CALL FOR PAPERS

workshop: Types of phylogenic memory: the intersecting theories of memetics, morphic fields, semiotics, collective agency, and theatrum mundi.

There are at least 3 kinds of phylogenic memory: (1) genes (DNA); (2) mind-stuff that is somehow passed on (propagated) as well as acquired by imitation (and which resides in organic carriers); and (3) memorabilia (human cultural artifacts and tools). It is the purpose of this workshop to describe these organic, endogenous and social modes of inheritance, relate this bio-psycho-social memory to earlier dual systems of genetic and cultural, and adjoin multidisciplinary expertise to integrate and restructure existing points of view. The principal discourses that will be reviewed are (1) memetic theory which epitomizes the cultural turn; (2) Sheldrake and his morphic fields (a Goethean lineage); (3) Semiotics as an alternative transdisciplinary method (linguistic turn); (4) theatrum mundi, viz. world-as-stage, with two dimensions: (4a) a literary criticism dealing with works of fine arts on this subject, and (4b) referring to the work of Halbwachs, Assmann, Burke and Nora on cultural production, historiography and the deep structure of history itself; and (5) collective agency as one of the central themes behind all other perspectives, one that concerned authors from all ideological angles, from Marx and Durkheim to Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin (more narrowly it calls on Lukács and Gramsci and the inevitable coexistence of differences). Foundational issues of deep psychology, physics (quantum theory vs. psi-fields), and the biomedical sciences will provide support. Communication among contributors will benefit from a history-of-ideas approach and comparative paradigm analysis. The workshop agenda will provide a comprehensive perspective about a putative second phylogenic system with methods contributed from all disciplines and should be highly able to address some timely concerns of science and society alike: Are the Laws of nature mere habits? How does the science of the genome relate to certain aspects of brain research and to our understanding of cultural deep structures as studied by the humanities? Do we need paradigm shifts in developmental biology and evolution theory? What moral implications follow for stem cell research and abortion policy? Is the public instrumentation of genetic screening flawed? Do we need collective human rights to protect what cannot be reduced to individual interest?

If you consider to contribute, please consult the detailed instructions at http://mailbox.univie.ac.at/Martin.Potschka/CALLFP.pdf, which gives an introductory review of the various theories and presents more specific questions.

There will be two meetings on the outlined subject and you may attend both or any single one of them. The first venue is the ISSEI 2004 conference in Pamplona, Spain, followed up by a symposium in the Spring of 2005 in Vienna, Austria (jointly organized by Jeff Bernard, Karin Liebhart and Martin Potschka). Please submit a brief abstract to the workshop chair (Dr. Martin Potschka, martin.potschka@univie.ac.at) now, but no later than January 2004. Your contribution will be reviewed and you will be notified of acceptance. It is planned to produce a book from the best contributions of both meetings.