Foreword

As a genuine believer in strong emergence, I guess it would be self-defying if not outright contradictory, for me to say that this edited volume will have such and such effects in the field or on the readers.

On the other hand, I can confidently say that in these times of Kurzweilian acceleration and Clarkian "tools-r-us" adage, yet another book-object to think with and about multi-agent systems and emergent phenomena will certainly help us catch up with the pace of "reality" changes. Who could have predicted the emergence of micro-crediting schemes made possible by the ubiquity of cell phones? Or the effects of sites hosting user generated videos on the U.S. presidential campaign and on politics in general,or the crowd sourcing phenomenon as well as the economy of the niche.

As our tools get more and more complex, so do we, as well as our relations with others. The editors' efforts invested into this edited volume resulted in something that will certainly help understand ourselves better by supporting the "extrospective" processes. An explanation of this neologism would be in order here: if we adopt the *distributed mind/cognition* theory, then I believe that (at least in this transitory phase of getting used to it) *extrospection* may a better word to describe what was once (during the *mind-does-not-go-beyond-our-skin-bag* era) called introspection.

The three sections of the volume—Initial States, Emergences, and Second Order Emergences—make for a new organic whole. The first section covers foundations of MAS (sociology of emergence, enactivist critique of questions of structure and agency in sociology, and issues of heterogeneous societies). In the second, we find a concentrate on emergences, where at least two levels of emergence are treated. First, there is the simultaneous focus on the three components of MAS, agents, their interactions, and properties of the groups. Second is the wide acceptance that MAS theories and tools do offer practical solutions in the world of today. Finally, the last part offers insights into the behavior of agents that become aware of emergent behaviors or emergent phenomena.

I am positive that even non-specialists will find this volume informative, and that every reader will get the update of latest on-goings in the field. The introduction by the editors gives an excellent *advance organizer* for what's ahead, and definitely helps the assimilation of the chapters.

What tags would I use for this book? Multi Agent Systems, emergence, second order cybernetics, heterogeneous societies, mixed realities, distributed cognition … in one word? Del.icio.us!

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Georgi Stojanov received his master's degree in 1993 and his PhD degree in computer science from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, "SS Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, Macedonia in 1997. His main research interest is in developmental robotics and modeling of higher cognitive processes (learning, anticipation, curiosity and analogical and metaphorical reasoning). Currently he is with the American University of Paris where he teaches several courses in computer science. Dr. Stojanov has been a member of organizing and program committees of numerous internationally recognized workshops and conferences. He has published extensively in the above mentioned fields. Dr. Stojanov has collaborated with many universities and research institutions among which: University of California in San Diego, University of Geneva, Lehigh University, University of Trieste, Paris V. His research projects and visiting researcher/professor posts have been funded by several institutions including: European Commission, US Academies Offices of Central Europe and Eurasia, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, SOROS Foundation.