Bullying - transformative potentiality?

Charlotte Mathiassen

Department of Education (IUP/DPU), Aarhus University

Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

In this article, I argue that a person's experience of having been bullied as a child can hold transformative potentiality. This means that childhood exposure to bullying can both produce negative effects and provide fuel for transformative intention and actions. By exploring two separate narratives, I demonstrate how these individuals' different ways of handling past incidents are entangled with both present and future, as well as how they are closely connected to both the specific situations and contexts in which the person lives and his/her movements across such situations and contexts. The concept of dynamic effectuality is introduced to describe this phenomenon. Furthermore, I claim that, by analysing the dynamic effectuality of individuals' past experiences with bullying and their present adult lives, certain processes can be found – including revenge, transformative intention and collective transformative actions.

Introduction

In my understanding, humans are continuously striving towards certain goals in life: they are engaged in life projects. Such projects can have a very different character – from personal to more political or societal. They are not necessarily planned or thoroughly reflected upon and rational, although they certainly can be (Bertelsen 2010; Mathiassen 2004). Thus, each person has different opportunities, and my point of departure in this article is that a person has both a choice and directedness in life that are continuously influenced by the opportunities and challenges presented in and across specific situations. This is a general characteristic of the human being in society: a person is born into a culture, into a society, into specific conditions that present different life settings, possibilities and challenges – and these must be understood as dialectically entwined with the more general and human characteristic of being engaged in the world.

Because individuals are embedded within socio-cultural conditions, a person and his/her specific life setting can be seen as intrinsically entwined; thus, to an adult person, the meaning and implications of childhood bullying should be examined in relation to the way that particular person is engaged in life. This includes how the person directs him- or herself towards other people, towards him- or herself and towards activities in general – and also which engagements or projects appear to be relevant and meaningful to him/her. For example, does he/she seem somehow restricted due to the bullying he/she experienced during childhood, or does he/she instead participate in life in an active and liberated way? Is childhood bullying an experience that leaves traces and remains operative in the life of an adult? And if yes – how? Trying to answer such questions necessitates an analytical consideration of the specific settings and situations in which a person leads his/her life, and the challenges and conflicts he/she faces in these contexts. Furthermore, and inspired by Dreier (2008), I find it analytically relevant to examine how the person in question moves across situations and settings in order to follow a process of potential transformation or change.

In this article, I argue that there is transformative potentiality in individuals' experiences with childhood exclusion and bullying, and it must be understood as being intimately connected to the individual's different life settings, specific challenges, discourses, etc., in his or her life. I further argue that, while some people are strongly constrained by their earlier traumatic experiences with bullying, others engage in life projects that are directed towards transforming their negative experiences into useful and productive actions. One could contend that this approach is also relevant when it comes to other negative or even traumatic experiences that occurred during childhood; for instance, the loss of a parent or other close relation. But, in this article, the central focus of my analysis is bullying. The transformative process that I examine here does not reside within the individual, but takes place as a dynamic process that includes both time and place.

This argument is developed through an analysis that draws upon an in-depth, qualitative interview study in which adults were asked about their remembered experiences of having been bullied during their childhoods, and the meaning that these remembered experiences hold for them today (Mathiassen and Viala 2009).

Methodology

Thirty-six adults between 20 and 65 years of age were interviewed (Mathiassen and Viala 2009; Mathiassen 2011a and 2012). The qualitative interview study was designed to investigate: how adults make sense of their childhood experiences of bullying; and how adults handle their childhood experiences of bullying once they have become adults (Mathiassen and Viala 2009). The initial theoretical point of departure was a cultural–psychological approach in the broadest sense. All of the interview participants were recruited from two large companies or two adult colleges (højskoler) located in Denmark; this represented twelve men and twenty-four women . In general, they fell into different levels with regard to education, social–economic hierarchy and career position: of those from the companies, some were employed as service workers, some as researchers and yet others as office staff or managers. Furthermore, all of the interview participants had assumed different positions in the bullying process: there were some who had bullied, some who had been bullied and some who had mostly been observers. The two participants cited in this article were recruited from the companies; they were in their mid-thirties to mid-forties at the time of the study, and each attended school in the 1970s and

1980s. Their personal accounts and recollections of their experiences with bullying during childhood include a high degree of personal depth and details – both with regard to actual events as well as the emotional shifts associated with these events. The interview material consists of the participants' 'remembered experiences' of being bullied as well as their descriptions of the 'experienced significance' of their memories. Their exploration of their present lives and existence as well as their past lives and experience of being bullied were contextualised. This means that the participants were encouraged to describe specific events and the contexts in which their remembered incidences of bullying took place; that is, where it occurred, who was there and what reasons might have led to the bullying. Their descriptions focused on the contextual meaning (cf. Bruner 1990) of the events. For example, participants were asked questions such as, "How did the other children handle what happened?" and "How did the adults, teachers and parents handle what happened?" Each participant also described something about the function of bullying – in relation to the class community as a whole, and to the individuals who were actively engaged in the bullying.

Additionally, the interviews tried to determine how each participant's social network was structured, including his/her family relationships. In this sense, it was important how and to what extent understanding, experiencing and managing occurrences of bullying can vary in and across contexts and in different time periods. It was central to the research to understand how being bullied was addressed by the participants, if at all. Were the children subjected to a dominant discourse that defined being bullied as simply something to be endured as a normal part of childhood? Did they have to deal with being bullied on their own?

As a point of departure, the participants' perceptions of what counts as bullying are manifold. Therefore, my analysis is not based on a pre-defined understanding of what it means to be bullied; the complexity of life influences how phenomena are experienced and how they acquire subjective sense. Thus, because the topic of these discussions had to be relevant to them (cf. Holzkamp 2005), the participants decided which themes in their present and past lives should be included in the interviews. In this way, the interviews adopt a first-person perspective as explored and described in Schraube (2013) and Schraube and Osterkamp (2013), and my analysis takes the participants' perspectives and understandings into account. This means that the localised experiences, meanings and perspectives of the individuals involved are what matter – as opposed to a third-person researcher's perspective, defined beforehand and 'from above'.

Because this study explored a subjective perspective on the past, present and future by focusing on the personal aspect of participants' experiences , the methodology used differs from other studies that have documented the negative effects of exposure to bullying. During their narratives – as the reader should notice – the participants sometimes spoke rather causally about the dynamic effectuality between the past and the present. In other words, for bullying to make sense in their adult lives, they sometimes seemed to look for simpler, more causal relationships between their pasts and their presents. In my analysis, I include several different experiences and situations in order to analyse this personal sense-making in a more multidimensional and entangled way.

At the time of my interviews, the study participants were adults in mid-life with different engagements than when they were younger. This positioned them and their narratives differently than children and young adults, whose experiences are more often examined in

much of the current research on the effects of bullying (McDougall, Hymel and Vaillancourt 2012). Many years have passed between the participants' childhood experiences and the present day, and various different and important events have occurred over the course of their lives. This presented an opportunity to analyse several traces of importance found in their actual lives, and my discussion of these traces here illustrates the dynamic and complex relationship that exists between and across time, place and experience. My research is meant to describe and explain how childhood experiences with bullying make sense for the now-adults in their present lives. Thus, the central question is: how can experiences of being bullied as a child be seen as traces in the narratives of now-adults when they share their memories in interviews and reflect upon the meaning of these experiences in their lives today?

A different point of departure

Previous research has documented the severe negative effects that bullying in childhood can have on the children involved (Hawker and Bolton 2000). Other studies indicate that adults suffer long-term negative effects from their childhood experiences of being bullied at school (Mebane 2010; Malaby 2009; Mathiassen 2012). However, little research has been done on the long-term implications of childhood bullying on adults aged 30 and older (e.g., Lund et al. 2008), and research that explores the implications of childhood bullying in ways that focus on both negative effects and resources is also rare. One exception is Kokko and Pörhölä (2009), whose study shows that experiences with being bullied in childhood can, in some cases, develop into a heightened awareness of negative social processes among children. The researchers illustrate this by describing teachers who had themselves been bullied as children, and who now in their adult lives strive to act as interveners in cases of bullying within their school classes. Kokko and Pörhölä emphasise that there is no clear or linear correlation between having been bullied as a child and being an effective intervener as an adult professional. Nevertheless, I believe their study has significant implications that should be explored further.

Also inspired by Stetsenko (2008), who underscores that "collaborative purposeful transformation of the world is the core of human nature and the principled grounding for learning and development" (ibid.: 474), I believe that a productive starting point is to follow a person's transformative intention rather than, for instance, to only focus on the personal wounds or even traumas he/she suffered after a childhood in which bullying was a prominent activity among the children. I find transformative potentiality in experiences that originally (in childhood) were emotionally – and for some, also physically – painful. To be more precise, I discovered that some people have developed a social sensitivity, both because of bullying and as a tool against bullying. Allow me to elaborate: in the qualitative empirical material upon which this article is based, several of the interview subjects shared memories of their traumatic experiences of being bullied at school and the negative implications of this on their lives today. At the same time, these adults described their various current engagements to improve schools, take care of marginalised groups and their general social awareness. What struck me most was that some of these interview subjects made sense of their bullying experiences as traumatic, but they had also cultivated in themselves a particular stance against negative social processes and exclusion. This 'finding' motivated me to further analyse the dynamic effectuality between past, present and future – in this case, with regard to bullying (Mathiassen 2014/in press). I elaborate on this concept later.

From this research study, I determined that certain traumatic experiences can be transformed into agency, and that a specific form of agency – namely, to take action against negative social dynamics in social practices – can be a way to develop distance from past traumatic experiences, yet it may also be a way to remain dependent on them. This focus complements the existing research and knowledge about the negative and harmful effects of bullying, and my discussion here goes in different and more complicated directions than, for instance, the work inspired by trauma research (Mebane 2010) or victimisation research (see, e.g., Smith 1991).

I do not take the position that it is necessary for a person to have experienced bullying firsthand to subsequently become sensitive to exclusionary processes. Neither do I intend to romanticise nor overlook the wounds, pain and suffering (emotional and/or physical) or even the suicides of people who have been bullied (e.g., Smith and Brain 2000). Rather, my point is that traumas and negative implications are not the only results of a person having been bullied during childhood. A person is not relegated to being stuck with traumatic experiences ; instead, one can sometimes transform aspects of the experience of having been bullied as a child into some kind of agency. However, the transformation process is not one of cause-and-effect: we are dealing with a dialectical process that includes dimensions of conflict.

The following examples allow me to exemplify this dialectic with different themes, and I hope to provide insights into some of the processes that are involved when people confront and work through negative and humiliating past experiences as well as to understand how transformations can develop in a productive and human direction. Part of this analysis includes the specific – and sometimes conflictual – situations and settings in which people are leading their everyday lives.

Agentive ways of being – dynamic effectuality

The adults who shared their stories with me gave different reasons for participating in the research project. In general, they said they wanted to help develop more knowledge about bullying in order to diminish this behaviour and its negative consequences. Their ambition to encourage change prompted me to consider the multiplicity of implications in being exposed to bullying. Stetsenko and Arievitch (2004) argue that human beings live in the world; not only by being or participating, but also by contributing and changing the world – and thereby themselves. These subjective and intra-individual processes develop from participating in inter-individual and collective practices to which the individual also contributes and thereby changes: these are transformative actions (Stetsenko 2008; Stensenko and Arievitch 2004). Here, the capability of the individual is emphasised, but subjectivity remains in focus as a product of development that is intimately connected to collective material practices and conditions. As Stetsenko and Arievitsch write (2004: 490), drawing upon the work of Leontiev (1983), one can speak of a dialectic unity (which does not mean equivalence) between material practice, human subjectivity and social relations, but these concepts cannot be understood as distinct from each other. Thus, I am inspired by their concept of transformative actions (Stetsenko 2008; Stensenko and Arievitch 2004). Later in this article, I explore whether the interview subjects' reasons for participating in my research could be interpreted as transformative intention because the participants said they wanted to contribute in a way that would bring about change – both for themselves and for others. People's activities, challenges and, at times, struggles in their everyday lives are considered central, and I anchor my analysis in descriptions of the

daily activities and experiences – both in and across different situations and settings – of the people I interviewed.

Furthermore, because I share the fundamental assumption from activity theory that people act in and on the world, thereby changing the world and themselves, the implications of childhood bullying must be understood in a dialectical way; as mentioned above, I use the term dynamic effectuality to refer to the relation between past and present (Mathiassen 2014/in press). Dynamic effectuality must be understood as being intimately connected to the possibilities and constraints of life in general. This means that everyday life, the concrete situations and settings of life, interpersonal relations, etc., must be included in an understanding of such influences. Furthermore, all experiences have potential implications and must be understood as being intimately connected to time and place – and across times and places. In this sense, the implications of bullying and a person's possibilities for action lie in the past, the present and the imagined future.

In the critical psychological approach that originated in Holzkamp's work (e.g., 1983, 1998) and was further developed by, among several others, Dreier (e.g., 1999, 2008, 2009), it is emphasised that the individual must be understood as always participating in (and intimately connected to) structures of social practice. As a result, the individual is somebody who always has the opportunity to change part of his/her conditions – possibly, to some extent, even transforming certain life conditions as well as his/her participation in the same structures of social practice that will influence or change him/her. Because this understanding is dialectical in nature, the process has no firm beginning or end.

The concept of entanglement (Barad 2007) also describes dimensions in/of this process and phenomenon quite well. For my purposes here, entanglement means that each of the dimensions involved in a person's life is not separate from the others; they are not independent entities or phenomena. Thus, considering recollections, memories, present situations and emotions to be entangled allows us to go further in analysing these dimensions as a whole – definitely not undifferentiated, but having more than a mono-causal relation. Along the same lines, past, present and future can also be described as entangled. Although the dimensions of a person's life may have a more or less restrictive character (Dreier 1999), the relationship between an individual and his/her everyday environment and different life-settings (see Barker 1968) is always understood in mutual and dialectical terms. For the person who tries to act and move in a certain direction in life, his/her environment and the different settings and situations in which he/she participates can be extremely restrictive, leaving little room for action. But they can simultaneously be facilitating. So it could be argued that, to a certain extent, the way in which the implications of childhood bullying are constituted depends on the specific situations and settings – e.g., the institutional conditions – in which the person in question participates. For example, later in the article, I describe how one person chose to work in a humanistic-centred organisation because of her particular social engagement; in this case, personal meaning-making (Bruner 1990) became coupled with her childhood experiences with bullying, while being at and working for this organisation facilitated a meaningful engagement in other people's well-being. This engagement helps the person to be more than a victim of the past; specifically, she is also an active subject in the present and directed towards the future. This process is further helped along by a professional life-coach who assisted this woman's move away from being imprisoned by the past and towards engagement in the present and the future to come.

In my analysis of the interviews, participants' descriptions differed in many respects and revealed varying degrees of having been exposed to childhood bullying. Thus, I found a great deal of variety in the kind of bullying the interview subjects described, in how they described the emotional and social impact of their experiences, and in how they have handled the implications of these experiences today. Essentially, having been bullied as a child can have different implications for different people in different situations, with different people and across different points in time. My analysis attempts to capture the variable character of traces of bullying by illuminating the experiences, situations and social relations that seem to be influential in people's life projects, and to exemplify certain types of negative experiences with bullying that can be transformed in a productive and human direction (Mathiassen 2012; 2014/in press).

Bullying at school on the research agenda

The work conducted by our eXbus group has made it clear that there are very complicated answers to how bullying happens and how it may be prevented (Kofoed and Søndergaard 2009; Schott and Søndergaard 2014/in press). This research suggests that different dynamic forces contribute to the negative and harmful social processes we term 'bullying'. Instead of understanding bullying as behaviour that is forcefully caused by an individual's innate aggression, as suggested by some researchers within the field (e.g., Olweus 1999; see Schott 2009 for a critical review), eXbus argues that bullying must be understood as a social phenomenon. Simply put, bullying is about social processes that have gone awry rather than about individual aggression.

The participants in my study attended primary and/or secondary school during the 1970s and '80s. During this time, public schools in Denmark were minimally aware of bullying as a problematic phenomenon. When these now-adults attended school, no overview existed about the prevalence of bullying, and they did neither notice any special attention being given to acts of bullying nor any systematic interventions that occurred during their everyday lives at school. This corresponds to the fact that, at the time when these study participants attended school, initiatives to combat bullying had not yet been instituted. Of course, some participants may have had a teacher who tried to become engaged in the social life of the students, and some had parents who tried to intervene. But the overall picture is that several of the participants who had been bullied as children did not obtain much help from adults, and they were often left to regulate their own social life as students. This can be understood as the logical consequence of a lack of both structured attention to and intervention against bullying in Danish schools at that time.

This was the general situation in many countries worldwide, as bullying was not an area of research or intervention until Swedish psychologist and researcher Dan Olweus introduced his findings and perspectives in Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys (1978); the approach Olweus presented in the late 1970s has had a significant impact on much of the research and intervention approaches that have followed (see, e.g., Meyer 2014/in press; Smith and Brain 2000).

According to Smith and Brain (2000), Norway and Sweden were the first countries to launch intervention campaigns at a national level in the 1980s, and Olweus' work "inspired the subsequent research and intervention activities in other European countries" (ibid.: 3). A meeting held in Stavanger, Norway, in 1987 further facilitated developments within the field, both in research and among practitioners – Finland, the United Kingdom

and Ireland in particular are mentioned as countries that promoted such developments (ibid.). In Japan in the '80s, researchers started to examine a phenomenon (ijime) that has much in common with the English word bullying. Although separate from the work being done in Europe at that time, the Japanese were also focusing on negative social processes among children at school. During the '90s, Japanese and Western researchers started to exchange knowledge and conduct joint research activities (ibid.: 4). By the late '90s, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France and Switzerland had also made school bullying part of their research and policy agendas (ibid.). A focus on bullying and teasing began to ramp up in Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand in the '90s as well.

Meanwhile, Olweus' approach started to receive criticism for individualising the problem of bullying; specifically, by focusing too much on individual aggression and the personal 'defects' of a particular child rather than acknowledging that bullying is a much more complex phenomenon. Some researchers argue that, in order to begin to understand the dynamics of bullying, it is necessary to take a more collective and social point of departure (Kofoed and Søndergaard 2009; Schott and Søndergaard 2014/in press). In addition, contemporary studies have shown that children still tend to receive little help from adults in relation to bullying (Crozier and Skliopidou 2002; Malaby 2009).

The potentiality of bullying

Some projects in eXbus assert that children are striving to find their position within the social community; that is, they are looking for opportunities to participate in the group of children that they – at least formally – belong to as students in the same class at the same school. But as a consequence of these dynamics, some children become excluded. According to analyses within the eXbus group, it is not reasonable to explain the exclusion of certain children by diagnosing more dominant children as 'evil', 'bad' or 'aggressive'. In addition, bullying cannot be explained by simply labelling the children who are targets of bullying as 'weak' (Kofoed and Søndergaard 2009).

My own qualitative empirical data indicate that the potentiality of bullying is a condition that can and often will structure the way children act in their social life at school (Mathiassen 2014/in press). Even children who are not directly exposed to bullying behaviour fear the possibility of being targeted and navigate away from it. I term this phenomenon the potentiality of bullying, inspired by Agamben's (1999) definition of potentiality as having effects, even though it might never happen in reality and only exists in one's imagination (Mathiassen 2014/in press). In other words, the fear that an individual will become the next target of bullying becomes a rather restricting condition that is intimately connected to the institutional context of 'school', and this has a marked influence on the way some children manage their school life. For example, in the interviews, Arthur, a man in his late thirties, said:

> I didn't, you know, feel bullied as such, but it was worse than [being bullied] would have been, because it was the same atmosphere, and it even actually got worse, I'd say. [...] There was such a sense of insecurity. I never felt specifically afraid, but it was not a, you know, good feeling. It was more like ... it's difficult to describe, but it was sort of like a ... [pause]. How to explain... [long pause]. I was afraid, you know, I was afraid that … it was very rare that it happened, but it was always there, in the back of your mind, that you could be called something.

This quote seems to illustrate how an imagined fear of bullying – the potentiality of bullying – becomes a marked condition for some children at school. Even when bullying behaviour does not actually occur, the fear nevertheless forms and sometimes restricts a child's "scope of actions" (Dreier 2008), and it has emotional and social implications because it makes a significant impression on students – here, exemplified by Arthur. This realisation led me to ask: does the way of learning to navigate due to the potentiality of childhood bullying become transformed into certain actions later in adult life? For example, what kinds of life projects – if any – developed later in Arthur's adult life? Does he still try to avoid social processes that contain the potentiality of threats, or just social challenges? Does he continue to have negative reactions and/or other effects from the potentiality of bullying he experienced during childhood? And is it possible for productive and useful actions to also develop from these experiences?

Potentiality turned into transformative intention and practice?

As already mentioned, children's experiences with bullying are understood here as potential forces; how these forces might have effects and influence a person can be seen as different traces in their adult lives. Further, these traces are related to what a person has experienced thus far in his/her lived life as well as considerations about what the future might bring. Arthur's recollections in particular are useful for examining other perspectives on how bullying can influence one's life, both as a child and later as an adult.

During the interview, Arthur told me that his everyday life at school was characterised by a high level of anxiety and uncertainty. At school, he navigated around an imagined danger – the potentiality of bullying. Arthur manoeuvred as though he might be the next bullying target – never knowing if it would actually happen. We might say that Arthur imagined a painful social exclusion and hoped instead for a life without bullying. According to his narrative, he was strongly affected by his anxiety about bullying and later by actual experiences of bullying that did eventually occur after several years of worry and uncertainty.

Arthur's narrative can be understood as such: his childhood experience with the potentiality of bullying has, as an adult, been transformed into a battle against what Arthur calls "bad teachers". In Arthur's adult life, the meaning of his childhood experiences is mediated by time and his other life experiences. Specifically, his ambition to combat "bad teachers" did not develop randomly; it is related to the fact that he became a father. At his children's school, he is confronted with challenges that remind him of his own past experiences, and he is prompted to act and intervene on his children's behalf. Is this a mono-causal relation between past and present? I would argue that such a categorisation is overly simplistic. Arthur is re-confronted with school bullying because he was introduced to the specific institutional setting in which his children attend school. In this context, he is confronted with an actual challenge that also reminds him of his own past, including his experiences with bullying and with adults who did not help him and the other children. This 'visit to the past' – mediated by and focused in his recollections – becomes one of the driving forces in Arthur's present life as a father, a researcher, a husband and also as a person who had experienced bullying as a child. In the specific school setting – i.e., his children's school – he seems to use this as a motivating force to try to change the

conditions at school for his children and their peers. However, I argue that neither the past nor the present is a determining factor per se. Rather, these times and events are entangled, and together they foster a transformative process.

During his young-adult years, Arthur participated in counselling sessions, but they did not examine his experiences with bullying – he did not go to counselling to come to terms with having been bullied as a child. Instead, the focus was on other life incidents and experiences and, in this process, he was encouraged to reflect upon the reasons why he leads his life as he does. In this way, for a certain period of time as an adult, Arthur concentrated on himself and his actions, motivations and interactions in a structured manner, together with a professional counsellor. This experience might have contributed to how he approached his past in school as well. That is, both his actual position as a father and his former experiences with bullying – as well as his participation in counselling – can be understood as forces that contribute to what I characterise as transformative intention, which potentially leads to transformative actions.

In our interview, Arthur stressed that his present engagement in preventing bullying behaviour must be understood as being closely connected to the 'bad teachers' at his children's school. The relationship between the children and the teachers, but also the parents and the teachers, seemed to be rather conflicted (see also Hein 2012). He and some of the other parents insisted on getting a teacher fired – according to the parents, this teacher was rather incompetent. In Arthur's narrative, he compared this course of events to the bullying practices and the lack of adult intervention during his own schooldays. His descriptions of some of his teachers contained a great deal of outrage:

> Yes, but it was also our class teacher, actually. He was also very unpleasant as a teacher. […] Yeah, but he was (...), we had both him and his wife (...) And it was such an unpleasant culture. There was something, for example, in mathematics (...) There was something with, "All of you get up." And then, "What is 10 minus 2?" And if you couldn't answer, then you had to sit down. (...) You became exposed if you weren't very clever, and things like that. And there was a very unpleasant tone. I met him once – the class teacher after him (...) had a school anniversary (...) when I was an adult. And it really struck me – damn, what an unpleasant man he really was. And also how unintelligent he was. It struck me. Because you don't have these thoughts when you're a child. (…) I can remember such a classic thing – that if you had been naughty or something, then he took hold of you (...) and just pushed you up against the wall. (…) Yes. And so (...), and how was the atmosphere? It [seems like] an atmosphere where one very clearly became exposed.

During his schooldays, Arthur too suffered what he termed "bad teachers", but in his recollections, he focuses on the remembered fact that none of the adults was successful in removing the teachers who bullied and excluded some of the children in his class. These teachers contributed to establishing an atmosphere of anxiety and fear among the students, and this environment became an influential and pivotal initiator for unhealthy social processes within Arthur's class. The teachers became co-constructors of the children's conditions in the school setting; thereby, we can conceptualise the teachers as also constraining conditions for the children.

This negative classroom culture and the teachers as constraining conditions still seem to have implications for Arthur's life and self-understanding as an adult. Thus, the negative experiences he remembers and focuses on – entangled with his actual aforementioned

experiences – can be understood as fuel for his ambitions to institute positive change in the present; in other words, this is his transformative intention.

Stetsenko and Arievitch (2004) argue that the self can be understood as leading activity, which resembles the concept of a life project (Bertelsen 1994; Mathiassen 2009, 2012). In Arthur's example, he has intentionally directed himself towards changing the teachers' practices, which he labels as 'bad'. But this project was not fixed; rather, it developed during his participation in discussions about his children's life at school. It was during his specific participation as a parent in a specific school arrangement that Arthur's project developed. If it had not been for his own children's challenges and his own recollected experiences as a schoolchild, he might not have chosen to engage in transformative practices in school settings.

At this point, we can understand Arthur's engagement in his children's school as one of transformative intention, as he deliberately and consistently argues for changes in practice. And it seems reasonable that his own negative experiences have fuelled this process rather than merely leaving him stuck with his negative experiences. There is no 'happy ending', but understanding an individual's transformative intention and actions facilitates an analysis that also focuses on potential resources in troublesome and negative – maybe even traumatic – experiences.

We might say that his present engagement is a kind of life project for Arthur. But next, I discuss how much transformative action is actually taking place in his case.

Revenge?

Using the above excerpt from Arthur's narrative as a point of departure, we might also ask whether there are other ways to interpret Arthur's example. Might it be that 'transformation' is too big a word for what I have presented in the analysis thus far? Perhaps the situation is much more complicated and contains more conflicts. It is possible that Arthur is in a process of transforming his past experiences, but also in a process of exacting revenge or trying to repair his own wounds? As an adult with power and agency, he could be enacting a vendetta against the wrongs he experienced as a child. This is an important point because his adult critique of his children's schoolteachers seems to remain on a personal level. In some way, he also reproduces an exclusionary approach to these teachers: they have done something wrong – so they must leave.

Informed by his own past experiences, Arthur wants to protect his children. At the same time, he describes a desire to contribute to a better school system in general. Thus, his past and present are dynamically entangled: Arthur's childhood experiences are entangled with how he chooses to approach his children's school life today, just as his confrontation with the practices at his children's school seem to re-vitalise his remembered experiences. Through the lens of dialectical–theoretical thinking, I see that Arthur's motivation for change developed through remembering the past and from confronting the actual social practices at his children's school. Using Leontjev's terminology (1983), change seems to develop towards a leading motive. There seems to be dynamic effectuality between times and places or situations; the future is involved as well, due to Arthur's ambition to change the school's practices. Still, the influence of his past seems clearer than the reciprocity between times. Of course, one could argue that, in his meaning making (Bruner 1990), Arthur consistently refers to his own past experiences as if they, to some extent, determine his actions today: he had bad teachers, so he focuses on the bad teachers at his children's

school. His parents did not insist on removing him from a negative school atmosphere, so he is determined to do that with his children if necessary. In a situation where his own experiences have taught him to look for solutions, Arthur is determined to fight the problems.

However, the main point still applies: for Arthur, his past experiences with childhood bullying hold transformative potentiality as a further engagement to prevent bullying behaviour in Denmark. This engagement is simultaneously fuelled in the present via his encounters with his children's school. One could argue that he strives to establish a more collective transformative ambition. During the interview, he stressed his contempt for the fact that Denmark – in his opinion – is not able to reduce bullying in schools:

> Basically, I find it catastrophic that we have this Danish … laissez-faire-like approach to bullying. […] I think one should break the norm that 'it is a necessary part of childhood that children tease each other'. I know this isn't true. Many are convinced that it's a law of nature that cannot be changed. I'm sure it can be changed.

Arthur reproaches both educational professionals and parents for not taking proper responsibility in these matters – and this is perhaps one reason why he chooses to become involved in the process of change. We could also say that a more thorough transformation of the past necessitates that, to a lesser extent, Arthur's past experiences call for revenge and, to a greater extent, fuel his passionate need to establish institutional and societal improvements that will reduce and combat bullying in Denmark. Among his group of parents, he seems to act as an instigator to successfully get the "bad teachers" fired – or at least to have them judged and measured by his standards.

Arthur himself made a connection between his own experience with bad teachers and how they contributed to the negative social processes of his life at school, and his persistent discussions with his children's school about the quality of the teaching and the competence of the teachers. But we can also see that, by keeping his criticism on a personal level, he does not really address the problems. In addition, criticising the teachers is perhaps just another way of bullying and not actually a form of transformative action; in other words, by 'striking back' in this way, Arthur may be reproducing his own experiences – the only difference is that, now as an adult, he is in a more powerful position.

To some extent, though, Arthur seems to have changed himself through his transformative intention. He said that, in a broad sense, the institution of 'school' must be improved: this should be done by people contributing to concrete situations of conflict and by challenging what might be called a zeitgeist that claims 'children tease and you mustn't tell'. This discourse was dominant during his childhood, and Arthur said nothing was really done to change it. Furthermore, he ardently believes this is still the case, so he intends to change it now. When Arthur tried to explain this to me, he argued that it is part of "a Danish approach" that we do not tell on each other – not just in cases of bullying, but also with illegal and dangerous acts like drunk-driving. He drew this conclusion based upon his own experiences, while also contextualising these actions using actual societal discourses and cultural practices – as he interpreted them.

From Arthur's example, I would argue that agency and transformative social practice can co-evolve with an ability to manage past injuries and humiliations. This does not mean that it is a safe way to overcome past injuries, but it can be a way to handle them. I believe

Arthur is engaged in a potentially transformative process within the school institution, and his participation has co-evolved as his personal history has been reworked and re-interpreted in his everyday life. If he was truly going to establish a collective transformative practice, then it should include a joint partnership with the school's teachers and administrators.

Let us now look at parts of Judy's narrative to explore how social sensitivity develops, and how its potentiality influences adult life. In the following, I suggest that her experiences with bullying transformed into an intention to participate in collective practices of change later in life.

Developing social sensitivity

In Judy's interview, she explained how her sensitivity towards bullying as an adult developed from her being exposed to bullying as a child. She said that she was yelled at and ridiculed by other children, and she often found refuge in the restroom, rushing inside and locking the toilet door as soon as the bell rang after a lesson. Or she ran to the school library during class breaks. A teacher was always there to take care of the books, and the teacher's presence functioned as a form of security for Judy, who could safely escape the overly challenging social processes she was experiencing at school. Judy described the bullying, which intensified during fifth grade , in different ways, concluding that it was an experience "of somebody suddenly [after years of a happy childhood] questioning you and your nature". In Judy's recollections – and in the way she described and focused on them – she underscored what I term social sensitivity, which has resulted from her childhood experiences with being bullied. She described her involvement with "ordinary children" and their need for adequate leisure-time activities. She also focused on her own children and recognised her childhood difficulties, as she remembered them, in the challenges her children experience time and again. In other ways, she drew upon her experiences of being exposed to bullying when she described her rationale for becoming involved in certain situations as an adult. And one could argue that, due to her own childhood experiences, she now has an increased focus on marginalisation and social processes.

In the same vein, Judy explained to me that, in her job position as a manager, she "comes down really hard on [her] employees/colleagues" if she experiences something "that isn't right". Judy described a situation where some of her staff had ongoing conflicts that lasted for several months. In Judy's description of her conversation with one of her employees during a coffee meeting, she emphasised that another colleague had systematically bullied this person to such an extent that the person "completely broke down and cried". Judy stressed that it was "a real grown-up person" with a family and a long, successful career who was suddenly crying in her office. She reflected on her reaction:

> I simply will not tolerate it. I've addressed it more harshly, I think, than I think I would have if I [hadn't been exposed to bullying myself], by inviting him to a coffee meeting, which we had yesterday.

Judy felt angry with herself because she did not detect the workplace bullying long before:

> I can feel how he must have felt. Shit – this person has had some real shitty months. I'm really annoyed that I didn't discover this [earlier].

Judy continued:

> I simply become just as upset as he does ... I do. When he says a few sentences about what he's been exposed to. ... So I just sit and think, "Yeah, that was really painful" ... I don't know ... it may well be that I would have thought so even if my life had been different, but I almost get a stomach-ache myself.

Another colleague of hers was also bullied in a similar way. Judy continued:

> I simply had to act. I simply could not have it – also, in a way where they were actually both exposed. [...]. I simply could not have it – I simply needed to go in and make an edge. And actually, it was mostly about protecting myself ... because, in reality, she bloody should have managed it. Otherwise, she could have said so. But I couldn't have that.

In this description of bullying among some of her colleagues, Judy connected the way in which she handled the situation with her own childhood experiences of bullying. She explained that she did not try to intervene because the targeted person "really needs" her help but because she herself could not bear to NOT react. Therefore, she reacted. In this situation, Judy exhibited a profound moral indignation, which she grounded in her own past experiences. Furthermore, she argued that, due to her own bodily recollections, she acted on a feeling of physical pain in her stomach. She was not certain whether she tends to act on behalf of a person who needs or wants help, or if she reacts based on her own remembered experiences. In her meaning making, Judy focused on her personal motives, but are there any special features in the work setting that may contribute to and/or prompt her actions?

Judy's position as a manager seems to further impel her to act in situations that she considers to be unfair. As exemplified above, the way she framed the experiences of her colleagues seems, in her own meaning making, to be quite influenced by her own childhood experiences. We could argue that her position as a leader – and especially as a leader in an organisation that is involved in improving the general health and well-being of the Danish and international population – seems to further encourage or support such conduct. In her job, Judy works to improve the living conditions of people in need. She is engaged with humanistic values and tries to continually implement these into her daily work routines and general activities. Therefore, during her participation in these activities, she is regularly reminded of a certain moral discourse – i.e., a practice that is preferable.

We might also say that a dialectic interplay exists between Judy's remembered experiences from her own childhood and her agency in a specific situation in her adult life but, at the same time, she almost gets a stomach-ache when she learns what her work colleague is going through – apparently, this is the same way she experienced similar social processes during her childhood. Rather than making a sharp divide between past and present, it seems as though both points of time are active simultaneously: they are entangled. Judy's past is transformed when she allows her past experiences to influence her present experiences – she is experiencing past and present at once. In another given situation as an adult among a group of colleagues. From my analysis of Judy's narrative, however, I believe it is neither possible nor reasonable to separate her recollected experiences from the specific situations at play and the simultaneous emotional reactions of her mind and body. Thus, I suggest we understand these as different dynamic forces that are dialectically entwined – and to fully capture the infinite character of the times that are involved (i.e., past, present, future), these forces could be better understood as being entangled (Barad 2007). Judy's reactions were motivated words, the present influences the

way in which the past becomes active in the present. And consequently, there does not seem to be any finality or clear cuts between the times; they appear to float in and out of each other.

Still, Judy described certain events in her life as significant. Specifically, she remembered being excluded as a child, and this experience has strongly impacted how she directs herself in the social practices that are available to her now as an adult. But rather than describing this exclusion as something that 'clipped her wings', she told me that she developed a certain awareness of social dynamics – especially those of exclusion. Thus, Judy's reaction to her colleague's situation is not based on a detailed and rational plan of intervention; rather, I would say that her body both remembers and reacts. Furthermore, the entanglement of forces continues to develop as her own personal experience and that of her colleague become entangled in Judy's intention to stop the negative social dynamics between him and their other colleagues. Again, I characterise this as a potentially transformative intention.

Judy's narrative demonstrates that it is possible for a person to use past experiences of exclusion to create power or courage that is productive and positive in the present. Judy could physically feel the exclusion she remembered, and it hurt. But despite this, she was galvanised to act. She was not overwhelmed and hindered, for instance, by the weight of depression. She also did not rely on the childhood strategy she used when challenges become too tough: instead of hiding, now as an adult, she intervenes. Judy's example illustrates that we can search for the transformative potentiality (Agamben 1999) in past experiences of exclusion. And such processes can be continually refined and developed, even when painful and constraining memories are still active.

We could further ask whether it is adequate to describe Judy's approach and actions as a result or implication of transformation? According to Judy's descriptions, her past experiences are definitely part of her urge to facilitate a better social environment among her colleagues. At the same time, what is at stake here seems rather entangled; thus, 'reaction' may better capture some of the ways she handles the situation. In Judy's case, I can identify the potentiality of transformation as well as transformative actions.

In the above analysis, both Arthur and Judy seem to be influenced by their negative childhood experiences – and they both use their negative experiences as fuel. Arthur discussed how the general Danish attitude towards bullying needs to change, and he became involved in his children's schools. Judy concentrated on her social sensitivity and specific transformative actions on an interpersonal level. In my view, both of them are contributing to different aspects of transformative practices with regard to people's well-being and social inclusion. They have also shown us particular dimensions of the way in which traumatic experiences may also be transformed into more liberating forms of intention and actions.

Transformative potentiality

The aforementioned study by Kokko and Pörhöläs (2009) focused on a group of students training to become teachers; these students had themselves been targets of childhood bullying during their everyday life at school. The investigation was quantitative, and the researchers were cautious about what might be extrapolated from their results. Still, they concluded:

> Despite the limitations of this study, the results suggest that teachers' own experiences of victimization can enhance their ability to tackle bullying at school, and that former victims may be seen as a resource in the attempt to put a stop bullying. (ibid.: 1007)

As I understand the study's data, the student-teachers saw themselves as a resource because they had developed a certain awareness of and sensitivity towards processes of exclusion and bullying. Furthermore, they formed a strong motivation to change the social practices of students who bully. I suggest that we can understand these findings in relation to the specific conditions and channels of possibility (cf. Valsiner and Lawrence 1997) that exist in their particular lives. As Kokko and Pörhölä propose, several dimensions – plus what I call transformative potentiality – may contribute to the strength of these teachers' experiences; these dimensions might be time, alternative and/or positive social processes, or some form of working through and re-interpreting their bullying experiences.

Certain individuals who have healed their wounds or otherwise worked through their past experiences of being bullied as children seem to become actively engaged in fighting processes of social exclusion later as adults. Some seem to be so stuck in their negative past experiences that we could reasonably talk about trauma. Others, during the course of their lived lives, have successfully worked through the negative experiences from the past and are using them as a force to combat bullying in the present. In fact, their lived lives seem to be a crucial factor in understanding whether and how such past experiences will remain traumatic or become transformed into fuel for action.

The process of personal development is continuous and lifelong for everyone. It also occurs as an entangled process between past, present and future. Examined through a socio–cultural lens, an individual also appears to develop his/her various life projects in an entwined process between the individual and collective, material practices. This motivation does not reside in or stem from an individual's mind; rather, it is continuously developing in and through practices in the lived life. Goals and motivation also influence each other – or, to paraphrase Stetsenko and Areivitsch (2004: 492), they "mould" each other.

Using this terminology with regard to the participants in my research study, I see their motives, intentions, projects and goals as lying along a continuum. Some are primarily engaged in wrestling with the existential problems of life, while others may have already done this and are now becoming more engaged in transforming the social life and everyday practices of today's students as well as practices in schools. I have called this kind of motivation transformative intention, which means that the study participants demonstrated ambitions that are purposefully directed towards such changes. They seemed eager to participate in and also to contribute to bringing about change in the existing school practices in Denmark.

According to Stetsenko and Areivitsch, activities that "allow individuals to purposefully transform the world [are placed] at the very core of the self" as a result of humans always contributing to social practices (ibid.: 494). Basically, this means that a human being is understood as someone who is engaged in real-life activities that are directed towards the goal of making changes in the world (ibid.). Some of the participants in my research study had worked through their past negative experiences with friends and family; some had worked through them with a professional therapist. But they all described intentions and activities that are directed towards 'transforming the world'. In this article, I have elaborated on the fact that 'purposeful transformation' can develop along different paths

and with different goals; some on a more personal level, and some on a more relational or even collective level. I have also argued that even negative experiences hold transformative potential – at times, a potential that is rather strong.

With the point of departure that a person has both a choice and directedness in life, which are continuously influenced by the opportunities and challenges presented in and across specific situations, the examples presented in this article show that being able to use negative past experiences in a process of transformation necessitates some kind of work. There is always the possibility that an individual will run the risk of only repairing his/her own 'wounds' or will repeat the past instead of engaging in positive, transformative actions. Thus, a different kind of work is necessary in a person's life project – work that allows one to find the potentiality to attend to collective and transformative possibilities that are directed towards a dream of life without bullying.

References

Agamben, G. 1999. Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Barad, K 2007. Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning. Duke University Press.

Barker, R. 1968. Ecological Psychology. Concepts and Methods for Studying the Environment of Human Behavior. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Bertelsen, P. 1994. Tilværelsesprojektet: Det Menneskeliges Niveauer Belyst i den Terapeutiske Proces [Life Project: the Levels of Humanity Illuminated in the Therapeutic Process]. Copenhagen: Dansk Psykologisk Forlag.

Bertelsen, P. (ed.) 2010. Aktør i Eget Liv: om at Hjælpe Mennesker på Kanten af Tilværelsen [Actor in his Own Life: About Helping People on the Edge of Existence]. Copenhagen: Frydenlund.

Bruner, J. 1990. Acts of Meaning. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press: chapter IV.

Crozier, R. W. and Evanthia Skliopidou 2002. 'Adult Recollections of Name-calling at School'. Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology Volume 22, Issue 1, pages 113-124

Dreier, O. 1999. 'Personal trajectories of participation across contexts of social practice', in Outlines: Critical Social Studies 1: 5–32.

Dreier, O. 2008. Psychotherapy in Everyday Life: Learning in Doing; Social, Cognitive and Computational Perspectives. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Dreier, O. 2009. 'Persons in structures of social practice', in Theory Psychology 19: 193–212.

Hawker, D. S. J. and M. Boulton 2000. 'Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: a meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies', in Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 41(4): 441–55.

Hedegaard, M., 'The dynamic aspects in children's learning and development', in Hedegaard, M., A. Edwards and M. Fleer (eds.) 2011. Development of Children's Motives and Emotions: Cultural–Historical Approaches. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Hein, N., 'Parental positions in school bullying: the production of powerlessness in home–school cooperation', in R. M. Schott and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2014/in press. School Bullying: New Theories in Context. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Holzkamp, K. 1998. 'Daglig livsførelse som subjektvidenskabeligt grundkoncept' [Daily life as a subject-scientifically basic concept], in Nordiske Udkast [Nordic Draft] 26(2): 3–31.

Holzkamp, K. 2005. 'Mennesket som subjekt for videnskabelig metodik' [The human as a subject of scientific method], in Nordiske Udkast [Nordic Draft] 33(2): 5–33.

Kofoed, J. and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2012. Mobning Gentænkt [Bullying Reconsidered]. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishers.

Kokko, T. H. J. and M. Pörhölä 2009. 'Tackling bullying: victimized by peers as a pupil, an effective intervener as a teacher?', in Teaching & Teacher Education 25: 1000–8.

Leontjev, A. N. 1983. Virksomhed, Bevidsthed, Personlighed [Company, Awareness, Personality]. USSR: Sputnik/Progres.

Lund, R., K. K. Nielsen, D. H. Hansen, M. Kriegbaum, D. Molbo, P. Due and U. Christensen 2008. 'Exposure to bullying at school and depression in adulthood: a study of Danish men born in 1953', in European Journal of Public Health 19(1): 111–6.

Malaby, M. 2009. 'Public and secret agents: personal power and reflective agency in male memories of childhood violence and bullying', in Gender and Education 21: 371–86.

Mathiassen, C. 2004. 'Fanget i tilværelsen? Casestudier om fastlåsthed og forsøg på frigørelse' [Trapped for life? Case studies on captivity and attempts at escape]. PhD thesis, Department of Psychology; University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Mathiassen, C. 2005. 'Fastlåsthed og udvikling – frigørelse – hos langtidsfanger' [Captivity and development – escape – amongst long-term prisoners], in Psyke og Logos [Psyche and Logos] 26(2): 629–59.

Mathiassen, C. 2011a. 'Mobning i barndommen – brændstof i organisering af voksenlivet?' [Bullying in childhood – fuel for the organisation of adult life?], in Psykologisk Set [Psychologically Seen] 83: 5–17.

Mathiassen, C. 2011b. 'Mobning i barndommen – erindringsspor i voksenlivet' [Bullying in childhood – memory traces in adult life], in Skolen i Morgen – Tidsskrift for Skoleledere [School Tomorrow – Journal for Principals] 14(10).

Mathiassen, C. 'Between freedom and captivity: life-projects of male ex-prisoners', in Valsiner, J. and A. U. Branco (eds.) 2012. Cultural Psychology of Human Values. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Mathiassen, C. 'Mobningens spor. En analyse af virkningsforhold' [Traces of bullying. An analysis of "dynamic effectuality"', in Kofoed, J. and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2012. Mobning Gentænkt [Bullying Reconsidered]. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishers.

Mathiassen, C. 'Traces of being bullied: "dynamic effectuality"', in R. M. Schott and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2014/in press. School Bullying: New Theories in Context. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Mathiassen, C. and E. S. Viala. 'Erindringer om mobning og det levede liv' [Memories of bullying and the lived life], in Kofoed, J. and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2009. Mobning: Sociale Processer på Afveje [Bullying: Social Processes Gone Awry]. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishers: 167–91.

McDougall, P., Vaillancourt, T., & Hymel, S. (2008, November 10). What happens over time to those who bully and those who are victimized? In S.Hymel, S. Swearer & P. Gillett(Eds.), Bullying at School and Online, a special invited issue of education.com.

Mebane, S. 2010. 'Adult survivors of adolescent bullying: an exploration of long-term effects'. PhD thesis, Department of Educational Psychology; University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), USA.

Meyer, E. J. New solutions for bullying and harassment: a post-structural, feminist approach. in R. M. Schott and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2014/in press. School Bullying: New Theories in Context. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Olweus, D., 'Sweden', in Smith, P. K., Y. Morita, J. Junger-Tas, D. Olweus, R. Catalano and P. Slee (eds.) 1999. The Nature of School Bullying: a Cross-National Perspective. London and New York: Routledge.

Rigby, K. 2007. Bullying in Schools and What to Do About It; revised and updated. Victoria, Australia: ACER Press: 69.

R. M. Schott and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2014/in press. School Bullying: New Theories in Context. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, P. K. 1991. 'The silent nightmare: bullying and victimisation in school peer groups', in The Psychologist 4: 243–8; www.statsbiblioteket.dk/filehosting/gfx/AU_link_long_large.png [last accessed: 28 August 2012].

Smith, P. K. and P. Brain 2000. 'Bullying in schools: lessons from two decades of research', in Aggressive Behavior 26: 1–9.

Schraube, E. 2013. 'First-Person Perspective and Sociomaterial Decentering: Studying Technology from the Standpoint of the Subject. In: Subjectivity, Vol. 6, Nr. 1, 2013, s. 12-32.

Schraube, E. and Ute Osterkamp (eds) 2013.Psychology from the Standpoint of the Subject: Selected Writings of Klaus Holzkamp. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. (Critical Theory and Practice in Psychology and the Human Sciences).

Staub, E. 1989. The Roots of Evil: the Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Staub, E. 2003. The Psychology of Good and Evil: Why Children, Adults and Groups Help and Harm Others. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Stetsenko, A. 2008. From relational ontology to transformative activist stance: Expanding Vygotsky's (CHAT) project. Cultural Studies of Science Education, 3, 465-485.

Stetsenko, A. & Arievitch, I. 2004. Vygotskian collaborative project of social transformation: History, politics, and practice in knowledge construction. International Journal of Critical Psychology, 12 (4), 58-80.

Søndergaard, D. M., 'Mobning og social eksklusionsangst' [Bullying and social exclusion anxiety], in Kofoed, J. and D. M. Søndergaard (eds.) 2009. Mobning: Sociale Processer

på Afveje [Bullying: Social Processes Gone Awry]. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishers: 21–58.

Valsiner, J. and J. A. Lawrence, 'Human development in culture across the life span', in Berry, J. W., P. R. Dasen and T. S. Saraswathi (eds.) 1997. Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Vol 2: Basic Processes and Human Development, 2nd edn. Boston: Allyn & Bacon: 69–106.

Acknowledgement

About the author

Charlotte Mathiassen is currently based at Aarhus University, Department of Education, Campus Emdrup. Her research centers on remembrance and recollection of childhood bullying and its implications in adult life. Additionally Charlotte Mathiassens research centers on prisons and prisoners – lately with a special focus on incarcerated women's conditions and perspectives. Also the relation between staff and inmates is a central research focus of hers.

Contact: Department of Education (IUP/DPU), Aarhus University, Email: cham@dpu.dk