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As a lecturer in Communication Studies, my research focuses on the transformative impacts of media theory and emerging technologies on our understanding of human subjectivity.

One of my key research areas involves the work of Evald Ilyenkov, a pivotal figure in activity theory. Ilyenkov challenged traditional views that locate thought solely within the individual brain, instead highlighting the role of the "thinking body" of society. Despite his scholarly influence, his work was suppressed in the Soviet Union, leading to his untimely death in 1979. My book, co-edited with Vesa Oittinen, *[Dialectics of the Ideal: Evald Ilyenkov and Creative Soviet Marxism](#)* (2014), introduces Ilyenkov's groundbreaking ideas to a wider audience, including translations of his work and expert commentaries.

This exploration sparked my deep interest in activity theory, which I further explored with support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I investigated the origins of activity theory and its spread beyond the Soviet Union, culminating in the publication of *[Activity Theory: An Introduction](#)* (2024), co-edited with Kyoko Murakami and Miriam McSweeney. The volume examines the evolution, current trends, and future directions of this rich tradition in the social sciences. In the foreword, I emphasize the potential of activity theory for addressing theoretical and methodological questions across the social sciences:

It is the vast potential of this approach that drew me to this work. Today we find activity theory consisting of a loose-knit, eclectic body of theorists, working in various fields around the world. What binds them is a common tradition rooted in a particular approach that has considerable, virtually untapped, methodological value for understanding social phenomena. Activity theory has vast potential for tackling theoretical and methodological questions cutting across the social sciences today, as it illuminates a special reality with a peculiar objectivity, which otherwise remains obscured. My hope is that this collection will contribute to the expansion and self-clarification of this tradition, facilitating its transformation into a method that can stand alongside other established research methods typically used in the social sciences. (Levant, 2024, pp. 8-9)

My current research program builds on this work and applies activity theory to investigate AI agency within Critical AI Studies. By developing, deploying, and studying autonomous AI agents using frameworks like AutoGPT, AutoGen, and Crew AI, this research clarifies the connection between AI and humans, defining the boundaries of AI agency. This approach contrasts with certain posthuman theory trends, instead emphasizing the role of social practices in shaping AI agency. The goal is to elucidate both the capabilities and limits of AI agency, contributing to a clearer understanding of this technology and human intelligence.

An exciting new avenue in my research is the study of multi-agent AI systems, where recent data suggests that AI agents achieve more when working collaboratively. This research leverages insights from activity theory about human intelligence as a product of intersubjective collaboration, exploring how these dynamics can enhance AI systems' safety, functionality, and scalability. My ongoing investigation into AI agency builds on my work on Ilyenkov and activity theory, continuing my lifelong exploration of the origins and nature of human subjectivity.

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