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Editorial

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Close to New Year we are happy to announce this third 2014-volume of *Outlines-Critical Practice Studies*. This volume contains: **de Saint-Laurent, C.** (2014). "I would rather be hanged than agree with you!": Collective Memory and the Definition of the Nation in Parliamentary Debates on Immigration.; **Jóhannsdóttir, T. & Roth, W.-M.** (2014). Experiencing (Pereživanie) as Developmental Category: Learning from a Fisherman who is Becoming (as) a Teacher-in-a-Village-School.; **Muthivhi, A. E.** (2014). Cultural-historical basis of literacy practices in TshiVenda-speaking South Africa's primary classrooms.; **Nevanen, S., Juvonen, A. & Ruismäki, H.**: After a decade: Does the developmental arts education done in Kindergartens still exist?; and finally a review by **Klitmøller, J.** (2014) of Michalis Kontopodis book: *Neoliberalism, Pedagogy and Human Development – Exploring Time, Mediation and Collectivity in Contemporary Schools* (2012). We hope you will enjoy reading, as the editorial group has.

But now, turning to history. As tradition prescribes in this *Outlines*, the editorial reintroduces papers from last volume and encourages you to go back and read what you missed. The vol. 15 (1) contains three papers: **Thorgaard, K.** (2014). Is evidence – based medicine about democratizing medical practice?; **Hackel, M. & Klebl, M.** (2014). The double path of expansive learning in complex socio-technical processes., and **Morasso, S.G. & Zittoun, T.** (2014). The trajectory of food as symbolic resource for international migrants.

What is common to all papers is that their analysis focuses on particular events as they unfold in time, thus embracing the historical dynamics that constitutes the phenomenon – on a personal, organizational/institutional or a societal level.

In Morasso and Zittoun's paper (2014) we follow migrating persons on their journey moving from their homeland to another country. Through interviews with migrating women the authors study how food becomes a resource in the person's development of cultural identity. Elaborating on Zittoun's earlier work on symbolic resources (Zittoun, 2006), Morasso and Zittoun develops the notion of *malleable symbolic resources*; that is

resources that are flexible, ductile, and yet impressionable on a person's cultural identity. Malleable resources like food, food-preparation and eating practices contains traces of evolving personal cultures, and these are undergoing transformation during processes of migration. In particular Morasso and Zittoun suggest three analytical attentions in the study of food as symbolic resources: its origin, the social use of food and the goals of food.

In the analysis of Hackel & Klebl's paper (2014) we follow the trajectory of an organization in development. The German plant engineering company in focus works together with researchers to overcome obstacles related to non-collaborating, highly specialized subunits within the company. To reduce high failure rates, parallel processes and excessive costs due to lack of early design matching, interdisciplinary collaboration is initiated through a series of dialogical constructive steps, described in detail in the paper. This first part of the action research process is in particular inspired by Engeström's work on expansive learning and action research. But what I see as the authors main contribution to understand processes of organizational development is their attention towards a *double path* of expansive learning; meaning that the tools and practices developed quite locally needed to deal with in the wider communities of practice to for them to adapt and to take the process further. The authors conclude that the "developmental work research" approach proved beneficial towards both of the organizational "layers" as well as their interconnections.

In the third paper Thorgaard analyses evidence-based medicine practice in light of its main arguments: that it serves better clinical practice and a more democratic treatment. In this analysis we follow the history of a phenomenon - medical treatment - on a societal or western level. Thorgaard introduces the reader to a history of medicine, it's "golden age" and the following skepticism towards clinical practice beginning in the 1970's. When evidence-based medicine followed, it was considered as an initiative to make certain, that health care practices were based on the best possible epistemological foundations, thus diminishing the importance of routinized clinical experience. And in particular, it was seen as an attempt to reject any improper authority on behalf of the singular doctor. Thus the evidence-based treatment could be seen as the best medical practice (in a western scientific regime), but Thorgaard asks if diminishing the authority of the doctor equalizes taking user-perspectives into account? Through the case of HIV treatment, the complexity and pitfalls of democratizing medicine is presented and discussed.

From my perspective the contribution of the three papers in the 2014 (1) volume reach far beyond the particular phenomena they investigate. The shared sensitivity to the historical dimensions of their phenomena highlights an important next step for the scientific branch of psychology if it should provide any relevant knowledge to its practical counterpart.

Looking back at the history of scientific psychology it could be argued that the general interest has first and foremost been on the scientific aspects of their enterprise and less on the psychological. Hence mainstream psychology has in its attempt to become thoroughly scientific, constrained itself to aspects of their phenomenon that could be investigate in a standardized and controlled manner, and thus objectively conceptualized (Hviid & Villadsen, 2015). To use Bronfenbrenner's (1977) classical metaphor, psychology has been caught between a rock and a soft spot, where one part of psychology was thoroughly scientific, but with few exceptions, had little relevance to the practiced field that dealt with the complex realities of human life and living and thereby was labeled as non-science.

Of course the gap between practice and science still exists, but one can argue that it is getting smaller. Within the last decades we have witnessed an increased interest of contextualizing psychological phenomena, supported by several quite old traditions within psychology, such as ecological psychology, sociocultural psychology, cultural-historical psychology and cultural psychology. The renewed interest shows a clear movement away from an understanding of *person in environment*, where the person is the singular unit of analysis, which can be taken out of the environment, investigated and replaced in the same environment, towards an understanding of *person and environment* as the inseparable and reciprocal unit of analysis. The core insight in this movement is that a conceptualization of the psychological system in itself, without any relation to the concrete (social and cultural) world in which it operates, does not provide us with much information about this unique system, but leave us with a simple evaluation of the system in comparison with other systems – which might operate under totally different conditions. As such, this movement signifies an important contextualization of the psychological system, based on an understanding of psyche and life-world as interdependent entities.

But what the three papers provides together is a step further taking the historical processes of this interdependent unit into account. This step is already present in the aforementioned traditions but, again to my understanding, less sought for. A historical perspective changes focus from *what is*, to *what has been in the past and could possibly be in the open future* (Valsiner, 2008). To understand phenomena (cultured psyche and human culture) in the process of becoming has in the scientific psychology gained little approval, since it empirically deals with the creative phenomena by letting the future into the present; a future which is not foreseeable in any exact manner and has not happened yet, albeit is significant to the subject.

Yet, studying social practices, as this journal sets out to do, I see no alternative if we are to understand, learn from and improve these practices. The analysis in the three papers are in this sense guiding our attention towards patterns and rhythms of unfolding tensions, ambivalences, breakdowns of meaningfulness, maintenances and novel meanings and practices appearing in course of cultured human living. Hence, the historical perspective offered in the three papers adds to the spatial contextualization of the psychological system by offering a temporalization of present. Where the contextualization seems crucial for understanding how phenomena operate, the temporalization offers insight into the ‘why’ of these operations: In conceptualizing directionality of phenomena, which is embedded in understanding of possible future states of such phenomena, I believe we approach the overall theme for every practical intervention.