

2<sup>nd</sup> *announcement and call for papers*

**ESREA – European Society for Research on the Education of Adults**

**Life History and Biographic Research Network**

**University of Southern Denmark**

**Institute of Philosophy, Education and the Study of Religions**

**1-4 March 2012**

***Expanding connections:***

***Learning, the body and the environment;***

**Perspectives from life history and auto/biographical  
narrative research**

"I was to fulfil the prophecy which the old woman made when as a boy I left my birthplace; – Odense should be illuminated for me. I stepped to the open window; there was a blaze of light from the torches, the place was quite full of people. They sang, and I was overcome in my soul. I was physically overcome indeed, and could not enjoy this summit of fortune in my life. The toothache was intolerable; the icy air which rushed in at the window made it blaze up into a terrible pain, and in place of fully enjoying the good fortune of these minutes, which never would be repeated, I looked at the printed song to see how many verses there were to be sung before I could slip away from the torture which the cold air sent through my teeth. It was the pitch of suffering; when the flames of the torches piled together sank down, then my pain decreased." *Hans Christian Andersen, a native of Odense in Denmark*

The next ESREA Life History and Biography Network Conference is being organised by the Institute of Philosophy, Education and the Study of Religions at the University of Southern Denmark at Odense, which was the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen. The conference website, for detailed information, is:

[http://www.sdu.dk/Om\\_SDU/Institutter\\_centre/Ifpr/Konferencer/konferencer\\_2012/ESREA](http://www.sdu.dk/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/Ifpr/Konferencer/konferencer_2012/ESREA)

The conference will be held in SDU from the evening of Thursday the 1st to Sunday the 4th of March 2012, ending at midday. Accommodation will be in Odense. The official languages of the Conference are English and French.

### **The ESREA Network**

Since 1993, the ESREA Life History and Biography Network has organized a major yearly conference focusing on relevant aspects of research in adult education and lifelong learning, broadly defined, covering many different contexts, including formal educational institutions but also informal learning in the workplace, communities and families. The conference has included established and less experienced scholars who use a variety of methods and theories centring on self-narration or story telling (life history, biography, auto/biography, life writing etc.) as a way to chronicle and theorise processes of adult learning. In this conference we will engage with what we term embodied learning and place this in context: of our interactions with each other, our interdependency with broader conditions of life, including, crucially, the 'natural' world. These connections always, of course, exist, but learning can facilitate making new connections as well as deepening understanding of existing ones.

*Please not that during the conference, there will be a screening of "An Ecology of Mind" by Nora Bateson, an intimate and personal portrait of her father Gregory Bateson, celebrated anthropologist, philosopher, author, naturalist, and filmmaker. This film celebrates Bateson's view of learning in an interconnected world and stories as a way to understand it.*

The dimensions to be considered include:

– **Our experience of our body, in interaction with others, and maybe within particular lifeworlds and relationships to the environment**

This includes the aesthetic aspects of life, connected to the imagination, the senses and the emotions. It encompasses embodied knowledge and knowing, which can easily be lost or neglected in biographical research; when, that is, the latter is overly focused on words, content and cognition. We want to focus on bodily experiences for both narrators and researchers, and to understand this in context. We want to emphasize, more generally, the significance of the body in learning and thinking, as well as to understanding learning and changing bodies, learning in health and illness, learning and sensuality, learning and ageing; and even learning in dying.

– **Inequalities in resources and conditions of life:** whole people interact in particular relationships and lifeworlds that, in turn, shape our senses of embodied well-being and future possibility. The resources that can be drawn on within different sets of relationships and lifeworlds will vary. There are, for instance, increasing inequalities of access to resources. What stories do people tell about such interactions and inequalities, and how do they account for their influence on lives; and how can research illuminate the processes involved and their implications for learning?

– **The relationship and interconnections with the natural environment** in which we live: this includes sustainability issues and the depletion and or exhaustion of the natural resources of the Earth. What are the implications of this for learners and learning? This issue becomes ever more urgent: and how might the issues be illuminated in doing auto/biographical narrative research?

– **The connection between the aesthetic and ethical dimensions in embodied, interconnected learning**

How can adult education and research contribute to greater appreciation and care in relationship to our bodies, to each other and to the living world in its manifold diversity and fragility?

The conference will address these different but overlapping levels: the individual in dynamic interaction with his/her body, with others, in relationship, including to the natural world.

Some suggested questions we would like to address:

- How does the body enter, as both content and focus, in stories of learning and change?
- What theoretical concepts help in our understanding the processes involved?
- How do we treat these issues methodologically?
- Does the body, and the body in relationship to others and our environments, appear in the way we narrate people's learning lives?
- What stories do we and others tell about our relationships in learning in the context of an increasingly fragile planet?
- What are the implications for adult education and research? What challenges are raised?

**Guidelines for submission of paper abstracts**

Paper abstracts should be sent as an attached file [either in \*.doc, \*.docx, or \*.pdf format]. All abstracts should be typed in one sided A4, and must not exceed 500 words [single spaced]. They must include a title and 3 keywords, the author/s name/s, affiliation or

institution.

- The conference languages are **English** and **French**.
- All abstracts for paper or other suggested presentations must be submitted by **Monday 7th November 2011** to [horsdal@ifpr.sdu.dk](mailto:horsdal@ifpr.sdu.dk)
- All paper proposals will be blind reviewed by the scientific committee.
- Acceptance will be confirmed by **Monday 5th December 2011**.
- Final versions of papers (no more than 5000 words including references) must be submitted by **Monday 6th February 2012**.
- Presentations must not exceed 20 minutes in time length. There will be at least 10 minutes time for discussion of each paper.

English is the obligatory language for the abstract, but papers can also be written in French, as is the tradition of the Network.

ESREA will be offering 3 bursaries (300 Euro each) for doctoral students.

**All proposals are considered by the Scientific Committee**

Professor Marianne Horsdal, University of Southern Denmark

Professor Linden West, Canterbury Christ Church University

Professor Laura Formenti, University of Milan/Bicocca.

Dr Michal Alhadeff, University of Geneva

Professor Agnieszka Bron, University of Stockholm

Professor Pepe Monteagudo, University of Seville

Professor Jean-Michel Baudouin, University of Geneva.

Further information about the conference will come in September. For questions and expressions of interest in the meantime, please contact:

Conference administrator: Helle Gad

Administrative Officer, Institute of Philosophy, Education and the Study of Religions

Tel. +45 6550 1470

Mobile +45 6011 1470

Fax +45 6550 2830

Email [gad@ifpr.sdu.dk](mailto:gad@ifpr.sdu.dk)

Web <http://www.sdu.dk/ansat/gad.aspx>

Conference website:

[http://www.sdu.dk/Om\\_SDU/Institutter\\_centre/Ifpr/Konferencer/konferencer\\_2012/ESREA](http://www.sdu.dk/Om_SDU/Institutter_centre/Ifpr/Konferencer/konferencer_2012/ESREA)

Addr. Campusvej 55, DK-5230 Odense M, Denmark

Marianne Horsdal (hosting university)

University of Southern Denmark

[horsdal@ifpr.sdu.dk](mailto:horsdal@ifpr.sdu.dk)

Linden West (co-convenor of the network)

Canterbury Christ Church University

[linden.west@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:linden.west@canterbury.ac.uk)

Laura Formenti (co-convenor of the network)

Università di Milano Bicocca

[laura.formenti@unimib.it](mailto:laura.formenti@unimib.it)