

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Human Development in the Life Course

Drawing on philosophy, the history of psychology and the natural sciences, this book proposes a new theoretical foundation for the psychology of the life course. It features the study of unique individual life courses in their social and cultural environment, combining the perspectives of developmental and sociocultural psychology, psychotherapy, learning sciences and geronto-psychology. In particular, the book highlights semiotic processes, specific to human development, that allow us to draw upon past experiences, to choose among alternatives and to plan our futures. Imagination is an important outcome of semiotic processes and enables us to deal with daily constraints and transitions, and promotes the transformation of social representation and symbolic systems – giving each person a unique style, or ‘melody’, of living. The book concludes by questioning the methodology and epistemology of current life course studies.

TANIA ZITTOUN is a Professor of Psychology and Education at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

JAAN VALSINER is a Professor of Psychology at Clark University.

DANKERT VEDELER is Associate Professor Emeritus at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

JOÃO SALGADO is Assistant Professor and the Head of the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences at the Maia Institute of Higher Education (ISMAI), Portugal.

MIGUEL M. GONÇALVES is a Professor of Psychology at the School of Psychology in the University of Minho, Portugal.

DIETER FERRING is Professor of Developmental Psychology and Psychogerontology at the University of Luxembourg.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring
Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Human Development in the Life Course

Melodies of Living

Tania Zittoun

(Université de Neuchâtel, Switzerland)

Jaan Valsiner

(Clark University, USA)

Dankert Vedeler

(NTNU-Norway)

João Salgado

(ISMAI-Portugal)

Miguel M. Gonçalves

(Universidade do Minho, Portugal)

Dieter Ferring

(University of Luxembourg)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press,
New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521769389

© Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel
M. Gonçalves and Dieter Ferring 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Zittoun, Tania.

Human development in the life course : melodies of living / Tania Zittoun
(Universite de Neuchatel, Switzerland) [and five others].

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-76938-9

1. Developmental psychology. I. Title.

BF713.Z58 2013

155-dc23 2013007949

ISBN 978-0-521-76938-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication,
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>List of boxes</i>	x
<i>Preface: from dispute to collaboration</i>	xi
Introduction: melodies of living	1
Part I Time for development	9
1 Solidity of science and fullness of living: a theoretical exposé	11
2 Imagination and the life course	52
3 Moving through time: imagination and memory as semiotic processes	72
4 Models of time for the life course	96
Part II Space for development	119
5 Social framing of lives: from phenomena to theories	121
6 Stability and innovation in adults narrating their lives: insights from psychotherapy research	160
7 Paradoxes of learning	200
Part III Beyond time and space: imagination	259
8 We are migrants!	261
9 Playing while being serious: the lifelong game of development – and its tools	285

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

vi	Contents	
10	Playing under the influence: activity contexts in their social functions	312
11	‘Old age’ as living forward	341
12	Epilogue: the course of life as a melody	365
	<i>References</i>	383
	<i>Index</i>	419

Figures

1.1 Hierarchical model of influences in epigenesis.	page 18
1.2 Waddington’s epigenetic landscape.	23
1.3 William Stern’s view of person<>environment relations.	33
1.4 A circle.	37
3.1 Kanisza’s triangles.	75
3.2 Differentiation of the AS-IF domain.	76
4.1 Detection of time.	97
4.2 Models of the present moment.	100
4.3 The broom of time.	104
4.4 Prototypical depiction of the life course in Europe.	105
4.5 Japanese and French drawings of the return of the soul.	108
4.6 The generative life cycle model (GLCM).	110
4.7 Coordination of multiple parallel time frames in the present of mother (M) and child (C) joint living.	112
5.1 Three ways of looking at <i>the real</i> .	125
5.2 Karl Bühler’s organon model.	132
5.3 Kurt Lewin’s scheme of life space in human development.	138
5.4 The Berlin Wall – where it used to be.	146
5.5 Commercial guidance of identity through meaningful objects.	147
5.6 The minimal structural unit of TEM.	157
6.1 Narrative as episodic description.	166
6.2 Panopticon blueprint by Jeremy Bentham, 1791.	176
6.3 A heuristic model of sustainable change in human psychological development.	187
6.4 How change fails in human development.	189
6.5 Reflection and protest IMs and mutual in-feeding.	191
7.1 Communication as mutuality of construction: emergence of novelty.	201

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	List of figures	
7.2	The teaching–learning complex (TLC) – <i>obuchenie</i> .	208
7.3	Boundaries of the institutions of formal learning.	220
7.4	The image of goddess Kali/Durga in Orissa, India.	240
7.5	Russian poster advocating a three-child preference in 2008.	243
7.6	Activity context for loyalty promotion and maintenance.	246
7.7	Yrjö Engeström’s activity system.	251
8.1	Mutual dependency of dynamics of transition.	264
9.1	Bifurcation of symbolically repaired transgression.	291
9.2	Dynamic relationships between life and theatre.	296
9.3	Three zones of experience after Winnicott (1971).	298
10.1	The special focus on the rear of the body in the making of jeans.	321
10.2	Dressing ‘up’ for minimal coverage of the body.	322
10.3	The inviting pleasures of smoking.	323
10.4	An outdoors symbolic ‘smoking area’.	325
10.5	A ‘smoking zone’ in Frankfurt airport funded by private business.	326
12.1	Emergence of the subject.	376

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Tables

6.1 Various perspectives on narratives	<i>page</i> 164
6.2 Lisa’s problematic self-narrative and IMs	181
6.3 Innovative moments grid (version 7.2)	184
7.1 Modes of learning – proposed new definitions	224

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Boxes

1.1 Gilbert Gottlieb – the originator of the idea of <i>probabilistic epigenesis</i>	page 17
1.2 Heinz Werner – developmental perspective from Goethe to our time	20
3.1 Charles Sanders Peirce	73
3.2 Lev Vygotsky	77
3.3 Internalization, externalization and the definition of personal culture	80
3.4 Hans Vaihinger	81
3.5 Jean Piaget	84
4.1 Psychological distancing and de-distancing	113
5.1 Personal culture	127
5.2 Karl Bühler	133
5.3 Erving Goffman	140
7.1 Personal life philosophy (PLP)	217
7.2 <i>The Tale of Cupid and Psyche</i> , by Apuleius	238
9.1 Juri Lotman and the notion of <i>semiosphere</i>	286
9.2 Victor Turner	295
9.3 Donald W. Winnicott	298
10.1 Serge Moscovici	327
11.1 One of the first examples of longevity: Alice George in 1681	344

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface: from dispute to collaboration

This book is the result of twelve hands writing. One of us (JV) invited the others to take part in an interesting experience of collective writing. Having a dinner together is a delicious starting point for collaboration. As with most interesting new projects, the writing of this book had its very beginning in the middle of a confusion of interactions during a Portuguese dinner in Porto in 2006, where one of the present authors (MG) denied that his current research work on psychotherapy had any direct links with developmental science, while another (JS) replied that it might have some, but they were not as explicit and full blown as a dynamic systems approach would probably imply – ‘how is it possible to know if our perspective is developmental if we know so little about developmental science?’ ‘But you should know something about it’, argued a third (DV), who started propagating dynamic systems approaches for elaborating on development within dialogical self theory. As the risk-taking opportunist that he always has been JV then solved the problem by suggesting that we find out in practice by writing a joint book on the developmental science of the human life course. For him, it seemed unreal that people who study adult psychotherapy processes – the very difficult processes that are to lead to further personal development – have anything other than a developmental approach. The others – somewhat disbelievingly – accepted the challenge. Soon the first quartet of adventurers to this new field of the study of adult development understood that they could not truly cover the human life course because of their lack of perspective on the dynamics of ruptures and the use of cultural resources in coping with these (which is the focus of TZ who then joined the team), and all of us were feeling totally lost when it came to understanding the very end of the life course (and DF joined to assist on this theme).

The process of the collective writing of one book was a developmental adventure in itself. Academics in any country are busy people, as they are increasingly dragged into administrative tasks and need to sit through many boring and inconclusive committee meetings that make them want to be elsewhere and have the freedom to do their work. That desire

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
 Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
 and Dieter Ferring
 Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii Preface: from dispute to collaboration

is usually frustrated by the unavoidable demand to be present at the next committee meeting. If one succumbs to such a mundane way of playing academic 'leadership roles', the senility of the mind is likely to arrive long before the senility of the body. This is why deservedly famous scientists often fail to produce new ideas after gaining prominent social positions. The tension between creative work and the obligations of social roles is a perennial problem for the academic life course. For the six of us, joint writing of this book was a 'window of opportunity' to at least temporarily resolve that tension in favour of creative effort.

Of course it was no easy task. Some of us were lucky enough to have the time and concentration to work quickly, others more slowly – and then the others became quick and the first ones slow. This somewhat un-coordinated heterochrony – at times leading to apologetic e-mails to one another for not getting promised parts finished on time – retained our understanding of one another's roles as constantly multi-tasking human beings. Understanding the Busy Other by being a Busy Self comes easily. In a sense, the writing of the book was itself a process of developmental emergence.

Most of the initial work was done at a distance. We decided the structure of the book through a series of 'pairs' meetings. We then distributed each chapter to those who were 'in charge' of it; we also decided, through a collective meeting, how each of us could contribute to chapters written by others. The inclusion of different voices often led us to substantially rewrite the chapters, or even to transform our understanding of what we were doing (if not of what development might be). Eventually, the book as a whole evolved through these dialogues, discussions, resolutions and questions left open.

Aside from dinners and e-mails, it is also productive to come together in the framework of workshops dedicated to a common goal. In the writing of this book this happened when almost all the separate pieces were prepared – in March 2010 – and in a place most fitting for such collective endeavour – the quiet campus of the University of Luxembourg at Walferdange.¹ What had been discovered in the course of working on the book at a distance – namely, that we could write it and that it was interesting to do so – was corroborated at the meeting of its authors. We felt good working on the joint goal – and our very different perspectives became mutually complementary. Collaboration entails mutual enrichment with ideas – many insights about elderly people began to fit the

¹ Our gratitude goes to the University of Luxembourg, and its INSIDE Programme, for making this meeting possible, and to Dieter Ferring and Lea Feltgen for setting it up in ways that worked very well for our task.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-76938-9 - Human Development in the Life Course: Melodies of Living
Tania Zittoun, Jaan Valsiner, Dankert Vedeler, João Salgado, Miguel M. Gonçalves
and Dieter Ferring

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface: from dispute to collaboration

xiii

perspective of the dialogical self of mid-age psychotherapy patients, and even of infants.

During the meeting at Walferdange we discovered that *basic ideas of development are one* rather than many, divided artificially between different sub-areas of developmental psychology. Of course that idea has been put forward by others before – but rhetorical declarations cannot replace the immediate joint experience of feeling the beauty of working together, even while disagreeing on many issues. The disagreements are the resource for further development of ideas, while the emerging feeling of joint endeavour in the team of the authors is the condition that makes further development possible.

To summarize, this book is the result of a truly collaborative enquiry. It is based on the very deep assumption that thinking does not occur in a void, and that there is no such thing as a lonely thinker. Creation of new ideas always occurs in a specific context, through dialogues with present and absent others and, in the case of scientific writing, through dialogue with other texts and theories, as well with empirical facts and mundane observations.² A collectively written book is simply fully exploiting this observation, and trying to catalyse processes of emergence, by purposefully choosing the real others of the dialogue in which one engages.³ Such a book is, in itself, a demonstration of what a sociocultural understanding of creativity may actually lead to do.

² Glaveanu (2010).

³ On the dimension along which one can try to modulate the generation of collective work, see for instance Cornish, Zittoun and Gillespie (2007); Zittoun, Baucal, Cornish and Gillespie (2007).