Introduction

With this Anniversary Issue we celebrate 50 years of the journal *Human Development*. *Human Development* was founded in 1958 as *Vita Humana* (Human Life) by Hans Thomae of the University of Bonn, Germany. From the beginning the journal was intended to serve as an interdisciplinary forum for research and theory on the full lifespan of human development. From 1958 until 1965, the journal published articles in English, French, and German. However, in 1965, in concert with international trends in the sciences, the journal began publishing articles solely in English. It was at this same time that the journal changed its name to *Human Development*. The authors who have published in this journal include virtually every significant theorist working in the past 50 years, from Piaget and Inhelder to Baltes, Bruner, Eichorn, Hatano, Havighurst, Kohlberg, Neugarten, Riegel, Sinclair, and scores of others. *Human Development* has published seminal articles ranging from reports on classical longitudinal studies to the uses of narrative to study educational processes. Most notably this journal has published conceptual and theoretical articles that have engaged in critical analyses and set the agenda for research from a variety of perspectives including Piagetian and Vygotskian theory, dialectical psychology, action theory, and cultural and evolutionary psychology. Through it all, the journal has maintained a commitment to interdisciplinary inquiry, a lifespan perspective on development, and the inclusion of scholarship from the international community.

In thinking about how best to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this jewel among journals in our field, we decided along with our editorial board to select three articles that appeared previously in the journal that marked significant points of departure for subsequent research and theory. Following each of these classics are invited papers by contemporary researchers that reflect upon the importance of the classical pieces and bring us up to date on the current and future direction of work on the issues that had been addressed in these original articles. In some cases the commentaries reflect the personal impact that these articles had on the authors' own research. In all cases the papers highlight the significance that these publications in *Human Development* have had for the field of human development.

We begin with Lawrence Kohlberg's 1963 article in what was then *Vita Humana*, in which he first published his theory of stages of moral development. The publication of this paper sparked a revolution in the study of moral development. Although Piaget [1932] had provided the basic theoretical framework for a cognitive developmental approach to understanding morality, it was Kohlberg's article in *Vita Humana* that led to the opening of large-scale interest in developmental research on this aspect of social life, and eventually the broader constructivist transformation of the-

oretical accounts of socialization itself. In his companion paper, Elliot Turiel, a former student of Kohlberg's, addresses the long-standing impact of Kohlberg's work, updates our understanding of where the field has moved, and offers insights into the new challenges faced by research and theory on moral and social development. Turiel continues the dialogue initiated by the Killen and Smetana [2007] essay – in the new Editor's Corner feature in *Human Development* – which has led to interesting and impassioned exchanges over the role of neuroscience in the study of morality.

No less controversial or significant is the next classic paper on formal operations by Jean Piaget, which appeared in *Human Development* in 1972. The publication of this paper provided an English-language synopsis of the work that Bärbel Inhelder and Piaget had initiated on adolescent and adult cognition. At least as important for subsequent research were Piaget's prescient admissions that the stage they defined as *formal operations* might not emerge in the same manner among adolescents outside the confines of the Swiss environment in which Inhelder and he had conducted their research. This article coincided with a flurry of Genevan cross-cultural research [Dasen, 1977]. We include two companion pieces with the Piaget classic. The first paper is by Deanna Kuhn, a former editor of *Human Development* and internationally regarded expert on the development of formal operational thinking. In her paper, Kuhn presents an evaluative analysis of the current status of the piagetian description of formal operations, and its utility for future work on adolescent and adult cognition. Her commentary is followed by a paper by Ashley Maynard, who picks up the thread of cultural variations in cognitive development raised by Piaget, to argue for and illustrate how contemporary research on human development must be self-consciously grounded in cultural practices so as to offer insights into general developmental processes.

The issues of culture and development raised by Maynard in her commentary on the Piaget piece are at the core of the third classic paper by James Wertsch, selected from the *Human Development* archive. In this paper from 1979, Wertsch sets out to clarify some of the basic concepts from Lev Vygotsky's writings that had begun to capture the interest of Western developmental and educational psychology. The impact of this article is addressed by Geoffrey Saxe, another former editor of *Human Development*, who discusses how the ideas developed by Wertsch resonated with Saxe's own struggles to bring together genetic psychology with cultural practices. Indeed, much of the energy of developmental theory over the past 25 years has been addressed to this set of questions. Saxe vividly describes how the powerful insights contained in the Wertsch paper have played out in work that is ongoing in both developmental and educational studies. The second commentary by Neil Mercer focuses on the relevance of the insights provided in the 1979 Wertsch article for our understanding of dialogic processes in classrooms. Mercer deftly illustrates how Wertsch's insights into Vygotsky's notions of the zone of proximal development provide both explanatory and analytic tools for effective teaching. With Mercer's commentary this celebratory issue is directly connected to the developmentalist educational themes that have graced this journal over the past 20 years. His commentary also reminds us of the broader significance of the James Wertsch piece in *Human Development* for the understanding of Vygotsky's work and its impact on developmental and educational research and practice.

We end the issue with an excerpt from an interview with Jerome Bruner. It would be safe to say that no other living scholar better represents the past 50 years

of research and theory on human development than Jerome Bruner. It was with that thought in mind that we invited him to share some reflections. It is altogether fitting that he ends his comments in the interview that appears in this issue with the following observation: 'I guess my recommendation is that developmental psychology give up the age restrictions that limit it to early life. Development continues through life. One's culturally shaped expectancies about life are just as important in steering development as one's hormones.'

It has been our good fortune to be entrusted with the editorship of *Human Development* in 2007. We wish to acknowledge the editors who have come before us, and whose accomplishments we hope to emulate. We mentioned above that the journal was founded in 1958 by Hans Thomae. In 1963 he was joined as editor by M.J. Langeveld, a phenomenologist who helped found the 'Utrecht' school of research and practice in child development and pedagogy, and Bernice Neugarten of the Committee on Human Development of the University of Chicago. In 1970 the role of senior editor was assumed by Klaus Riegel of the University of Michigan, who served with distinction until his death in 1977. Jack Meachum took the reins in 1978 and guided the journal as senior editor until 1982, when Wolfgang Edelstein of the Max Planck Institute in Berlin became senior editor with Hermione Sinclair of the University of Geneva. In 1988 the editorship shifted back to North America under the guidance of Deanna Kuhn of Teachers College of Columbia University. Under her direction the journal assumed the general format that it has maintained up to the present day. Barbara Rogoff of the University of California at Santa Cruz took over the editorship of the journal in 1997. During her time as editor the journal began to appear online (1998). Geoffrey Saxe followed Rogoff as senior editor from 2002 until the end of 2006.

Throughout these 50 years one constant has kept this journal moving steadily forward. That has been the continued support of its publisher, S. Karger of Basel, Switzerland. This is a truly remarkable publishing house owned and operated by the same family since 1890. Heinz Karger, who had moved the company from Berlin to Basel in 1937, was at the helm when *Vita Humana* was founded. However, it has been Thomas and Steven Karger who have led the company and nurtured this journal since 1959. We owe them both a deep and outstanding debt of gratitude. We wish also to acknowledge and thank the staff in Basel, who works tirelessly to produce each issue.

As we celebrate 50 years of uninterrupted publication of this unique journal of conceptual and theoretical articles, we look forward to another 50 years of new ideas and new directions for research and theory appearing in the pages of *Human Development*.

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