international association, whose purpose is the promotion and development of multidisciplinary theoretical and empiri-

cal research on societal, cultural and historical dimensions of human practices.

ISCAR member also receive the following benefits:

- Discount on the Congress fee to the next ISCAR Congress (Italy, 2011)
- Price reductions on ISCAR publications
- Price reductions on ISCAR-affiliated journals
- Price reductions on other publications
- News announcements via email

You can pay by credit card payment form, online payment via PayPal, personal check, EURO-cheque, bank draft in your national currency. More information about how to renew your membership or how to become an ISCAR member is available on the web site:

<http://www.iscar.org/membership.html>

For any further information please do not hesitate to contact the treasurer office at the following email address: [treasurer@ISCAR.org](mailto:treasurer@ISCAR.org)

## ISCAR Honoured

At the IXth International Lev Vygotsky Memorial conference on "Methodology and methods in Psychological research", ISCAR was honoured by the Russian Psychological Society with a certificate for keeping the tradition of cultural-historical approach. The certificate (shown below) was received on behalf of ISCAR by its President Marilyn Fleer.

## 3. Regional News & Events

### News from the German-Dutch Section

The German-Dutch Section is proud to announce its new webpage: <http://www.iscar.org/de>

Here you can find information in English or in German (and sometimes in Dutch) on recent news and events as well as older publications and institutional information. German and Dutch local members are invited to submit always-actualized news.

*What is more:* a German speaking Activity Theory workshop is taking place in Germany in July (see below) and another one which will be in English and is addressed to members from Germany and Holland and guests is planned to take place in January or February 2010 in Berlin and Potsdam. More information on this will be published soon. Some ideas of coordinated research and teaching between Holland and Germany



have already been discussed and we invite members from Germany and Holland to address their interest in these activities to the local coordinator: [michalis.kontopodis@staff.hu-berlin.de](mailto:michalis.kontopodis@staff.hu-berlin.de)

## 6. Workshop „Tätigkeitstheorie und kulturhistorische Schule“ vom 10. bis 12. Juli 2009 im Haus Ohrbeck bei Osnabrück/ 6th Workshop on 'Activity Theory and the Cultural-historical School

Wie in den vorherigen Workshops, richtet sich auch dieser an praktisch und wissenschaftlich Tätige, die an der kulturhistorischen Schule und der Tätigkeitstheorie interessiert sind. Er versucht, ein Forum zu bieten, auf dem Erfahrungen ausgetauscht, eigene Beiträge vorgestellt und konzeptuelle und praxisorientierte Fragen auf dem Hintergrund der Tätigkeitstheorie diskutiert werden können. Der Kreis richtet sich an ein breites Spektrum an Disziplinen und Tätigkeitsfeldern, wozu unter anderem die Psychologie, die Erziehungswissenschaften, die Psycholinguistik, die Sozialarbeit, die Betriebswirtschaft, die Computerwissenschaft, die Philosophie und die Sportwissenschaft gehören.

### Themen

Auf der letzten Tagung wurde in der Abschlussdiskussion eine Reihe von interessanten Themen angesprochen bzw. es wurde ein gewisser Bedarf nach Information und Diskussion erkennbar. Die Themen sollen hier einmal zwanglos in Erinnerung gerufen werden: Entfremdung in den verschiedenen Lebensbereichen, Tätigkeits- und Systemtheorie; Gesten, Schrift, Sprache; Vygotskijs Arbeiten zum schriftlichen Sprechen; Zählen als basale kognitive Funktion; Zur Historie der kulturhistorischen Schule.

Natürlich ist jedes andere Thema ebenso willkommen.

Deadline für die verbindliche Anmeldung zur Tagung: 1. Mai 2009

Deadline für die verbindliche Anmeldung von Beiträgen: 1. Juni 2009

### Vorläufiges Programm

Die Tagung beginnt am Freitag, den 10. Juli 2009 um 18 Uhr mit dem Abendessen (Sammeln ab 17 Uhr). Am Samstag und Sonntag finden Vorträge der Teilnehmer statt und am Sonntag wird über die zukünftigen Aktivitäten diskutiert. Die Tagung endet am Sonntag, den 12. Juli 2009 mit dem Mittagessen um 13 Uhr. Im Preis von 96€-115€ sind Unterkunft und Verpflegung (Vollpension) für Freitag bis Sonntag im Haus Ohrbeck enthalten.

Anmeldungen sind per E-Mail zu richten an: Falk Seeger, [falk.seeger@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:falk.seeger@uni-bielefeld.de) mit folgenden Angaben: Name und Anschrift mit Telefon, eventuell Titel des Beitrags; Ankunfts- und Abfahrtszeit – falls diese vom Tagungsbeginn und –ende abweichen.

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## Regional Activities in Finland

### CRADLE: A new center for investigating Activity, Development and Learning

Two research centers functioning under the auspices of the Faculty of Behavioral Sciences, University of Helsinki, namely, the Center for Research on Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research (Department of Education) and the Centre for Research on Networked Learning and Knowledge Building (Department of Psychology), have decided to merge and form a new, internationally oriented research unit starting on January 1, 2009. The name of the new unit is the Center for Research on Activity, Development, and Learning (CRADLE). The Department of Education will be the mother organization of the new Center at the University of Helsinki. Through a series of workshops and discussions, the participating investigators and partners are creating a research program for the new centre and developing the model of its scientific management.

The Center for Research on Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research (<http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/activity/>) has pursued ground-breaking research based on cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) since 1994. This multidisciplinary research unit, which functioned as a national

centre of excellence from 2000 to 2005, has significantly contributed to the development of CHAT-based research to a globally highly regarded paradigm. The methodology of developmental work research elaborated in the Center has significantly enriched research on work life and work-related learning. The Center has carried out a large number of research projects concerning work, education, and innovations; trained several generations of doctoral students; and produced numerous international publications. The doctoral program of the Center has produced 22 PhD dissertations; in addition, investigators of the Center have supervised 11 other doctoral dissertations. International evaluations indicate that the Center's impact has increased continuously.

For more than 10 years, the Centre for Research on Networked Learning and Knowledge Building ([www.helsinki.fi/science/networkedlearning](http://www.helsinki.fi/science/networkedlearning)) has pursued learning research based on psychology and cognitive science, from elementary-level education to higher education. Many investigations have addressed how learning and human intellectual resources can be expanded by relying on collaborative technologies based on informati-

on and communication technologies. During the most recent years, the centre's research activity has expanded toward investigating personal and collective learning processes taking place in knowledge-intensive organizations. Simultaneously, the group that was originally oriented toward cognitive study of individual learning has moved toward socio-cultural and activity-theoretical research.

In the background of merging the research units are positive collaborative experiences concerning the large EU-funded Knowledge-Practices Laboratory project ([www.kp-lab.org](http://www.kp-lab.org)) and exciting novel research challenges emerging from these interactions. There are 22 organizations from 15 countries which take part in this project, focused on developing "triological" technology for facilitating collective creation of knowledge.

The purpose of the new CRADLE is to create a stronger research community with higher international impact and attraction, a national and international cradle of activity-theoretical and socio-cultural research. Within the new Center, the following five professors will each lead their respective research groups: Yrjö Engeström (research on activity theory and expansive learning in transformations of work and organizations), Kai Hakkarainen (research on epistemic technologies), Reijo Miettinen (research on innovations and organization of research work), Pirita Seitamaa-Hakkarainen (research on craft, design, and learning), and Jaakko Virkkunen (research on interventions and the formation of new operating concepts in organizations). A number of post-doctoral researchers and doctoral students, as well as visiting researchers pursuing nationally and internationally funded research projects, will work in the new Center. The Center is responsible for the Doctoral Program of Adult Education and Developmental Work Research (part of the national graduate school of educational research (<http://vanha.edu.utu.fi/kasva/>) as well as for the Master's Program of Adult Education & Work Development (<http://www.helsinki.fi/ktl/atmo/>).

The following will be some of the research foci of the

### **News from Australia, New Zealand and China**

Professor Elena Kravtsova, the Director of the Vygotsky Institute at the Russian State University of the Humanities (RSUH) and the granddaughter of Lev Vygotsky, together with Professor Gennady Kravtsov, also from the RSUH, visited Monash University in Australia. They spent 2 weeks within the Faculty of Education delivering a course on cultural historical theory following the theoretical works of Lev Vygotsky, and workshopping many concepts in relation to imagination and play through their pedagogical approach of experimental theatre. Methodological discussions also

new CRADLE:

- Human activity in societal and cultural contexts across everyday life, school, work, and communities of science and culture;
- Technology-intensive knowledge practices in educational systems and working life; expansion and augmentation of human activity potentials through collaborative learning supported by information and communication technologies;
- Learning from the developmental perspective, especially expansive learning associated with radical transformations of activity concepts;
- Human activity in heterogeneous networks that break organizational, institutional, cultural, and national boundaries by various means;
- New forms of work and organization of activity within a globalizing world; human potentials of guiding the development of their activities within global organizations;
- Pursuit of innovation and design as challenges of work and learning;
- New potentials, instruments, and forms of agency and collaboration.

The Center is focused on reciprocal interaction between theory and practice. Many investigations of the Center are formative interventions that use the Change Laboratory method. CRADLE will work in a close collaboration with work organizations, educational institutions, and organizations pursuing investigative developmental consulting (including the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and Verve Consulting). The Center continues and expands its collaboration with polytechnics (universities of applied sciences), developing and investigating pedagogical solutions that cross boundaries between education and work. International collaborators of CRADLE include the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition at University of California, San Diego, as well as research centers based on activity theory and socio-cultural approaches at the universities of Bath and Oxford (United Kingdom) and Kansai University (Osaka, Japan).



featured. The course culminated in a one day symposium where more than 50 people attended. Participants

flew in from all of Australia and from New Zealand.

#### 4. Summer Schools and International Conferences

##### **Second International Interdisciplinary Conference on Perspectives and Limits of Dialogism in Mikhail Bakhtin, Stockholm University, Sweden: June 3–5, 2009**

The increased interest in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin among Western scholars has been particularly evident ever since the 1980s. Because of its erudition and versatility as well as its multidimensionality and open character, Bakhtin's ideas about dialogism have been a source of inspiration for various approaches within different scientific fields.

The core of Bakhtin's theory is dialogue and dialogicality, where the "I" and the "self", the "you" and the "other" are embedded in each other, affecting each other, and functioning together as a centrifugal force around which communication and life circles.

This interdisciplinary conference on Bakhtinian issues aims at addressing researchers, and, research on dialogue and dialogicality, within and between different academic disciplines. The scopes of the conference include dialogism within and between disciplines such as anthropology, art, education, economy, gender, history etc. (see conference webpage). The conference is however not limited to these themes, but welcomes proposals within any academic field, that focus on theoretical, empirical and methodological aspects of dialo-

gism. The program committee invites researchers to send proposals as a paper, a poster or a symposium. Proposals must be submitted electronically on the conference website. You will find all the instructions for submitting your proposal in the form. Please open and follow the directions: [www.nordiska.su.se/bakhtin2009](http://www.nordiska.su.se/bakhtin2009)

*Keynote Speakers:* Michael Holquist, Hugo Lagercrantz, Per Linell, Ragnar Rommetveit, James V. Wertsch  
For more detailed information about the conference, visit the website:

[www.nordiska.su.se/bakhtin2009](http://www.nordiska.su.se/bakhtin2009)

Whatever questions you have about the conference, do not hesitate to contact:

Karin Junefelt: [karin.junefelt@nordiska.su.se](mailto:karin.junefelt@nordiska.su.se)

Lena Geijer: [lena.geijer@did.su.se](mailto:lena.geijer@did.su.se)

##### **Dates to Remember in 2009**

**January 31:** Submissions for paper, poster or symposium proposals.

**March 25:** Notification of acceptance/rejection.

**April 3:** Deadline for registration.

**June 3–5:** Conference days

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##### **Nordic Network on Disability Research 10th conference in Denmark, April 2-4, 2009**

**10<sup>th</sup> NNDR conference**  
**Challenging Positions in Disability Research**  
Normativity, knowledge and praxis  
April 2 - 4, 2009  
Nyborg - Denmark

**Keynote speakers**  
Kjersti Ericsson, Oslo Uni,  
Tom Shakespeare, UK  
Niels Aakerstroem, CBS  
Ian Walmsley, UK  
Kjeld Høgsbro, Aalborg Uni.

**Sessions**  
Paper and poster sessions  
**Cultural presentations**  
TV-Glad  
Limfjordsskolen  
Billedspor

**Nordic Network on Disability Research**  
[www.nndr2009.dk](http://www.nndr2009.dk)

## **11th International Il'enkov Memorial Congress dedicated to 85 years of Evald Il'enkov's birth: IL'ENKOV AND NEW PROSPECTS OF DIALECTICAL THOUGHT**

Moscow, May, 13 - 15, 2009

The 11th International Il'enkov Memorial Congress dedicated to 85 years of Evald Il'enkov's birth will take place on 13-15 May, 2009.

The main themes of the conference:

- Il'enkov and world Marxist philosophy
- Il'enkov as a founder of a new stage in CHAT psychology
- Il'enkov and actual social, political and cultural problems of modernity

A proposal (500 words) has to include: Family Name, Given Name, Email Address, Institutional Affiliation, detailed Mailing Address including Street, City, State/Province, Country, Postal Code.

The works presented at the conference will be published. The working languages of the conference: Russian, English.

### *Deadlines*

- Submission of proposals: February 15, 2009
- Abstracts acceptance: March 1, 2009

### *Registration Fees*

- €150 for overseas participants
- 1500 roubles for those from CIS
- 1000 roubles for Russian participants

Further information will be sent as a newsletter to every participant by email and found on the following websites:

[www.voxnet.ru/~monada](http://www.voxnet.ru/~monada)

[www.caute.net.ru](http://www.caute.net.ru)

For more details please address to Organising and Programme committees:

[ilyenkov.conf@gmail.com](mailto:ilyenkov.conf@gmail.com)

[surmava@yandex.ru](mailto:surmava@yandex.ru)

### *Address*

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For Russian speakers tel.: +7 499 720 8718 (Irina Mikhailovna)

For English speakers Skype: alexander.surmava (Alexander Surmava)

Fax.: +7 495 455 88 24

## **Summer School on Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research, University of Bath, July, 2-3 2009**

The Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research is holding its annual summer school on Thursday 2 July and Friday 3 July at the University of Bath, United Kingdom. The primary purpose will be to present current research work within the Centre, both from researchers

and doctoral students. All are welcome to attend and participate in the discussions. If you are interested to participate or would like more information, please write to Professor Harry Daniels [h.r.daniels@bath.ac.uk](mailto:h.r.daniels@bath.ac.uk)

## **Russian Vygotsky Summer School 2009: "Total Immersion in the Golden Key School Methodology", Belaya Kalytva, Russia: June 19 – 26, 2009. Director, Prof. Dr. Elena Kravtsova (granddaughter of L. S. Vygotsky).**

This summer school will take place in a Golden Key elementary school, with professors/staff/students from the Vygotsky Institute of Psychology, Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, and others, attending. We will join the staff and students/parents in the village of Belaya Kalytva (approx. 26 hours south of Moscow), and participants will stay in one hotel, and will come to the school each day for the events. The Program Committee will prepare an overview of the Golden Key concept by introducing the curriculum for various levels in depth, according to the different grade levels of instruction, from early childhood until around 11 years of age. Participants will have the opportunity for participation, presentations, questions, role-playing themselves, and learning about how a Vygotskian methodology is practiced in education in Russia. You will also have the unique

opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Vygotsky family/and team today. Participants will be immersed in how the Golden Key elementary school environments are created, within an integrated curriculum, understanding how the ZPD is interpreted.

*Travelling Information:* Participants will have two options to reach Belaya Kalytva, Russia:

- 1) Arrive in Moscow a couple of days early (especially for the time change adjustment, and the police registration...this registration cannot happen on weekends). Those of us arriving in Moscow, and the Summer School staff/students from the Vygotsky Institute of Psychology, will be taking the overnight train from Moscow to Belaya Kalytva on June 19th, arriving around noon the next morning. Participants will pay for the train ticket individu-

ally, not included in the registration fees. If you select this program, we will leave Belaya Kalytva mid-afternoon for a train to Moscow on June 26th. We will be working with you individually about your stay in Moscow that evening and your return flight the next day, or later.

2) The other alternative is the following: Fly to Rostov-on-Don (or simply Rostov, Russia) directly. You will be responsible for the cost of the transfer from Rostov to Belaya Kalytva, with our help. The detailed information will be provided. We are hoping that a small group of international and Russian participants will be willing to embark on a real adventure, knowing that we will not have all of the comforts of home. And, yet, the rewards can be tremendous in terms of understanding how Vygotskian methodology is practiced in education in Russia, in the Golden Key Schools. You will also be involved in discussions on establishing a viable international network that begins to understand each other from different perspectives, and you will have an exciting opportunity of developing cross-cultural collaboration. You will have two options upon arriving in Russia: You can come to Moscow first, or you can fly directly to Rostov-on-Don, where you will be met and taken to Belaya Kalytva (with additional transfer fees applying). We will all meet and begin the Summer School 2009 in Belaya Kalytva in the early afternoon of June 20th. Please bring your swimming suits for afternoon swims!

*Price:* (with no exceptions):

Regular registration fee: \$200

Student registration fee (for students under 30): \$100

IVS member fee: \$150

The registration fee will include printed materials, workshops, all lunches, tours around Belaya Kalytva, welcoming party, and a banquet, and bus transfers from the hotel to the Golden Key school each day.

## 5. News for and from PhD Students

### I. Full PhD stipendium at University of Bath

The Department of Education invites applications for studentships leading to the award of PhD. Studentships in the area of Socio-Cultural and Activity Theory [CSAT](#) are available. Closing date: 30th April 2009. Application forms for all studentships can be downloaded from the Graduate Office:

You will be responsible for: your visa application, flight to/from Moscow or Rostov-on-Don, transfer from/to airport, hotel in Moscow and/or hotel in Belaya Kalytva (which will be arranged for the group), international health insurance, and evening meals. Due to the international financial situation, all prices are subject to change. We are keeping the registration as low as possible.

*Certificate:* If you are engaged in the entire course, you will receive a certificate of participation, which will be personally signed by the daughter of L. S. Vygotsky, Gita L'vovna Vygotskya.

*Deadlines:* In order for the Vygotsky Summer School 2009 to take place, we will need to have your registration form, and flight information [scanned and e-mailed], by May 15, 2009. There must be at least 15 participants, with plane tickets purchased for the Summer School to take place. Once we hear from you, you will be sent an application form. And, once we receive that form, together with a scanned copy of your airline ticket, we will begin working with you individually. Remember that you will need around one month for the Russian visa process. However, if we do not reach this number of participants, please know that you can attend the seminar in Belaya Kalytva on your own.

We will be happy to send you the registration form as soon as we hear from you. Once we receive verification of a paid plane ticket (scanned and e-mailed), we will begin working with you individually. The registration fee will be paid once you are in Russia. You can be sure that we will do everything in our power to make your stay in Russia most enjoyable and profitable. For contact and information write to the international directors: Dot Robbins at [dot.robbins@gmail.com](mailto:dot.robbins@gmail.com) and Elina Lampert-Shepel at [ellampert@gmail.com](mailto:ellampert@gmail.com)

<https://secure.bath.ac.uk/prospectus/cgi-bin/applications.pl>

Applicants should normally have a good honours degree in a relevant discipline. See also:

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/education/news/news0043.html>

### II. PhD Workshop: COMMUNITY INTERVENTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIZING

*Target Group:* Ph.D. students in the field of psychology, pedagogy, anthropology, social sciences, interdisciplinary projects, projects with aspects of intervention, action research, practice research, etc.

*Main Topics:* Relations between intervention, processes of social change, research and theorizing. Communities and everyday life. Research as part of social change.



Action research, practice research, participatory research. Different theoretical perspectives on the relation between theory and practice. Methodological and analytical challenges in ph.d.-projects.

*Enrollment before 01.06.09*, at: Mikael Meldstad, Coordinator, Graduate School in Life Long Learning and Social Psychology of Everyday Life Roskilde University Pav. 10, Box 260, DK-4000 Roskilde Denmark Email: [mdm@ruc.dk](mailto:mdm@ruc.dk)

### **III. Ph.D. Course in Developmental Psychology: Practice research: Researching Children in Institutional Practice**

Responsible for the course is Professor Mariane Hedegaard Department of Psychology, Copenhagen University

*Date:* 13.-15. May, 2009

*Place:* University of Copenhagen, room TBA

*Deadline for applications:* 24 March 2009

Limit: 15 students

#### *Teachers*

Professor Anne Edwards Department of Education, Oxford University

Professor Mariane Hedegaard, Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen

#### *Content*

In the course we examine relationships between children's development and its social situation and, in particular, focus on how children are able to make sense of and engage with different settings. The studies discussed raise questions of how to research children's development as they participate across different institutional contexts in their daily lives. Sessions will focus on how to research children's experiences as they move across settings and on the role of the researcher in these settings, for example, in relation to practitioners in institutional settings. Questions raised will include 'how do different traditions of practice and

### **IV. PhD Tutorial: Basic Concepts of Systemic-Structural Activity Theory (SSAT) and its Application in Human Computer Interaction**

*Organized by* Karwowski and Bedny in the context of the 13th International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction, 19-24 July 09, Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, CA, USA.

#### *Objectives*

1) Introduce basic principles and concepts of SSAT, the relationship between general and systemic-structural activity theories, cognitive psychology, action theories and situated approach; 2) Demonstrate multiple examples of the algorithmic, functional and quantita-

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*More information & subject description:*

<http://www.psy.au.dk/en/forskning/danish-research-school-of-psychology/activities/course-calender-2009/community-intervention-and-psychological-theorizing/>

values set conditions for children's learning and development?' Sessions will focus on the collective and practice-based processes of learning rather than on learning as individual cognitive processes. Starting with the practices, presented in case studies and elaborated in theoretical discussions, will allow us to examine how the conditions for children's learning and development are created.

*Form:* The course will alternate between lectures, groups and plenary discussions. The aim is that the discussions should be relevant and applicable for students' work on their own projects. Therefore, there will be time for students' presentations of their projects in groups as well as continuous reflections on the usefulness of the course.

Along with their admission form students are required to submit a short paper (max. 1 A4 page) on their own research project, this will be the basis for the discussion of the students' projects.

*Preparation:* Students should have read a series of texts, which will be provided on-line, prior to the start of the course. Note that only students who are able to participate in the entire course should apply.

For more information and the program contact: [Marie.Hedegaard@psy.ku.dk](mailto:Marie.Hedegaard@psy.ku.dk)

tive task analysis in the HCI field. 3) Give hands on experience in applying the demonstrated approach to the analysis of Computer based tasks 4) Show how the results of the task analysis can be used for enhancement of software, reduction of the task complexity and increasing the reliability of human performance.

For details on participation and registration see: <http://www.hcii2009.org/> or contact: [gbedny@optonline.net](mailto:gbedny@optonline.net)

## **New Dissertation: Talking to infants: how culture is instantiated in early mother-infant interactions. The case of Cameroonian farming Nso and North German middle-class families**

Autor: Carolin Demuth, Dipl.Psych (Email: [cdemuth@uni-osnabrueck.de](mailto:cdemuth@uni-osnabrueck.de)).  
Universitaet Osnabrueck, Institut für Psychologie, Fachgebiet Entwicklung & Kultur

This study wants to contribute to a better understanding of child development by considering the broader cultural context in which it is embedded in. It takes a socio-cultural approach and considers childcare practices as adaptive to the specific requirements of a given cultural context. Particularly, it is interested in investigating discursive practices in early mother-infant interactions in diverse cultural settings and relating them to prevalent cultural models of childcare. A survey of research literature suggests that infant-directed communication varies greatly across cultures. It is suggested that protoconversation as described in the literature might be a cultural manifestation of an underlying innate parenting system prevalent in Western white middle-class context and that there might be other phenotypical forms of protoconversation in non-Western agrarian societies. Moreover, the study takes a practice approach to language and is interested in investigating how the construction of specific versions of the social world is achieved in the process of the ongoing interactions, particularly with regard to the dimensions autonomy and interpersonal relatedness.

The study therefore examines mother-infant interactions from two cultural contexts previously described as prototypically independent (German white middle class families in the city of Muenster) and interdependent (farming Nso families in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon). The data corpus originates from an earlier longitudinal study and consists of video material and transcriptions of 20 Nso and 20 Muenster mother-infant dyads at the infant's age of 12 weeks.

The data are analyzed following the principles of qualitative social research using strategies from discourse

analysis, conversation analysis and documentary method. Different patterns of co-constructing mother-infant interactions were found and are discussed in chapters 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Chapter 4.1 presents findings of a pattern of co-operative vs. hierarchical discourse; chapter 4.2 discusses findings of narrative-biographical vs. rhythmic- synchronous structuring; and chapter 4.3 surveys examples of individual-centered vs. socially oriented discursive strategies. The results point to the possibility of innate characteristics of protoconversation as well as culture-specific manifestations of their phenotype. The results are discussed with regard to the specificities of the relevant local socio-cultural contexts and possible implications for the development of culture-specific world views and self-construals.

The thesis concludes by arguing that infants' 'narrative envelope' is a powerful medium to transmit cultural knowledge, even in interactions with pre-verbal infants. Maternal discursive practices are both constituted by culture and constitute culture. Finally, some of the main implications of the study's findings for theory and practice are discussed. It is suggested that what is healthy and pathological development needs to be (re-)defined for each specific cultural context. Curricula for training pediatricians, psychologists, teachers and other social workers accordingly need to take a socio- or eco-cultural approach in order to ensure culture-sensitive counseling and teaching. Further studies from socio-cultural contexts that have so far been neglected in academic research are needed that systematically relate infant-care practices with cultural models of child care. The study of discursive practices is suggested to be a particularly promising avenue to this line of research.

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## **6. Mind, Culture and Activity: *Call for Papers: Special Issue on "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory and Action Research"***

First version submitted: *July 31, 2009*

Reviewing and decisions for accepting papers completed by: *January 31, 2010*

At the ISCAR conference in San Diego in September 2008, at an invited symposium on "The Social Construction of CHAT: An Intervention" a lively debate developed on the relationship between Action Research and CHAT. Yrjö Engeström expressed the view that Action Research is "not a method" and has no value for those engaged in CHAT, an opinion that was contested

by several members of the audience. Anna Stetsenko, another contributor to the symposium, reminded us that Lev Vygotsky and Kurt Lewin, who is generally acknowledged as the first to use the term Action Research, were friends and influenced by each other's work.

Since then, both CHAT and Action Research have grown into very heterogeneous approaches, each with an ongoing discussion between diverse positions on how to

relate theory, research, and practice, yet perhaps also with some common ground.

To continue the debate, the Editors of MCA have invited Bridget Somekh, co-Editor with Susan Noffke of the \*Handbook of Educational Action Research\*(Sage, 2009), to be Guest Editor of a Special Issue of Mind, Culture and Activity. Bridget has been a member of ISCAR, and previously ISCRAT, for the last ten years and uses both CHAT and Action Research in her own work. The Special Issue will be co-edited by Morten Nissen, who has written and co-edited a number of texts on action / practice research in the CHAT tradition, and is member of the ISCAR executive committee.

The aim of the Special Issue will be to provide a platform for comprehensive and critical discussion of the issues arising from methodology and practice in the experience of those working in the field of socio-cultural research with a CHAT and/or Action Research orientation.

The special issue will examine but will not be limited to:  
1. In what sense CHAT and Action Research can be said to be methodologies, including informed critique of either or both approaches

2. How and why some "action-oriented" methodologies articulated in terms of CHAT (e.g. "developmental work research" or "practice research") take up, ignore or reject elements from the Action Research tradition
3. The relationship between mind and action in CHAT and how this compares with work on reflection in action research
4. How the problem-focus in action research compares with the focus in CHAT on understanding the objects and motives of activity
5. How the Marxist legacy in CHAT compares with the use of critical theory in some approaches to action research when the field of problems and references is widened to social theory and philosophy.
6. The political in action research and in CHAT – in areas such as the politics of identity and community, the politics of knowledge
7. Comparisons between fundamental theoretical ideas in CHAT and Action Research, such as those were developed by Vygotsky and Lewin and their followers
8. Historical accounts of the work of Vygotsky and Lewin during their lifetime and the extent to which each may have influenced the other.

For any questions, please email Bridget Somekh ([b.somekh@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:b.somekh@mmu.ac.uk)) and Morten Nissen ([morten.nissen@psy.ku.dk](mailto:morten.nissen@psy.ku.dk))

## 7. New ISCAR-related Publications

*You are welcome to write recensions for the next Newsletter, please contact the authors or the Newsletter editors in case of interest.*

### **Problems of Developmental Instruction: A Theoretical and Experimental Psychological Study by V.V. Davydov (Translated by Peter Moxhay, Peaks Island, Maine), 2008**

Series: International Perspectives in Non-Classical Psychology (D. Robbins and V.A. Lektorsky - Series Editors)

Binding: Hardcover; Pub. Date: 2008, 3rd Quarter (in press), ISBN: 978-1-60456-552-2

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Based on the results of many years of experimental and theoretical research, it is impossible not to conclude that the problems of developmental instruction and upbringing are among the most significant problems of contemporary psychology, especially in the fields of developmental and pedagogical psychology. The overall orientation of pedagogical thought and practice will in large part depend on their successful elaboration. The essence of these problems can be expressed concisely

as follows: Do a person's instruction and upbringing determine the processes of his psychical development, and if they do determine them then is it possible to understand the nature of the link between psychical development and instruction and upbringing? In other words, can we assert that developmental instruction and upbringing exist, and, if they exist, then what laws do they obey? In everyday life, these problems sometimes take the form of the question: Can we, by means of instruction and upbringing, develop in a person certain psychical capacities or qualities that previously did not exist?

In the history of psychology, several theories have been created with respect to these problems, each of the theories being based on data from a given pedagogical practice, on materials derived from experience. These theories may provisionally be divided into two groups. The adherents of the first group of theories deny that

instruction and upbringing can have any significant effect on a person's psychical development, i.e. they deny the very existence of developmental instruction and upbringing. Adherents of the second group of theories acknowledge the determining role of instruction and upbringing in a person's psychical development and try to study the laws of developmental instruction and upbringing. Each of these two basic groups of theories

has many different variants. The authors notes that the accepted techniques of instruction and upbringing in different educational institutions are in some way connected with these theories. Therefore, the pedagogical practitioners who are guided by such techniques realize, consciously or unconsciously, fully or partially, the principles of one or the other of these groups of theories.

**New Publications in 2008 in the Series: International Cultural-Historical Human Sciences, <http://www.ich-sciences.de/>**

Roth, Wolf M.; Lee, Yew-Jin; Boyer, Leanna  
*The Eternal Return Reproduction and Change in Complex Activity System: The Case of Salmon Enhancement*  
Price: 29.00 Euro (368 p.) Lehmanns Media.

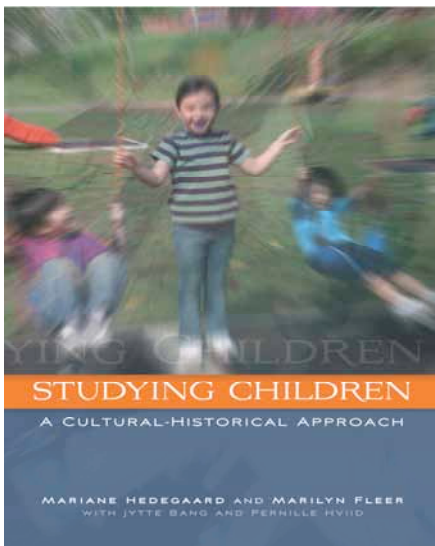
Cultural-historical activity theory frequently is used as a framework for studying static situations statically. In this book, the authors implement Lev Vygotsky's call for doing unit rather than element analysis by studying activity dynamically, across different spatial and temporal scales. The eternal return, that is, the continual production of change while reproducing the system, is taken as the central metaphor for a system that produces self-movement. A case study is provided of salmon enhancement in British Columbia (Canada), linking the 120-year cultural history of this activity, with the 30-year evolution of a fish hatchery that concretely constitutes the system in one of the possible ways, and the knowing and learning of individual fish culturists, which is analyzed at the time scales of five years down to the micro-evolution of individual conversations. Most importantly, the authors implement Vygotsky's call for theorizing

affect and emotion at the very heart of the activity system, showing how the eternal return allows us to understand the change of worker involvement and identification with the goals of their workplace.

Rückriem, Georg (Ed) *Lev Semenovic Vygotskij Briefe/Letters • 1924-1934* (german/engl.)  
Price: 38.00 Euro (352 p.) Lehmanns Media.

Vygotsky's voluminous correspondence well known for its international extent has been lost during the turmoil of war. Partly by accident partly after hard investigation some of his letters to friends, disciples, and colleague scholars have been recovered. Their contents are of high interest to issues regarding both his biography and the history of his work. Importantly, they provide new insights into his personal relations, especially to Leontiev. The present book is the first comprehensive compilation of Vygotsky's letters which are available at the moment. It additionally includes the accessible replies of his addressees.

**Studying Children: A Cultural-Historical Approach, by Marianne Hedegaard and Marilyn Fleer**



*Studying Children* is the first book of its kind to offer a theoretical and practical discussion of how to undertake research using cultural-historical theory when researching the everyday lives of children.

The authors discuss the complexities of child development, providing a critique of alternative perspectives of research and notions of development. They provide a number of case studies following researchers in early childhood as they move from a developmental approach to a cultural-historical framework for observing and planning for young children. The book is rich with examples of how to undertake specific methods, such as surveys, experiments, case studies, digital video observations, interviews, and children as researchers.

*Studying Children* is a valuable resource for academics,

researchers and students working in the field of Early and Middle Childhood at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Open University Press is pleased to offer ISCAR members 20% off of 'Studying Children: A Cultural-Historical Approach' by Marianne Hedegaard and Marilyn Fleer as well as 20% off all of our Education titles until 28th February 2009.

### **The Materiality of Learning: Technology and Knowledge in Educational Practice, by Estrid Sørensen**

Hardback List: £45.00/\$80.00 Disc: £36.00/\$64.00 (DISCOUNT TO ISCAR MEMBERS: 20% Discount Offer)

Discount Code: ME9ISCAR, Discount offer good: Until May 20th, 2009

Publication: March/April 2009, pp. 224

The field of educational research lacks a methodology for the study of learning that does not begin with humans, their aims, and their interests. The Materiality of Learning seeks to overcome this human-centered mentality by developing a novel spatial approach to the materiality of learning. Drawing on science and technology studies (STS), Estrid Sørensen compares an Internet-based 3D virtual environment project in a fourth-grade class with the class's work with traditional learning materials, including blackboards, textbooks, notebooks, pencils, and rulers. Taking into account pupils' and teachers' physical bodies, Professor Sørensen analyzes the multiple forms of technology, knowledge, and presence that are enacted with the materials. Featuring detailed ethnographic descriptions and useful end-of-chapter summaries, this book is an important reference for professionals and graduate or postgraduate students interested in a variety of fields, including educational studies, educational psychology, social anthropology, and STS.

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### **Special Issue: Materializing Times: From Memory to Imagination. Guest Editors: Michalis Kontopodis (HU Berlin) & Alexander Kozin (FU Berlin), Memory Studies, 2, 1: 2009.**

Situated at the margins of the history of modern Western thought, this special issue of Memory Studies brings together such diverse theoretical traditions as cultural-historical theory, phenomenology, process philosophy, Actor-Network Theory, symbolic interactionism and anthropology of the senses for an in-depth examination of the interrelations of time, mattering, and memory. It seeks to challenge traditional and mainstream approaches to time and memory by emphasizing material-semiotic interaction and its creative aspects. Various discourses and empirical examples from the fields as diverse as philosophy, film studies, architecture, educa-

tion and ethnography are brought together in order to explore the relation of time, materiality, and memory. By engaging with a variety of material-semiotic orderings such as monuments, institutional documents, and pictures, the special issue also examines the temporal and processual aspects of materiality itself. It therefore addresses the issues concerning the relations between and among material, semiotic, and virtual aspects of memory. It also reflects on the emotional qualities as well as political and ethical aspects of individual and collective memories, elaborating on such phenomena as nostalgia, testimony, multiplicity, or novelty.

**Embodied Mind, Situated Knowledge and Education: Approaching the Poetics and Culture of the Thinking Body – Interdisciplinary Approaches, by Marios Pourkos (2008) Athens: GUTENBERG (605 pages, published in Greek with English Table of Contents and Abstracts).**

Extended Summary & Introduction in English:

The study of human action, communication and knowledge through the perspective of the body is a new field of study/research of our bodily existence and relationships with others. Rationalism and abstract objectivism of the Western cultural traditions as well as most approaches of philosophy, psychology, history, sociology, including sciences of education have, to a large extent, ignored the fundamental relationship of body with cognitive, communicative and cultural processes, functioning on a basis of various forms of dualisms: mind-body, intellect-experience, subject-object, substance-phenomenon, organism-environment, nature-culture, society-individual, public-private, language-speech etc. On the other hand, in view of today's extreme fetishist consuming materialism, supporters of (the ideology of) logical positivism, in trying to reconcile the dichotomy of mind-body lead to a simplified interpretation of it. In so doing they project the priority of certain autonomous pre-social-cultural experiences (where most money for research is spent), formulated with reductionistic and mechanistic terms of Biology and Neurosciences: hormones, instincts, brain, neural networks, genes etc.

Consequently, the discussion, in connection with our bodily existence, opens a wide, new horizon for the application of eminently interdisciplinary critical reflection and investigation of the body and the world of ineffability (unsaid) which is connected to it. It can contribute in such a way that certain major traps and crucial difficulties that are presented nowadays through the viewpoint of dualistic, reductionistic and mechanistic approach (priorities) can be overcome. In this context, a variety of fundamental issues are raised - certain of which are addressed further on and are the basis of this collective interdisciplinary book.

What is the body? What constitutes its existence? What does it include and how does its content relate to reality? Is it a social-historical and cultural construction or something with a different ontological status? If it is construction, then who shapes it and based on what is it shaped? Is the body a passive medium (vehicle), something that can be shaped like clay, a simple field of bioforces or something as dynamic as fire, a subjective force that resists dominating pressure, something that disrupts the identity it manufactures, something that creates divergences which affect historical movement? Is it a medium, an instrument, a tool or something else? If it is a medium, which is the driving force behind the

negotiation and management of it? Are there certain organisational principles that are put into effect regarding the function and constitution of the body? How are these principles applied to our daily life? Which is the suitable (appropriate) level (standard) for the valid study and analysis of the body? How does the body function concerning our existence? Which role does it play in the way that we experience reality, how we think and act and how we relate to ourselves and with others? What part does the (function of the) body play in the way we relate to social hierarchy and the relationships of power games played in the family, in school and in society? How does the body relate to social structures, history, the processes of learning and education and culture in generally? How, and to what degree, do social-cultural structures affect the body and vice versa? To what extent, in other words, is the body simultaneously an object that on it are drawn the social-cultural relations and a subject that shapes these relations? Is there a pre-social material, natural and biological hypostasis of the body which remains constant regardless of the processes of socialization? How does the body acquire symbolic meanings in the relationship of the acting agent with society as a whole? Which phenomena can the body bring to light, reveal and clarify, concerning both knowledge as well as theory, but also questions of application regarding health, learning, education, development etc. Which role, for example, does the body and the experience of embodiment play in the cognitive processes? To what degree does the body constitute the basis (foundation, ground) of experience? Are there ideological elements in the very mechanisms of the body?

The aim of this interdisciplinary collective book is the presentation of contemporary problematics (positions held, critique, controversies, dilemmas, misunderstandings, fallacies, misuses) and the recent research conclusions concerning: (1) the nature of the body, (2) the social-historical and cultural dimensions of the body, (3) the role that the body plays in cognitive, learning, developmental, communicative, interpersonal, social-moral and psychotherapeutic processes, (4) the bodily bases (foundations) of artistic/aesthetic creation and communication and (5) the role that the body plays in religion and in the creation of new forms of subjectivity.

The 26 chapters of the book are divided into in eight parts. The first titled "Body and Social-Historical and Cultural Processes" is made up of three articles. Here, the social-historical and cultural dimensions of the body

are presented including an explanation as to the heightened interest in the body near the latter part of the 20th to the beginning of early 21st century. The basic sociological interest in the body are presented in a critical way speculating the classic Cartesian dualism mind-body and the traditional image of the body as an absolute biological entity. Considering modern data of medical knowledge and the new network technologies of communication we are faced with certain questions concerning the new disembodied experiences and the possibilities of new forms of human re-embodiment (forms such as "cyborgs", "post-bodies" and "virtual bodies"). Furthermore, we look at the social-historical conditions of work systems (Taylorism, Fordism, neo-Taylorism) where the body had begun to be individualised and had become an object for scientific observation and biopolitics and by extension of ergonomic management and a field of investment and discipline (which came from the quantification and the breaking to pieces of social work).

In the second part, which is titled "Body, Knowledge, Moral Orientations and Alternative Psychopedagogical Approaches", three articles are presented. In this part the important aspects of the relationships between the body and cognitive or and moral processes are shown. In critical juxtaposition to the ontological and epistemological dualism of mind-body, alternative proposals and reflections with regard to the approach of concepts and categories, the explanation of the phenomenon of the phantom limb and the understanding of moral action and formation processes of moral orientations of two the two sexes (gender) are presented. As an extension of these proposals and reflections alternative solutions with regard to the processes of acquisition of knowledge in the framework of education and collaboration of philosophy with the science are suggested.

Part three, titled "Body, Child and Education: Bodily Control Practices and Creative Dimensions of Bodily Action", is made up of five articles. There is an analysis of the concept of Body, as it is described by various great philosophers, from antiquity to today and concerns are expressed with regard to the reasons why today in education cognitivism, the mechanistic and dualistic perceptions prevail which (in turn) lead to breaking of knowledge into pieces and to a multiple split of the student. Concerns are expressed also regarding the current movement of "embodiment", where there is an emphasis on the liberation of the body of the individual through spontaneous expression, non-verbal communication and the activation of personal experience. Children's body control practices (techniques) are also investigated in the context of modern education and in the current analytic educational program (curriculum) as well as in the daily space and time framework of kindergarten. Moreover, the creative dimensions of bodily action are stressed in the framework of education with

the presentation of assumptions and the application of the alternative approach of psychomotor education of children in nursery school. Emphasis is also placed on an alternative social and psychopedagogic approach of children with simultaneous loss of sight and sound (deaf-blind children), that was developed by A. Meshcheriakov at the special school of Zagorsk in Russia. In the end the concepts of bodily schema and image, and how these are developed in the child, are presented.

Two articles make up part four titled "Body and Non-Verbal Communication in the Educational and Learning Process". Here, aspects of the body from the point of view of non-verbal communication are presented so much on the level of the senses (smell, taste, touch) as well as on the level of behavior and expression of feeling (non-verbal communication skills). Data are also presented to show that the various aspects of non-verbal behavior and communication play an important part in the pedagogic/learning process and that it can be the subject of teaching and learning, can be enriched and be developed pedagogically. Moreover, it is argued that what we generally call experiential learning and knowledge is based on our body.

The fifth part titled "Body and Art (Bodily Dimensions of Artistic/Aesthetic Creation and Communication)" has four papers. In this part important aspects of the body are presented and how they, constituting the basis of intersubjectivity and experience, are important in the artistic and aesthetic creation and communication processes. This is supported so much so in the artistic work of Yves Klein as well as the art of drama (according to the views held by Aristophane's Thesmophoriazusaee), in the platonic aesthetics (at least according to Plato's Charmides) and in Karagiozis (who, according to the analysis that takes place for the viewpoint of M.M. Bakhtin's work, constitutes the incarnation of the bodily, social and ideological "bottom" that is found in dialectic and communication relation with all sorts of "top").

The sixth part titled "Body and Processes of Construction of New Forms of Subjectivity" has two articles. Here, there is interesting speculation with regard to the way in which medical and psychological science and mainly the new currents of alternative holistic medicine nowadays deal with various aspects of the body (suffering body and sex) and the self. The essential characteristics of this new stream are described, analyzing the meanings that liberate discourse from the body and its disorders, the expectations and claims that are produced, as well as their institutional crystallizations and endangerments. The role that psychotherapy and counselling play in the formation of modern forms of "subjectivity" are viewed, simultaneously investigating the structural homologies between the psychotherapeutic approaches and discourse and the traditional, magic-religious systems of

thought. It is generally supported that the modern rational, instrumental management of the body, that is seen as an autonomous field of production of meanings and emotions, eventually imports new forms of social control, new forms of constraints and normalities. Such a process inducts new forms of metaphysical reception of the body that also leads to a new type of metaphysics of the self and of identity.

The seventh part titled "Body and Psychotherapeutic Processes" is made up of three papers. This part presents the modern theoretical and research data with regard to the concept and basic dimensions of body image and role that it plays in the psychological constitution and development of the individual and what happens when it is disturbed. As examples of disturbed body images cases of schizophrenics and of individuals with eating disorders and anorexia nervosa are shown, where the dynamics of body image are seen and how it relates to intrapsychic/interpersonal and family dynamics. Data are also presented regarding the possibilities of the reconstruction of the disturbed body image of schizophrenics and individuals with anorexia nervosa via psychotherapy. In this part interesting arguments are also presented that interpret or explain the effectiveness of psychotherapy through art, for example dance-movement therapy, music therapy and generally art therapy.



The eighth and last part titled "Body and Religion" is made up of three articles. In this part we see how various aspects of the body relate to religion and particularly the religious experience. The views of St. Ioannis of Chrysostome on the human body are presented, and how in the work of M. Bakhtin that concerns the body, the alterity, the self-other relationships and the issues of aesthetic creativity latent in the tradition of kenosis of

Christianity and concretely in the orthodox theological concerns. The bodily practices that are used by various religions are presented, aiming at the initiation and facilitation of the religious experience among their followers. Is the body a worthy issue of interest for a researcher who is interested in and searching for answers to issues regarding the way that human action is shaped and developed and by extension experience and knowledge? The basic answer to the question held by the writers of the articles in this book is "yes". Their writings sensitise us, each in his own way, concerning the questions that trouble us, that social and humanistic sciences, including the sciences of education and art should extend their horizons or viewpoint, taking into consideration the disregarded, and yet ever-present (the "absent presence", as is reported by Shilling) reality of the body and bodily experience, but also the possibilities of its transformation.

In the last two decades one can easily ascertain an incredible elevation in the interdisciplinary interest in the body, both in the framework of academic scientific research as well as in the framework of art, therapy and popular culture. Indeed, there's a flood of conventions regarding the body and no important annual meeting in the social sciences, in the cultural and humanistic studies is considered complete today without at least one convention or statement/announcement, dedicated to the body. Particularly, from the 1980's onwards, studies in which the body is recognized as a fundamental subject for the social theory and the modern culture and policy began to be presented (the studies focus on various issues, such as are for example the nature of the body, the relationships of the body with history and social-cultural structures and institutions, the body as an object of social control, that the body is connected with the processes of development and formation of self and identity taking into consideration gender, social class, race, age, sexuality etc, the question of the "normal" and "abnormal" body, the body in relation to new technologies, consuming culture, religion, ethics etc.. There are, as is discussed in the first chapter of book, a lot of reasons for this growth of interest in the body. Certain of which are the political and social movement of feminism, the complex legal and moral questions with regard to the modern medical technologies of in vitro insemination, the growth of techniques of virtual reality, the ever increasing use of cyborgs for military as well as for industrial purposes, the growth in the area of modern consuming culture of new aesthetic trends that consider the body as a basis etc.

One of the basic issues today in this new order of things and the abundance of approaches for the body (philosophical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, biological, medical, therapeutic etc) and the parallel cognitive revolution with the growth of new rationalistic



approaches, where the body does plays no important part in the development of knowledge) is for one to find a proportion, to keep a realistic and sober attitude, far from biases and dogmatic perceptions, showing the complexity of the subjects and how the various factors interrelate in a dynamic and dialectic way. Also, with regard to the nature of the body and its part in human perception and action, there is no doubt that what we need today, more than ever before, is a theoretical approach that would be made up of the various discoveries from various scientific sectors. The articles that were assembled for this book, even though they are far from being this integration, nevertheless constitute part of a dialogue on certain of the fundamental questions of modern thought on the body, its representations, our bodily existence in its various dimensions, as well as the possibilities of the body extending the limits and the horizon of our experience with the use of various mediatory means (e.g. tools, instruments, appliances, symbo-

lic systems etc). From their research one can easily notice that neither the choice of issues presented, nor their analysis offer complete range and all the aspects of this dialogue. However, we want to believe that these texts leave a suspicion or hint on the importance of the above dialogue, that they extend the possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration, reciprocal (mutual) learning and enrichment and that they can also activate curiosity for further searches and critical depth.

This book is aimed at a wide public, from the second cycle and postgraduate students up to those (experts and not) that mainly deals with and are interested in social theory, psychology (mainly those that are related with social, developmental, cognitive and pedagogic psychology), philosophy, cognitive science, cultural study, feminist' theory and sociology and anthropology of the body.

## **PERSPECTIVES AND LIMITS OF DIALOGISM IN MIKHAIL BAKHTIN: APPLICATIONS IN PSYCHOLOGY, EDUCATION, ART AND CULTURE, by Marios Pourkos (Ed) Rethymnon: University of Crete 2008**

VOLUME I: In Greek; Volume II: In English (different contents, not translated)

In the forty-one chapters that are included in both volumes of the present collection, emphasis is placed on the perspectives and limits of dialogism in Mikhail Bakhtin's work, as well as on its application in psychology, art, education and culture. In other words, the aim is to investigate contemporary issues and recent research approaches related to: (a) the nature of dialogism and its various dimensions or meanings that emerge from Mikhail Bakhtin's work, (b) the breadth, flexibility and universality of Bakhtin's understanding of dialogism, and other key-concepts that permeate his work (carnival, the concept of border, 'superior' and 'inferior' civilization, folk laughter, meaning, small and great time etc), (c) the reception of Bakhtin's ideas both in his birthplace, Russia, and the West, (d) a comparative analysis between Bakhtin's theoretical and methodological assumptions and several postmodern appropriations of his work, (e) a comparative analysis between the idea of Bakhtin's dialogism and the philosophy of dialogue, (f) ethical or moral, ontological, epistemological, methodological, literary, psychological, educational, socio-historical, cultural and ecological dimensions of dialogism, (g) contemporary Bakhtinian readings of literary works, (h) contemporary applications of dialogism and carnival in a variety of fields (music, painting, photography, cinema and the plastic arts and visual culture in general), (i) the application of Bakhtinian thought and method in understanding contemporary social phenomena and globalized practices (e.g. 'Macdonaldization') and, finally, (j) the role dialogism plays in cognitive, learning, developmental, communicative, interactive and social-moral processes.

As already said, the basic concept in Bakhtin's work is dialogism. Dialogism derives from Greek διάλογος and means an interaction completed through and by λόγος, speech. However, the Greek word λόγος has many different meanings: speaking, thought, narration, mind, intellect, agreement, consent.

Searching through the relevant literature one can easily see that the concept dialogism has been used in many different ways and for a variety of purposes. In this book, we attempt to answer two fundamental questions regarding the essence of dialogism:

What is dialogism? How has it been defined throughout the history of its use, not only by its main advocate, Mikhail Bakhtin, but also by other important theorists that belong to different theoretical traditions? To what other uses, misuses or abuses has the concept of dialogism been subjected through its application to other research fields - in science, art and philosophy?

Is dialogism a unified social phenomenon? Are there several kinds or forms of dialogism? Can dialogism be used merely as a philosophical (ontological or epistemological or aesthetic) concept or it can also be used as a scientific category?

As an ontological category, dialogism is believed to characterize human existence in a fundamental sense. As an epistemological category dialogism belongs to a post-theoretical level. It may also refer to processes which people, with differentiated potential, use in order to communicate, act, acquire knowledge about the world or find meaning in the world. Moreover, dialogism has been widely used as an aesthetic, literary and moral

concept and Bakhtin's contribution to this development is particularly important.

This collective book consists of two volumes. The first volume contains 20 chapters and the second 21 chapters. The first volume contains essays in Greek while the second one includes studies written in English. Both volumes share a common thematic structure.

Volume I is made up of six parts. The first part (Bakhtin, Dialogism and Postmodernism: Dialogism in the Contemporary World), includes five studies, one of which also appears in volume 2 – this time in English (we are referring to Lyudmila Bulavka and Aleksandr Buzgalin's essay). The focus of part I relates to: (1) the various dimensions or meanings of dialogism in the special forms it takes in Mikhail Bakhtin's work, (2) the breadth, flexibility and universality of his thought on dialogism, sketching other key-concepts of Bakhtin's work, such as carnival, border, 'superior' and 'inferior' civilization, folk laughter, meaning, small and great time, (3) the differences between the idea of dialogism and the philosophic concept of dialectic, (4) a socio-historical retrospective account concerning the reception of Bakhtin's ideas in the USSR, (5) the reasons for the recent revival of Bakhtin's ideas both in Russia and the West, and (6) a comparative analysis between Bakhtin's theoretical and methodological ideas and the different versions of Postmodernism.



The second part, titled Ethical and Cognitive Dimensions of Dialogism includes two studies. Here the focus is on (1) the position of morality within the general framework of bakhtinian philosophy, (2) the possibility and the limits of application of bakhtinian theory in other fields, (3) the function of morality in relation to different aspects of civilization (science, aesthetics, everyday life, etc), and (4) how knowledge can generally be approached and interpreted as a dialogic process.

Part III (Bakhtin, Dialogism and Literary Criticism: Bakhtinian Readings of Literary Works), includes seven chap-

ters that focus on the importance of Bakhtin's concept of dialogue within the field of literary criticism. The authors deal with:

- how Bakhtin's ideas were 'imported' in France through Kristeva's psychoanalytic perspective and especially through her concept of intertextuality,
- the reasons which led Bakhtin to choose Sophocles and his tragedies as a base for his aesthetic and ontological inquiry,
- the advancement of a bakhtinian approach to the study of the identity of children's historical novel in Greece from the beginning of the 20th century up to the 1980's,
- an approach that emphasizes how children's historical novel was formed through communicative/dialogic interrelations of specific socio-historical conditions, becoming an institutionalized literary genre, the different shades that the idea of dialogism takes on within the context of the short story 'The Voice of the Spirit', by the Greek writer Alexandros Papadiamantis, where, as the title itself suggests, both the theme and the specific narrative development center around the concept of 'voice', past and present reception and use of Papadiamantis's work in education and finally, matters concerning (a) popular literature and its function as a cultural system within oral contexts and non-privileged parts of the society, (b) the place of popular culture and popular literature within Bakhtin's oeuvre, (c) word and utterance as centripetal and centrifugal forces in popular literature, (d) the ritualistic basis of verbal multiformity and (e) the limits of dialogism in popular literature.

The following two chapters (Part IV, Dialogism, Psychology and Psychotherapy) present a comparative analysis between Bakhtin's dialogic approach and Freud's psychoanalysis (Chapter 15) as well as a discussion of the ways in which a Bakhtinian dialogic and polyphonic approach can be used in psychological and psychotherapeutic research with drug addicts (Chapter 16). More specifically, this chapter focuses on how dialogic and narrative reflective processes which operate within group (especially family) contexts could contribute to the therapy of individuals dependent on substances, acting as counterweight to their depending speech. It is argued that, in the long run, the creation of dialogic reflection within group contexts helps them regain their autonomy and develop relationships on the basis of recognition of their diversity.

Part V (Dialogism, Self, Education and Learning Processes: Towards an Eco-Bodily-Experiential Approach), includes two studies. The first (Chapter 17) refers to some basic traditional and modern theories of the Self, paying particular attention to socio-historical-cultural, dialogic and ecological approaches. Critical examination of those approaches leads to the advancement of a new, synthetic approach (termed 'eco-bodily-experiential' approach), which constitutes an attempt to construct a widened perspective to the study of Self. The second chapter of this part (Chapter 18) focuses on

an analysis of the basic dialogic approaches to teaching, learning and development (e.g. the Socratic pedagogic approach, P. Freire's pedagogic ideas, L. Vygotsky's approach to human development and, Bakhtin's approach to dialogism). The aim is to initiate a constructive dialogue between them, and especially between Bakhtin's dialogical approach and that of L. Vygotsky and the socio-cultural tradition. Focusing on issues of communication, education, learning and development, the purpose of this chapter is to construct a wider theoretical, methodological and research perspective.

In the final part (part VI - titled Dialogism, Ethnomusicology and Cinema), Bakhtin's method and thought is applied to ethnomusicology and the study of visual culture, offering significant insights which go beyond conventional theoretical and research approaches that dominate these fields. Chapter 19 examines the role and position of dialogism, polyphony and heteroglossia within the context of ethnomusicology, within the process of getting 'inside' the tradition studied, and the process of accumulating and interpreting data. A research study conducted in Crete becomes the starting point for viewing the experience of fieldworking and writing the ethnographic text through a Bakhtinian perspective. The final chapter (Chapter 20) of the first volume constitutes a critical examination of the possibility of using Bakhtin's approach to the study of genre theory within film studies.

The twenty-one chapters of the volume 2 are organised in six parts. The first part, titled Bakhtin, Dialogism and Postmodernism: Dialogism in the Contemporary World focuses on (1) a socio-historical retrospective account of the reception of Bakhtin's ideas in the USSR, (2) the reasons that explain the growing popularity of Bakhtin's ideas both in Russia and the West, (3) a comparative analysis between Bakhtin's theoretical and methodological assumptions and various postmodern theoretical approaches (4) the development of contemporary globalized practices of fast food (the phenomenon of McDonaldization) and how these can be understood through a Bakhtinian framework which focuses on the notions of dialogism and carnival.

The next two chapters (part II: Bakhtin, Dialogism and Literary Criticism) discuss the importance of Bakhtin's dialogic approach for literary criticism. More specifically chapter 3 discusses some basic ideas of Bakhtin's approach, such as dialogism, the carnivalistic element in literary texts ('carnivalization' of literature), and proceeds to examine how Bakhtin's ideas were imported in France through Kristeva's psychoanalytic perspective and especially through her notion of intertextuality. Chapter 4 discusses problems concerning the limits of the theoretical scheme that Bakhtin proposes for the analysis of Dostoevsky's work, questioning the validity of the use of

this scheme as a hermeneutical tool for understanding Dostoevsky.

The four chapters that belong to part III (Philosophical and Methodological Dimensions of Dialogism) present (1) a discussion of dialogism within the Platonic philosophical universe, (2) a comparative analysis between Bakhtin's dialogism and the philosophy of dialogue (as exemplified in the work of M. Buber and J. Tischer) and a discussion of how these perspectives might be mutually enriched, (3) the basic assumptions of the Bakhtin's circle and the way the work of the thinkers that belonged to this circle could inform the study of human and social phenomena on an ontological, epistemological and methodological level, (4) the way in which Bakhtinian philosophy, through its emphasis on dialogue and the carnivalistic element, could help bridging the gap between theory and practice in social sciences and (5) how the ideas of the Bakhtin's circle on language, dialogism and carnival can enrich the notion of Research as Praxis in interesting and productive ways.

The following three chapters (part IV, Dialogic Dimensions in the Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Research: The Example of Dialogic Self) discuss the way Bakhtin's dialogic and polyphonic approach could be used productively by psychological and psychotherapeutic research that centers around the study of self and identity. First, the phenomenon of internal dialogue is analytically pursued, with special reference to the possibility of its empirical study (Chapter 9). Secondly, a combination of different quantitative (nomothetic) and qualitative (idiographic) approaches is proposed as a means of advancing a more holistic approach to the study of self (Chapter 10). Thirdly, some practical preventive work strategies are presented, strategies that help reconciling the various contradictory voices that flood the lives of modern people. A process of re-experiencing and accepting the richness of the inner variety is suggested in the spirit of a dialogic and narrative approach, with the aim to support human development (Chapter 11).

Part V, Dialogic, Socio-Cultural and Historical Dimensions of the Processes of Communication, Education, Learning and Development, presents some attempts to combine Bakhtin's dialogic approach with the socio-cultural and historical approach of Lev Vygotsky. More specifically, the chapters included in this part offer theoretical discussions, research data and analyses in relation to:

Core concepts of the dialogic and socio-cultural and historical approaches (i.e. utterance, heteroglossia, voice, chronotopicity or time-space, appropriation, alterity, internalization, zone of proximal development, etc.) and how these might enrich theory and research on (a) children's and teacher's learning and developmental processes, (b) the communicative and inter-subjective processes in and out of the classroom, (c) the construction of personal meaning and identity, (d) children's

linguistic, mathematical and cognitive development and (e) processes of meaning-making within the multimodal pedagogical applications,

The dialogic nature of teaching, learning and developmental processes, as well as of the reflective strategies employed by teachers in the course of their developmental trajectories within different cultural contexts,

Experiential and subjective dimensions of children's and teacher's actions and how these constitute an important part of processes of learning and development, as well as their implications for the creation of appropriate learning environments, and

The possibility of initiating a dialogue between Bakhtin's dialogical approach and other approaches (mainly that of L. Vygotsky and thinkers who were informed by his

work) in relation to the study of issues concerning communication, education, learning and development.

The chapters included in the final part of the present volume (part VI, Dialogism, Music and Visual Arts) attempt to apply Bakhtin's method and thought to the fields of music and visual culture, offering significant ideas and insights that go beyond conventional approaches to the study art, art history, music-making and visual culture. More specifically, chapter 19 attempts to create a Bakhtinian perspective on musical improvisation, discussing its implications for music education. Chapters 20 and 21 use Bakhtinian approaches to dialogism, polyphony and the carnival, to the study and interpretation (a) of the work of the contemporary Australian painter Howard Arkley and (b) the enlightened contemporary Greek photographer Ion.

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## 8. Films: Lev Vygotsky Educational Documentary

PhD Lowe Productions is pleased to announce the release of, "Lev Vygotsky: One man's legacy through his life and theory", an Educational Documentary by Valerie Lowe. Valerie Lowe of Abbotsford, British Columbia has finished her first independent Educational Documentary about Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, and is already garnering interest from universities around the world.

This educational documentary explores the compelling story and legacy of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, father of Russian Psychology, by using a mixture of interviews and commentary from family members Gita L. Vygotskaya and Elena Kravtsova, renowned professors and educators including: Michael Cole, Yrjo Engestrom, Lois Holzman, Vera John-Steiner, Alex Kozulin, Tamara Lifanova, Luciano Mecacci, James Wertsch, Vladimir Zinchenko, archive photos, original film footage, narration, and Vygotskian practice examples from around the world.

"Lev Vygotsky: One man's legacy through his life and theory" is a 1 hour and 53 minute educational DVD, divided into three key sections: life, theory and practice and jam packed with information about Vygotsky and his Cultural Historical Theory. The DVD Chapters can be selected and viewed singularly or in a combination by the professor (as class time and curriculum dictate) and with students in self-directed learning.

Some Vygotskian concepts highlighted in the DVD include: learning through internalization of culture and social relationships, thought and language development, mediated learning, zone of proximal development, dynamic assessment, the more knowledgeable other, psychological tools, inclusion of special needs children in a school setting, play, and the role of collaborative dialogue and communication.

In fall of 2008, Lowe presented a few clips from the documentary at the 2008 ISCAR Conference held at the University of California in San Diego; it received great response, providing invaluable feedback on the content. The film clips were then shown at the October 2008 East Institute Performing the World Conference in New York, again a favorable response and more feedback.

Lowe came back from the 2008 ISCAR and Performing the World Conferences with feedback from the professors and viewers and made revisions to the DVD. "It's an even better product as a result of the feedback" Since then, Lowe has completed the Educational DVD which is now available in NTSC and PAL formats.

For more information visit:

[www.vygotskydocumentary.com](http://www.vygotskydocumentary.com). At this address you or your University Librarian can order through Pay Pal a copy of this one of a kind DVD. 20% discount is provided for members of ISCAR.

ISCAR NEWS is published regularly twice per year as well as on special occasions.

EDITOR: Michalis Kontopodis, Secretary of ISCAR

The deadline for submissions for the next issue is June 30, 2008. Submissions in all languages are welcome. News items, conference reports, announcements, calls for papers, short abstracts of recently completed Ph.D. theses etc. should be submitted to:

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