



Title      Beyond talent management: a relational portrait  
of companies adapting to global financial  
downturns

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BEYOND TALENT MANAGEMENT:  
A RELATIONAL PORTRAIT OF COMPANIES ADAPTING TO  
GLOBAL FINANCIAL DOWNTURNS

by

Birgitte Pedersen

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines life within large Danish companies affected by the global financial downturn. It does so from phenomenological-relational perspectives, as a counterpoint to the traditional, mechanical (Cartesian) ways of viewing structures, problems and processes leading to resolutions. In particular, the thesis dwells on the differences between “aboutness” and “withness” as criteria for judging how people behave in such companies, particularly at times when a CEO suddenly announces major and rapid change. The thesis attempts to shape some of the contours of a relational landscape - with different understandings of life and living. In that respect, it looks beyond models, tools and recipes as the only ways of evolving as companies move towards future survival.

I wish to dedicate this work to Benedicte and Therese

You are the next generation!

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## Prologue

Life has become increasingly important for me as I have grown older, and in this thesis I wish to show you how the judgement of life itself has changed the principles for my practice, and even for the way I would describe myself today. I have been told that my interest for the subtle aspects of life started at a young age. I lived a safe life growing up. My parents were newcomers in a farming district in northern Denmark. During the day my father visited farmers in his role as agricultural adviser. My mother worked in the grocery store, until she retrained to be an advisor at an unemployment insurance fund. It was at a time in history where many farmers went into liquidation and were unemployed; their safe bubbles burst.

At the dinner table at night my family and I would discuss examples of life which we had encountered during the day; how life was lived in different ways and how people felt life treated them fairly/unfairly. We were wondering together about our own values through the lives lived by others. During holidays we would take the car and visit new places offering fresh examples of lives lived by others. Impressions were captured in detailed descriptions in notebooks and documented with photos. Back at the dinner table at night, we would recall what we had observed, and suggest which of the impressions we would try out ourselves – for example if the house or garden needed a brush up, we would think and talk about, and maybe visit again, exciting houses and gardens. Despite living remotely in the countryside; we did not need the Internet or social technology (which was not invented at that time) to know that we were part of a bigger world, and that lived lives were interconnected.

The exchange of "field work" every night allowed me to train my story telling and story listening skills. I learned how to pay attention to my family's responses and shape the story I was telling accordingly; if it was not a social event for us all, there was no point in telling the story. I learned the importance of noticing the details and the context as a connected whole, because in the evening we would challenge each other with questions of coherence, patterns and exceptions.

I am sure that all families tell stories at some point, but I guess what made me think of our stories as different is that they did not follow the dramaturgical compositions which shaped other stories (for example, elements like a good starting point, good guys, bad guys, the hero, the plot, the climax, and an ending). I learned this as I later

moved into the city, and people did not seem to be enticed by or interested in lived stories, simply because there were too many lives to relate to. Quickly I sensed how my stories were only found interesting if I included plots, motives, and predictions in the compositions – very different from our stories at the dinner table portraying lived lives, in real time, told in a way so we would be able to recognize the dilemmas and mirror them in our own lives.

However, one day our safe bubble also burst, and we discovered that life inside the bubble was not infinite.

It happened in an instant when I was in my mid-twenties. At this age the prefrontal cortex (the executive function) of the brain is still maturing in relation to complicated planning processes. My planning processes involved deciding what to do next – based on my judgement of distinguishing what is accepted as good, just, beautiful and true in the norms of the society where I was growing up – and then considering the consequent future social acceptance or unacceptance of my choice. It was an intensive trial and error dance, requiring the whole body to adapt along the road of experience.

What to wear, who to imitate and which group to be part of suddenly seemed unimportant as I sat in the hospital at the bedside of my father struggling for his life after a stroke. He was fifty-two, and had fallen ill only three months after I had participated in my boyfriend's funeral. My boyfriend suffered from a cancerous brain tumour and I had been through three tough years as his caregiver, living far from my family. The phone rang suddenly and I was called to the hospital in my hometown. In both situations the well-known movements of the person I used to know, was changed – and the systemic toolbox I had been taught was less helpful. In my boyfriend's story it happened gradually and it was only after his death, I realized how much he had changed. In my father's story it happened in a split second. As they changed, I did too. In the year that followed the phone rang several times from the hospital emergency room, as my father had several subsequent strokes and suffered badly from the complications.

If you have been a regular visitor to hospital – not as a patient but as a relative – you may recognize the emotions of shock, fear, sadness and worry when you rush as fast as you can into the hallway, crossing your fingers that someone will understand the

emergency and quickly assist you in finding your way around inside the hospital, or that there at least will be other signs to lead you. As I sat down a few minutes later at my father's bedside it felt as if the blood in my veins was getting stiffer, as if my arms were getting heavier, and as if my stomach was not functioning at all, even though I felt a continuous need for the toilet. The clock on the wall seemed to be ticking slower than the clocks I had at home, which of course was not true as I was just experiencing time as standing still. The room smelled of plastic and the water tasted of iron. My father was asleep, or at least it looked like it. Twenty different pillows supported his whole body as he lay there tied to several machines through tubes and cables of different colours and sizes. The machines were linked to monitors showing graphs and numbers. The sounds from the machines and monitors were bip-sounds following my father's rhythm (his heart beat etc.), but which also gave him a scary mechanical identity. Had my father turned into a machine?

My voice mailbox (mobile phone) was filled with messages asking me to update people on the situation, and because it was forbidden to use the phone inside the intensive care unit, I would have to delay making all the calls until later, or step out of the room to make them immediately. However, I did not want to leave the bedside and I started wondering how to solve the dilemma. I stopped wondering and went directly into reasoning on how to organize a cascade information system. I had learnt from my boyfriend's course of disease that I would have to set aside much time for the updates to friends and family, and that it would include the risk that I would not get any sleep myself. I also started to think of practical matters, if my father was not to live. Looking back, I am surprised that I so quickly went into operation mode. While I was considering how to solve the matter, I did not feel like sleeping at all, because my thoughts went back and forth between a search for certainty and worst-case scenarios, between hope and despair, between feeling lucky that my father lived and feeling sad that I may be about to lose him. The adrenaline alone allowed me to stay awake for several hours. Suddenly I understood why some would feel an urge to use alcohol or sleeping tablets in order to get just some sleep or peace.

The expressions on the doctor and nurses' faces were serious and they spoke very quietly to each other when they came to the bedside every fifteen minutes to examine my father. Around my father's bed sat my two brothers, my sister-in-law and my mother who had similar facial expressions as the hospital staff, however just paler

and shivering with anxiety. We did not cry at the bedside, but went to the bathroom when it was impossible to keep away the tears. The trusted friends I was to contact later that day showed similar responses, and after a week like this, I felt like I was kept imprisoned in a room not unlike the scene in Norwegian Edvard Munch's expressionist painting "The Scream". Like my own face, every face responded to an anxious situation.

I returned to work but was not 100 percent present. I acted and felt like a robot, and was unable to think more than one day ahead. If anyone at that time had presented me with a systemic technique asking me to dream, to take the front seat of the bus and drive it to a nice destination, or step out of my so-called comfort zone, I would have looked at them as if they must be bananas suggesting such nonsense.

I was only interested in "Any news?" while my family and I were monitoring every detail in my father's condition in the search for signs on which way it would lead to. We were all very frustrated that the doctors were unable to provide the clear answers we were asking for. Booklets etc. seemed to give some of the answers, but did not provide us with the answers we needed. It seemed a paradox that I had been trained in and worked with change management in my professional life and here I was not being able to manage or control anything, feeling vulnerable and not having the energy to let supportive voices into my life. I just wanted certainty and clear answers. I declined all invitations to talk with anyone else, as it seemed a waste of time. I assumed they had never experienced a similar situation themselves and therefore I could not use the kind of advice or comfort at all. My mother explained it with a proverb: "they have not tasted the apple yet, so they do not know what we are tasting".

\*\*\*

Today, many years later, I recognize similar responses from within my own story to those in a company when a "turnaround" occurs: Similar "panic" responses show when the senior management of the company suddenly, from one day to another, decides to change course. In Human Resources (HR), the department in which I work, this is called a "turnaround" and the announcement is distributed internally via parallel mass meetings at the many company sites, to which the employees, managers and HR are invited, with little or no warning.



**Figure 1 Turnaround announcement by CEO**

The mass meeting is often a one-hour meeting where the thoughts behind and the consequences of the turnaround are presented via Power Point presentations. After the mass meeting, local meetings between managers or team leaders and their teams will follow. Sometimes the manager has been pre-briefed twenty-four hours before the announcement or has received a Q&A package via e-mail. Other times the manager is not aware and receives the message for the first time in the same meeting as the employees. Often, the rest of the day is used in conversation about what the turnaround means for the employee, for the colleague, for the team, for the manager and for the company – in exactly that order (quite the opposite of how the presentations are designed).

A turnaround usually means the company is in a serious situation. It is fighting for survival, and the strategy may include options such as redundancies, cost savings, outsourcing of non-core activities, clearer customer focus. Whole departments are closed down, and many colleagues are laid off. New managers are appointed, office buildings are sold, and the workstations moved into offices with others. The turnaround influences many criteria which managers and employers use as benchmarks to other jobs and companies; for example my values, my rights and



duties, my practice, my relationships. Issues like “will I still have job?”, “where to sit/work?”, “with whom?”, “who to report to?”, “where to get further information?”, “how soon?” seem to be the most common queries that everybody is asking right after the mass meetings and team meetings. It happens at every level, for staff and managers alike.

Despite what is written in management books or what proud CEOs tell you at conferences, I have experienced turnaround featuring merely loose overall direction setting as the urgency does not allow time for preparations of detailed plans. Also, it is assumed necessary to include the organization in the detail planning of the actual redesign, because the CEO and senior management do not know every detail of every practice.

“But isn’t this a good thing to create an involving process?” you may wonder.

Maybe, but if the managers and employees are not prepared, or have even never experience a turnaround before, I notice a rather different response: panic.

Just like when a person is hit by a stroke, the organization also may be paralyzed, or having a “high-blood-pressure-like” condition. Limbs, which used to work, do not work anymore, and new practices will have to be integrated into the daily life. The nerve cells may be damaged, and channels used to provide insight or information, are now blocked. Proper rehabilitation can train the system to use other nerve cells, but it takes some time to figure it out, and that is time the CEO cannot afford.

The belief for many families hit by a stroke or a company hit by a turnaround is that the person/the company as a system stay intact – and only subparts need to be fixed or replaced. We believed this in my family, until we learned otherwise, and many systemic colleagues I know and myself seemed to approach *systems* just like this.

The first response of panic is not only noticeable at an individual level, but the turnaround manifests itself in many ways in the company. Often a turnaround “task force” is monitoring the progress, but an external consultant can also be brought in. They do head counts and calculate full-time employee numbers, which are put into Excel spread sheets. Sales figures, cash flow, inventories etc. are also put into Excel spread sheets. Even though these are supposed to be a secret, people will know instantly what is going on as frequently calls from above (often informed by an

executive secretary or personal assistant), or the consultant in charge of the secret project, require immediate attention and documentation: “Please send us the latest evaluation sheets”; “Please, send the order and error list”; “Please calculate the loss, if you are to remove 25 percent of your budget”; “Please send your headcount list”. With deadlines of anything between one and twenty-four hours to deliver it is never quite certain in which context the information will be used. If you ask, the answer would most likely be “I can’t tell you” or “The CEO has asked that we prioritize this”.

Managers transform into desk generals using all their energy in front of the computer, describing and documenting their function’s value, and adapting their team’s practice to the new financial situation. They will often bid for new projects, and make sure that their employees look busy, or de-prioritise those projects which risk too much negative attention. Other managers will focus primarily on their own career life, and seem to forget the team. And a few will do nothing but just wait.

Many meetings and projects are immediately put on hold, and even if it is described as “only temporary”, the hold may last for several months or even years. People start to be very explicit about what they have achieved and begin prioritising in relation to what has to be done in order to meet customer’s needs only (often called LEAN). Frequently the provision of internal support services is downgraded.

Stories are told. In the beginning those involved want *any* news (like myself and my family needed at the hospital bedside). Later the stories transform; I shall explore examples in this thesis. Patterns of behaviour such as when people arrive in the morning and depart in the evening are also indicators that a kind of “Value Competition” has begun.

The Value Competition is not only linked to the practices, but also to the individual’s worth, and sometime pretty nasty methods are used to prove this even though it is actually not a schoolyard, but a company of adults. People spend many hours a day working, so for some there is no choice other than to join the competition. “What I am worth nine hours a day will affect my self-esteem in the time outside work as well”, seems to be the rationale. As we shall see later, there are many ways you can construct your self-image in a sympathetic fashion, so people – just like Facebook – will mark you as “liked”.

Unanswered questions create a vacuum right in the middle of the Value Competition, questions like: “how do I deal with emotions when others interpret their expression as a sign of weakness?”; “How do I avoid the risk of downgrading my own value by questioning the turnaround?”; “How do I protect the (family) members who suffers most – including the manager?”; “How do I deal with members who continually forget agreements, because they prioritise more urgent matters from the top?”; “Who does not support but withdraws, when support is needed?”; “How do we deal with diversity if the turnaround means alignment?”; or “How do I respond to the new manager who knows nothing about the practice, and therefore leads and judges according to atmosphere only?”

All the employees in a turnaround company are affected, in contrast to the situation in the hospital where my family, sitting around my father’s bed were affected but the doctors and nurses were not personally suffering from the stroke of my father. Even “spaces” where employees used to reflect (e.g. training courses, team building or social activities, critical voices/debates in company newsletter) are affected – employees can therefore no longer use these as reference points or role models, in their imagination work of “what does good citizenship in this company look like?”, “what is good leadership?”, “what is good performance?”, “what are the new criteria, and who are the new assessors with legitimized rights to make the judgement?”

### **My (stand)point in relation to a turnaround**

Even if I believe we are moving all the time, I do have a preferred standpoint describing a turnaround. I have worked as an in-house HR practitioner for many years. As previously stated HR means Human Resources, the function in larger organizations responsible for internal people processes. It is one of the vulnerable functions, often downgraded or erased whenever turnaround hits the company. The in-house HR practitioner works for the company on a permanent contract unlike the independent consultant who is hired by the company for a task or a project for a limited time. (Please refer to appendix, Chapter 9.4 for a further description of the HR practitioner.) There are different types of HR practices (e.g. talent management, compensation and benefit, performance management, executive search etc.), depending on how the relationship the company has developed with the “people processes”. In the appendix (chapter 9.5) you will find a short overview of different HR arenas.

We will not explore the processes and history of HR further in this thesis, even though my focus and examples are related to a dominant script (referring to CMM: Cronen, 1994). On one hand a description of the HR praxis will consume too many words of the thesis, which would not be fair to the reader. On the other hand it creates ethical dilemmas, making it easy for you and other readers to figure out whom I would be describing through a brief search at the Internet.

In the beginning I tried to find a way to include an explicit description of my praxis, but soon I found out that being a practitioner carrying out research “in-house”, suddenly created the dilemma that “my” practice is never *my* practice. I asked partners if they would like to be part of the research, they replied by requesting copyright agreements, in case I published the work. And the habitants in the system (especially at the strategic level) declined any part in the written research (or comment on the vignettes used in this thesis) for competitive reasons, and their own future career possibilities. As we shall see later the compromise (e.g. the talk shows, see page 202) included many checkpoints, where spin doctors had a controlling function, and most of all the data I collected was targeting the thesis as part of a marketing campaign rather than research material. Later, I learned that they expected “aboutness” questions, and it was the setting of “withness” questions, which provoked people to withdraw.

I was an inhabitant of the systems as well, and it created a wave of mistrust when I introduced the “Consent to participate form” and it immediately influenced our relationship. Once, I was called to my then manager’s office and advised not to use any indicators, which could remind others that I was doing something else (e.g. being a doctoral student) than what an in-house HR practitioner is supposed to do. Retrospectively I think that had I carried on, the thesis would not have portrayed the relationship between a HR practitioner and an organization. It would be of a researcher and an organization. How can you research a practice, without being in the practice, I wondered?

## Amanda; + 101 days a.t

"I am very sorry." My boss, Lars, looks down at the table between us. He has just finished talking and he seems nervous. I have not paid attention to the monologue, only that "your position is closed down, and I'm afraid we have to let you go". I look at the HR person, sitting next to my boss. She is smiling, as she always does, pretending to show empathy and that she is my friend. I have not met her before. Now, she says something.

"Amanda, I know this may come as a surprise for you, and that's why all three of us are to meet again in three days, so we can answer all your questions."

Both the HR person and Lars now sit and look at me as if they think I am a child or a foreign person not understanding. It is very uncomfortable and I sense how the blood raises in my cheeks.

Then the HR person slides a sheet of paper across the table. "You'll have to sign this. Your signature means that you have received the notice, not that you agree to it, so it is safe to sign." I look at the letterhead ... with my name and address. They have used my old surname, even though I have told them that I have taken back my maiden name after my divorce six months ago. The HR person continues: "This is an agreement which means that you are not allowed to tell anything about this. You see, we want to give you the best opportunities to move on, and acknowledge your loyal contribution to our company. Therefore we have decided that we will offer you an outplacement programme. It means that we fund a personal coach, who will advise you how to write an application, and how to train for job interviews. You'll meet him three times, and if you need further consultations, we have arranged for you to carry on ... at your own expense." She pauses, still looking at me in a strange, examining way, as if she thinks I'm not listening. "Of course, you have the right to choose another coach, if you think that your personalities do not match after the first meeting.... Are you all right, Amanda?"

I am not sure what she expects me to answer. How am I going to tell my son about this? He graduates soon. How am I going to pay for the party, if I have no income? I say, "Can I tell my colleagues?" The HR person turns her attention to my boss, Lars. He says "Well, Amanda, I suggest we arrange it so it looks like you have handed in your resignation yourself. In this way no one has to know, and who knows with your qualifications I won't be surprised that you have several job offers to choose from very soon. And then you might want to leave sooner ... I expect you to hand over your tasks to the trainee, and train her so she is able to continue the job. But we can talk more about this when we meet again". He looks at his watch all the time. Handing over my tasks to the trainee. To the trainee! But I'm the one who built up the parameters of my job from scratch, and the trainee is the last person who would have any interest in taking over this.... Or was this what was planned from the beginning? I have always felt that this child wanted to become a manager one day! And now I understand why they extended her contract a further year the other day.

My boss, Lars, continues: "Okay, Amanda, remember if you have any questions, you just call me, okay? Then we meet again in three days. I'm afraid I have to leave you now." He stands and offers me a handshake. "Bye, Amanda. Cheer up; people often use an opportunity like this to rethink their priorities in life. Many start to do what they always actually wanted to do. It's a turning point, an opportunity." He leaves the room.

The HR person also stands up. "Are you okay, Amanda?" She keeps mentioning my name, as if we are really close. "You know, Lars is a busy man, so we will have to forgive him for leaving. But I know, that talking to you in person meant a lot for him. You should know that it was Lars who demanded the outplacement. Otherwise we do not normally offer such expensive packages considering the crisis the company is in right now. Today Lars has to lay off 5 employees, and I know that he did not sleep at all last night."

I nod, she is kind of right. We were told two months ago, that our function had been moved into a new C-something ... CFO ... or COO or CDO area ... or something like that... some

category for “development” or “outsourcing”, which of course meant that my colleagues and I had been left feeling anxious about a possible meeting like this today.

The HR person tidies the table – the untouched tissues and the water intended for me. I clear my throat; “so, five this time?”

She smiles “Amanda, I know this is a hard time for you and for the colleagues left behind. I think we’ll have to expect more redundancies to come. It is not the poorest we lay off first, you know. The redundancies are jobs closed down, so you see in fact it has nothing to do with you. By the way, it’s okay if you go home directly after this meeting. You can tell your colleagues you have a headache or something like that.”

She is now at the door, and offers me a handshake. Tell my colleagues that I have a headache! Everybody noticed that the three of us went into the room seven minutes ago. When an HR person joins a meeting, it’s serious. I say “okay” and then I give her my hand and go out to collect my things. I say nothing, and my colleagues are quiet, looking into their computers, avoiding eye contact. One is even pretending to talk on the phone, only I can tell he’s not, because the light on his headset is not on, so there are no one at the other end of the line....

## 1. I began to wonder

### ... the birth of the research question

I am a trained systemic practitioner, and I began to wonder why the living systems I was in, during turnarounds, did not follow similar patterns, which many systemic theories would suggest (e.g. the idea about autopoiesis, appreciative inquiry, reflecting teams), but seemed to split up very fast in subsystems, or even into a range of individuals – those with power almost worshipping behaviourism approaches. I wondered why, presumably, any of the tools, which the systemic community of independent, external consultants often would suggest, were not helpful as they would assume and orient themselves toward *one system*, temporary out of order. I noticed that the tools often only were relating to other situations, as it is rare that any independent systemic practitioner is invited to join the first days of a turnaround, as all costs especially to external consultants are kept to a minimum.

I began to wonder about Value Competition and its many layers (e.g.; value of one's practice, personal worth, self-image, value of one's colleagues and manager etc.) and how these negotiations about identity (between and in individuals and/or functions) also included re-negotiations about whether the self-image from the past is legitimate still, here in the present. It feels almost like a withdrawal from previous legitimate, negotiated positions as they are no longer of benefit in the present competition: "I have actually always found him a bit boring, and I know that the new CEO agrees", or "he has always been very slow and good at hiding the errors he frequently makes" or "she would go directly to the top and complain, not on our behalf though. That is why she got promoted. I am not suggesting anything, but I can't help wondering, why she only needed one year, whereas other, very competent colleagues struggled away a lifetime without any promotion".

To make the negotiations even more complicated, I began to notice how the many lines of rationalising the purpose of the turnaround in relation to the achievement of the future targets, also included a reappraisal of personal worth in the past and present, in order to predict the value and worth in a future scenario: "He will never be able to cope with this, he does not have it in him ... just think of a situation with the customer!" All these constructions about the past and the future influence the self-image the individual has today and on how s/he acts today. Therefore the more you

know about the future (or act as if you do); the better you can position yourself in the present. I noticed that these responses were following everything but a linear change management idea suggesting phases of “ending-shock-denial-accept-letting-go-neutral-new-beginnings”.

It seemed more like a Western movie where everybody had been granted “a license to kill” or re-negotiate previous stories.

The bigger the noted difference between self-image before and after the announcement of the turnaround, the harder and longer it seemed to take to create new positive self-images. Again the assumption of *one* whole system adapting itself seemed to make the systemic approach fail dramatically. Explanations about “individualism versus relationships” seemed not to quite capture what I noticed.

There was something about the actual point of change and the premise of life, which caught my attention. The turnaround is expected to happen just as quickly as when you upload new software to your computer, or turn your car around. I often noticed it when senior management concluded: “Are you in, or out?” “This is not the time to discuss this; you are free to leave; we have customer’s waiting; it is not about you.”

I began to wonder about potential links between the supposedly free will to leave, the identity process, self-image, wellbeing (which systemic would explain as “symptoms” as we have no “self” but many “selves”) in the different spaces (which systemic would name “contexts”) and the ability to develop new relationships, new practices, which are meaningful for both the company and the individual. I noticed how former friends or allies co-constructed tense relationships with each other and opponents across the new territories – likely affecting the self-images and the sense of belonging in the rest of the relationships.

However, self-image has always been difficult for me to “prove” or invite conversations about – you will lose the Value Competition if you start to talk about your self-image (whether high or low), or about how your sense of belonging, is changing. I noticed how traditional systemic tools (and other tools) seemed to be used to point at causes-and-effects outside the individual, thus relieving the guilt and lightening the burden of the individual. In other words the tools are sometimes just removing the guilt and responsibility to another place in the *system*. Neither do the



tools support the in-house practitioner's solution of how to act on indicators like "nervousness", "worry about doing things wrong", "isolation or being placed on the periphery", "anxiety about losing the job", "eagerness to get things done in order to show results". How to involve such indicators into the systemic language? How to work with this in practice, if the ones with "power" in the *system* do not notice the indicators? No wonder that several have tried to write books about how to create and optimise change management processes, or external HR networks are springing up allowing a powerless space for breathing.

However, if the in-house HR practitioner uses clear, visible and certain signs from "the world of appearance" – as the German philosopher Immanuel Kant would describe it (cited in Hansen, 2008 p. 55) – such as satisfaction surveys, or how many employees have had a dialogue with their manager, it is suddenly much easier to conclude how the turnaround is progressing.

But I wondered if there is such a coherence between the number of completed meetings between manager and employee, and people's sense of coherence, of belonging, of feeling accepted as you are as a person, of being able to recognize oneself in the different contexts, of feeling needed, etc. None of these indicators help us to notice anything about the organization's health, the loss of total organizational knowledge, the risk of talented employees leaving or of no one daring to think out-of-the-box and wonder about the good, the just, the beautiful and true way of sustainable life inside the company and in the relationships with life outside the company.

I was unable to find answers which helped me. The answers I met seemed to point to the need for one true answer and the direction of *we-need-hero-leadership!* Even if employees would claim they wanted empowerment and that they hated micromanagement, they still would expect someone to take responsibility. "We have poor leadership", or "My manager does not dare to say anything to senior management" are expressions which are based on the premise *someone has more right to change this than others*, and that this change is related to something *fixed* like a thing, and not to life constantly *moving*. Even young employees, newly graduated from business schools, despite trained in ideas of social constructionism, seem to arrive with the expectation of value and hero leadership – hormonally ready to fight! They practice it themselves from the first day, and often describe a future where they

see themselves in charge of a number of people ... until the day they too suffer from being portrayed by others suggesting another self-image than their own hero-self-image. Then they also contact HR.

## 1.1 Readiness

I have, like my systemic HR peers, countless educational courses behind me in the search for explanations and answers, so no one seemed surprised when I decided to explore my wonderings further through doctoral studies.

Even though I was eager to start my research, I still had to learn a couple of things before I was ready to narrow my studies down to one research question – because I did not want to create a thesis introducing or portraying a systemic practice. I wished to create a thesis taking the practice as I had learned it further. In this way I was taking for granted that the audience for the thesis is already familiar with basic systemic principles.

In order to prepare myself to take this writing position (*preparation* which later was to be a central point in my work) I retrospectively notice that I changed my relationship to my practice in several ways, with guidance from my professor. As a systemic citizen in the world of appearance, I had not been used to finding any resonance of the invisible indicators, and I often doubted my wonderings, because I could not visible prove them. So the first thing I had to learn and research was how my Cartesian background made it impossible to include social phenomena like “value completion”, “good citizenship”, “anxiety” and so on into my work. My colleagues and I did not know what to look for or how to “capture” *it*. John Shotter (2010a, p. 59) describes:

*“Something else altogether is needed. We must first ask ourselves, why the crucial, responsive, embodied phenomena have remained so long unnoticed and unacknowledged, and what is involved in us all coming to attend to them in the same way. For without a shared ability to “see” the phenomena in question, directly and unproblematically, we cannot discuss them between ourselves or formulate agreed ways of studying them. Thus, initially at least, the kind of transformation involved, is not to do with new ideas, with anything cognitive in us as individuals, with seeing something differently, but with seeing something we have not seen before for the first time. It is to do with our whole way of relating ourselves to our surroundings, our relational way being in the world. To “get” a grasp of the kinds of connections and relations between things required in a social constructionist approach, we need to embody a new relational practice, to change what we notice and are sensitive to (as well as what we care about, and feel are appropriate goals at which to aim). In other words, we need to change ourselves, our sensibilities, the “background” practices we have embodied that make us the kind of professionals we are.”*

I realized I had to change to be able to change the practice. I began to relate to the idea of social phenomena just like weather phenomena. Tsunamis, tornados, hurricanes, sea fog – well, all kind of weather phenomena are responses of the meeting of contrasts. They do not arise by themselves, and we only know about them because we have experienced them. All tornados are not similar measurement wise, as they do not follow a mathematically predictable pattern; still we are able to recognize them. The terrible catastrophe on 25 December 2004 in Asia opened the Scandinavians' eyes to the phenomenon called tsunami, because some of the many victims were Scandinavian tourists, the majority of which were Swedish. Now every grown-up citizen recognize the word and its meaning. In a similar way we can only notice and learn about social phenomena, if we have been touched by them, and start our reflections from this touch on how we are being ourselves, and how we are orienting ourselves in the world. We have to have a "lived experience" (Hansen, 2008, p. 74), just like my family, who did not know anything about strokes before it knocked on our doors. Neither did we know about the anxiety ("will it happen again?"), which became a permanent member of our family, and it was related to factors like the time dimension (a dimension we will explore later).

Secondly, I had to learn how to include the relationship to my surroundings (ontological skills) instead of continuing to pay attention to what I used to do; which was to act as almost like a politician for a living, not fighting for something, but for my own existence, in a permanent election campaign, adapting to times and atmosphere, trying to sell to the highest bidder, looking *at* the world and it's inhabitants, and at one's own existence and value through their eyes. Instead I had to learn how to include how I have been touched myself by the social phenomena, and search for data indicating others being touched. I had to be aware of – despite my social constructionist background – my own standing point, and believe in a right to take it, so I too became a human bodily being *in* the world. It seemed even more important to notice when the background scenery is a turnaround, where everybody is fighting for (new) rights, the systemic practitioner is forced to do the same. It was quite a different scene to what I had been taught, and it later showed me how some spaces shape the social phenomena. If you happen to be an inhabitant of such a space, it does not matter how much systemic training you have achieved, you will most likely be touched by the phenomena anyway.

Thirdly, I gave up the idea of homogenously social worlds in the sense of being able to set a contextual frame around people – so *your* perspective allows you to see one thing, and *my* perspective allows me to see another. On the one side we live in one physical world, the Earth, divided into spaces, which shape the movements we can make. On the other side how we experience our world depends on our own lived experiences, and, as we shall explore later, whether we look *at* it, or live *within* it. I left the idea behind that the social world is *one* we socially construct *together* and therefore can talk about together. Now, I meet the many different, individual worlds as socially constructed by the individual and the responses s/he has met on the journey. It is a real world for the individual, and it allowed me to re-introduce the *individual* as a starting point into my work – instead of what I had been taught in my systemic training – to start with the situation/case/dream/problem/issue and let the individual's voice comment, or use a lot of time to negotiate *the* right naming of a problem between individuals, or letting someone with more power define what the naming should be.

I began to imagine an ecosystem, where worlds are described in a unique way by the inhabitants, closely related to how they have experienced their surroundings. Please take a look at the image below. It portrays an example of an eco-system. There are different arenas you can zoom into and study more closely. In the image the ship would, in the way I have been taught systemic practice, be considered the upper context when we try to reason and predict about the potential future changes to the eco-system. However, there might just as well be other events, which may change the environment, just as the eco-system is constantly renewing itself as well.



Figure 2 The eco-system.

The eco-system is in constant movement. It is living, and with reference to the hermeneutic circle (see pages 32 & 138) I started to explore the eco-system both in a local arena *and* in the bigger picture, and how the two aspects are intertwined, depending on and forming each other in a constant relationship.

It all became very complicated and I realised I needed a technique so I could work with the complexity systematically. I found inspiration from painters, photographers, video camera men and graphic designers, who work with different layers they zoom into or out from. I will describe the technique more in detail at page 30. Very close, on a local level, I was now able to notice how people try to make cause–effect sense out of an instant change. Zooming out I was able to relate the responses to waves of other relationships – e.g. to other events, social phenomena etc. – which also affect the eco-system the living system is part of, but which is not visible at a local level.

As soon as I tried to put the complexity into a two-dimensional paper, many of the nuances disappeared. The image below was one of my “drawings” at that time, trying to compare the stroke events in my family with some of the parameters changing after an announcement of a turnaround in a company. The changes happen at so many

arenas simultaneously, and have different expressions and names, depending on your own lived experience, lens and your zooming technique.



Figure 3 Zooming in and out

A forth important point I had to learn, before I was able to articulate the research question in a way that would bring the thesis further than an introduction or a portrayal of one of many systemic practices, referred to my linear assumption that companies are transforming from industrial age to an age of knowledge workers, collaboration and virtuality. I had learned this in my systemic training – nicely clustering modernism and post-modernism into chronological order. My whole praxis has always been based on this premise – allowing me to compose a story about my praxis as innovative compared to the practices before the turnaround. I felt proud of the identity as social entrepreneur of the whole eco-system, and did not pay attention to the prize it had for me, that I in this way valued the systemic practice as better, newer, more right than the practices I indirectly criticised as old fashioned, unethical and unconnected to the latest research. The practices were very much also a part of the Value Competition and I had enrolled the systemic practice to join as well! However, the premise of *one* evolutionary, chronological development within social science was unhelpful and it sometimes made me stay too long in social rooms, with no resonance, or made me look *at* the responses in the room as a critique of the systemic or of me, only. Later, we will explore ways of relating other than the evolutionary, chronological assumptions.

My changed relationship with the four landmarks opened new worlds for me, and they allowed me to explore the social phenomenon I have felt present all the time, but only been able to articulate via stories of unfairness, injustice, poor leadership, mistrust, harassment, uncertainty and ethics. I noticed the “ethics” (or the “process” as it is called in HR language) the employees pay attention to, when they are in exit-interviews carried out by HR and giving their reasons for leaving, when they turn to HR for support for their desire to job shift inside the company, when they are responding negatively in quantitative employee satisfaction surveys, or when expressing mistrust to a manager off the record.

The new relationships made me able to listen to new kinds of stories and signs, to the contradictions and the paradoxes of the good intentions and the negative outcome. I started noticing that it was not enough to focus on the target, the way to get there, clear definitions of boundaries or interfaces and conditions between departments only (e.g. role descriptions define boundaries between individuals). The performance indicators seemed to define boundaries between success and failure, between having a job and being laid off, but there was no longer *one* system and the borderlines were far from clear and constant, but still preventing different kinds of relationships to emerge, still privileging separate worlds; managers, employees, talent/high performers, fairy advocates/switched offs, etc.

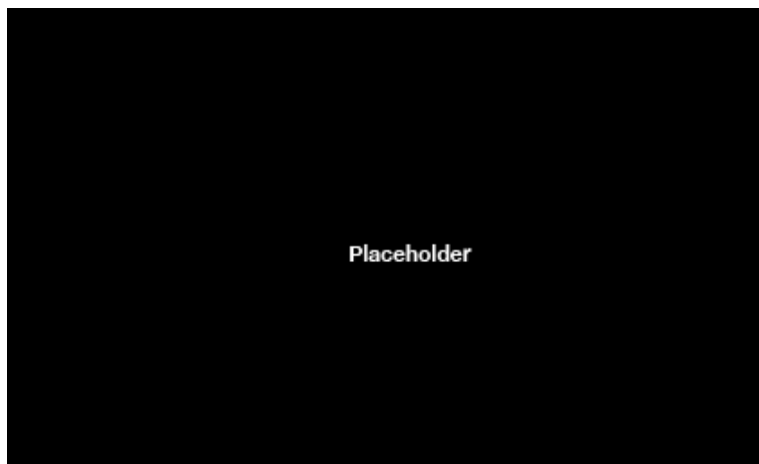
I felt how the research question began to manifest itself in my explorations as I experienced an increasing concern: diagnoses on right and wrong behaviour seemed then to be floating without any attention from HR – or anyone else for that matter.

The concerns from employees were both based on lived experience of new standards of “good ethics” and stories about expected, imagined events where employees fear they will be met unethically. Without a voice, there is a risk of being laid off if you step out of line and call upon attention on yourself.

None of these concerns or actual experiences is included in “business ethics” which many larger companies introduced after the Millennium. The business ethics allow “whistle-blowers” to report conflicts of interests directly to an external company without using the hierarchy (e.g. when a manager accepts a precious gift from a supplier, when an employee manipulates with the time registration sheet, or when confidential information is leaked to the press). But what about relational ethics?

It seems that no one is able to judge anything anymore, because they have no voice, no rights or are anxious about losing the job. It seems we are no longer able to notice the criteria for what is good, just, right and beautiful. The Danish artist Thomas Kluge (Thøgersen, 2001, p. 1), whom we are to meet later use Magritte pipe to describe it for us:

*I do understand Duchamp [artist who in 1917 placed a pissoir of porcelain at an exhibition, and by doing so turned it into art]. Now, the artists had painted queens and kings and made them so realistic that it was almost like reality. Why, don't we then show the real reality? Why not include a pissoir? (...) Magritte joined in with a very nice point, when he created the Pipe. He says: This is not a pipe; it is a painting of a pipe (...)*



**Figure 4 “Ceci n'est pas une pipe”.**

*We do no longer trust our own judgement. We need to have someone with decorations on their shoulders, acting Gods by saying: “This is art, this is not art”, before we are able to judge, whether it is good. And later, we need to check the catalogue to find out why it is good, because we cannot see it ourselves. In the Renaissance the art was closely connected with the society, science, architecture and philosophy. Today the artists stay in an empty space, and are kind of nobody. And then they seek towards the horizon, because they want to win new land. I use to call it Guinness Book of Records. The one, able to overthrow the biggest house in the name of art, gets fifteen minutes of fame (...)*

*One could ask: Am I the great innovator? I am not, I don't believe in it. And it must be frustrating to chase innovation all the time, instead of exploring oneself in relation to the world, one live in” (My translation)*

## 1.2 Research question

From within a situation where Europe is facing financial problems; where countries, governments and households struggle; where old “Mrs Soon-to-be-retired” with blazing speed learns about the coherence between political decisions and the value of her life savings – and where many fear that whole generations (the young entering the job market now) will be lost, because employers prefer experienced employees. From within a space where many old, proud companies are suffering, and sometimes



are explaining it with differences between “salary, benefits, and efficiency” compared to other regions. Where senior management sometimes refer to the domino effect of the date 15 September 2008, when the Lehman Brothers, the fourth largest investment bank in the USA, was declaring bankruptcy, suddenly had consequences for the company’s procedures on debt and cash flow. Where some use it as an opportune moment to point at the “crisis” out there, when “things” inside get complicated. From within a time where Cartesian methods seems to be preferred and re-launched, and where separate functions like HR exist, creating spaces calling at the in-house HR practitioner to almost mechanical “come-and-fix-the-parts-not-working” (with trainings, workshops, competences manuals, processes for roll out, policies and procedures for quickly mastering an instrument, a performance, a skill, a situation etc.). From within an assumption that the solutions should include a change of norms for what seems to be good citizenship, and where mostly management or experts far away from the different practices are defining the norms. From within a time where more and more employees no longer only search for a job, but for a *meaningful* job, and where especially young people do not feel obliged to stay and wait for the harvesting the fruits of the solutions implemented trying to make the company survive. From within a time where more people leave relationships – also with companies – if the decisions are judged to be unfair or unsustainable and from within a time of technology where a reputation for poor relational ethics travels fast in the job seeker’s community through social media ...

**... I wish to explore the phenomenon of “beyond talent management” by creating a relational portrait of lived experience in companies adapting to global financial downturns.**

From my initial research I quickly learned that inviting others to a conversation *about* their relationship and experiences with instant change (e.g. due to the global financial downturn) sometimes would result in beautifully composed stories justifying their method, or very short stories, because people had not paid attention to it, and therefore found it difficult to have a conversation about.

Therefore I wish to create a portrait inspired by how the phenomenon is manifested in our surroundings and in people’s responses – and this is my argument for exploring “vitality forms” and the premises of life itself (see details on the methods at page 30).

I wish to create a portrait where the reader co-constructs its meaningfulness. Therefore I will present no conclusion. There will be no plots, no heroes, and no climax in the overall storyboard for this thesis. It is not a recipe book with concrete solutions to copy. I wish to invite you into another room, to another kind of dialogue with attention on what is in the background of the urge for conclusions and recipes and the like. However, the separate snapshots I use to portray the everyday life within a turnaround will be filled with plots, heroes, anti-heroes, and dramatic climaxes – as this is often used in the sense making on a local level.

In the HR community, which is young compared to other practices, there has for some time been an on-going debate about “beyond talent management”, but often I only hear voices pointing at the need for more recipes or trying to solve the challenges by introducing principles from other communities of practice (COP), e.g. finance, sales and marketing, supply chains. Sometimes it makes it difficult to recognize the in-house practitioner in the crowd, because s/he dresses and styles in similar uniforms as, and sometimes even speaks like the COP s/he borrows practice from.

My hope is that in-house practitioners, living in worlds where diagnoses, re-placement of guilt and blame via “gap” analysis or “mechanical” best practices are used to explain the contrasts between sense making and meaningfulness, may meet the thesis as the contours of a “gate-opening moment”, a gate which opens into a different space based on relational premises, pointing at a different end in view, and where social phenomena AND life are intertwined.

A space where we, like fishes in the eco-system sense, judge and adapt to the movements of the other fishes, and other compression waves, calling at our constant responding as we swim along. A gate opening moment where we jointly can play, just like children training body awareness, through the play with streamers – allowing them to “see” and “feel” the vitality forms.



**Figure 5** Girl playing with streamer

My intention is not to tell what you should judge as right or wrong or acknowledge the thesis as yet another Truth, but to create a moment where you notice your own method of judgement through your vitality and form life and around you.

### 1.3 Wayfinding in the thesis

We will start our explorations by describing the method and data used in the thesis (Chapter 2). Then in Chapter 3, “Meeting the world”, we will explore the phenomenon of judgement further, based on the assumption that it is when we meet the world (remembered, real or imagined) we are judging.

The distinctions will join us in Chapter 4, where we will briefly look at the phenomenon of judgement in relation to selected touch points in history (Western culture). This chapter is also aiming at making us ready to leave the islands where a community of people acts culturally similar and where an aboutness view can explain groups’ behaviour, etc.

Then we will be ready for Chapter 5, where we orient ourselves towards an exploration of the social phenomena probably appearing during a turnaround designed via aboutness thinking and judgement criteria. We will not explore one social phenomenon in detail, but will more focus on how to notice it.

Following that, in Chapter 6 we will explore the vitality forms – or life in action. We will look at how life is responding to the changing surroundings with examples from my practice and the specific data I have collected. The premises are: no complexity, no richness, no hope, no action possible, and no life – the equilibrium of a system means a non-living system with actions as we recognize it from, for example, mechanical systems. Non-living systems can be managed and controlled, just like if you push a (dead) stone, you can, with the help of mathematics, predict where it will end. Living systems respond to what you are trying to do to them. If you force instant change into living systems you cannot predict the outcome, regardless of how many guidelines, rules or penalties you set up, or how many controllers or HR policemen you hire.

The thesis closes with an epilogue in Chapter 7, references in Chapter 8 and an appendix in Chapter 9.

## 2. Methods and data

The research question leads me to the following research design:

To remind us of the relational background of this thesis, the narrative will tell a story which both leads us through the chapters as well as towards relationships with possible answer(s) of the research question. The composition will be supported by several styles – so the thesis as a whole gives us a feeling of something moving and not fixable. The intention is to invite different possibilities to “see” and experience the effect of the different judgement criteria and possible touch points of the phenomenon we meet. The premise is that the touch points are only possible touch points, as social phenomena will still exist, despite our efforts to “remove”, for example the weak leader, or the complaining employee. The social phenomenon will just show its face somewhere else – and will not always appear in the way we meet them in this thesis.

To make the touch points visible we will visit not only one room (space), but several rooms – indeed several houses with rooms. This may give the thesis a rather complex content, because we will go into conversations with a variety of people from the neuroscientist to the philosopher, from the artist to the physiotherapist, from the wayfinder to the map user, just to mention a few. However, my hope is that despite the many “doors” and “rooms” we feel it as a design leading us – through all the different details and examples – to a combined, whole thesis.

The design is based on two criteria: layers and writing style.

### 2.1 Layers

I have always found the working methods of painters, graphic designers and film editors fascinating as they do not start from one corner and finish off in the other, like when you slice a loaf of bread into several pieces, or like when you present a turnaround as proceeding along a straight line from “as is” to “to be”. On the contrary they put layer on top of layer, and then they add on even more layers. The layers are not hierarchically sorted, but exist simultaneously and together they are able to portray many condensed expressions into a consistent whole. “Like the CMM”, you may wonder? The CMM is a very well-known model, at least by systemic trained, in-house HR practitioners in Scandinavia. CMM refers to “coordinated management of

meaning” and was introduced by Vernon E. Cronen and W. Barnett Pearce (see for example

Cronen, 1994), as a hierarchy of the contexts of performances and stories affecting the individual’s actions with others. However, I have noticed how some in-house HR practitioners use the model to point at the best fitting explanation (reason) of the behaviour of others, based on how it looks from the practitioner’s point of view. The premise is that we are standing in the same world, and looking at the same object. My aim is the opposite – to show that we ”see”/explore the world differently – and therefore meet it differently. I want to challenge the way many in-house practitioners understand “multiworlds” or social worlds; inviting us to negotiate “this” or “that” as not important in “this” world, and therefore not “in there”. I suggest we “see” and “live in” different worlds.

For professionals like the Danish painter, Thomas Kluge, layers have become part of his signature. Kluge paints portraits in the photorealism style which are so vividly realistic that the viewer feels s/he could reach out and touch the person in the painting. He is loved and hated in Denmark, and was never admitted to the Danish Academy of Arts even after applying three times (Dubgaard, 2008). He dresses like the Dutch artist Rembrandt (1606 –1669). He rebels against postmodern art as he believes the skilled artist should be judged in relation to the concrete picture which we (the audience) have of “reality”, not against arbiters of taste. Also, he is criticized for showing too many of the details, which people wished to be photoshopped away (as we are to see later). He earns money on his art and is, maybe also because of his age (born in 1969), accused of commercialising the art. Kluge describes why the layer technique is important for him (Dubgaard, 2008, p. 41):

*“My portraits are also self portraits (...) It is all about getting in dialogue, because this is where the ideas come from (...) A good picture is constructed by contradictions: cold and warm, lightness and darkness, inward and outward. This applies to all genres, and it is also possible in a portrait, if you are willing to look for the contrasts” (My translation).*

He uses up to 200 layers of painting in one portrait, and the effect enables us to zoom in and explore the details, details, which otherwise would pass our attention in our hectic lives. If you want to watch his working process, please find an example via this link:

[http://www.dr.dk/K/Kunst/Programmer/Lag\\_paa\\_lag\\_Thomas\\_Kluge\\_maler\\_Anders\\_Fogh.htm](http://www.dr.dk/K/Kunst/Programmer/Lag_paa_lag_Thomas_Kluge_maler_Anders_Fogh.htm), Danish version only.

The technique does not tell the story, but it is an essential part of how we as viewers experience a piece of art. By working with foreground and background, and focussing on how the movements in the actual story relate to each other, the painter makes efforts to making the piece as alive as possible, so we as viewers are able to imagine the scene taking place in the portrait story.

You probably know about the concept, if you like to make and edit home videos. It is similar concept; you add on voice, music, titles etc. to the track of motion pictures you have captured. I am using and showing this technique in my practice, and will do the same in the thesis, as I found this a better touch point if I wish to include many voices in the noticing, than if I only referred to the painting techniques as a metaphor.

From an academic point of view the layers resonate with the hermeneutical circle as described by Lübcke (1995) referring to the German philosopher Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who suggested that we cannot notice a phenomenon's whole without considering the fragments that make it, and we cannot appreciate the individual fragments without acknowledging the whole they are part of. It is impossible to capture the whole, through the single fragments only as the two sizes are interdependent (Lübcke, 1995, p. 397). The social phenomenon resonates with thoughts of existential phenomenology, which are concerned with the human being in the world, always responding and in relation to it. However, the limited size of the thesis does not allow me to explore the history and concepts of hermeneutic and phenomenology further.

The layers are supposed to intertwine into a flow. They are supposed to cross over into each other, and to hopefully create a harmony. Shotter (2010a, p. 141) uses these criteria to describe what the French phenomenological philosopher Merleau-Ponty's called "chiasmic" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 130). With this he meant, according to Shotter, that certain livingness was created in the portrait – enabling us by calling out living responses from us *itself*. Or expressed in another way: The phenomena occurring in the portrait (the thesis) will hopefully call out for a response in your inner dialogue while you read, like "This point reminds me of a similar situation where I handled it in this way", or "Well, I've never noticed this before, but I will look into it

next time I meet Mr...”. Therefore the layers cannot exist if they are not related to a particular writing style, which supports this dialogical ambition of exploring judgement, while we explore our own judgement as well.

The movement of the flow is not relating to single events presented in chronological order, so you can compare “before, during and after” effects. Instead it tries to capture some of the kairos moments (see description at page 163), which I judge are essential to show details of the bigger picture.

The layers I have chosen to bring this piece of paper alive are:

- Academics and practitioners who has published their work
- My experience as in-house HR practitioner (examples of the practice within practices affected by a turnaround)
- Vignettes – stories told to me off-record, rewritten into fictitious vignettes
- Interviews from six so-called wayfinders, five senior managers and others
- Images, art, video etc.

Below I will comment each layer:



I have invited other voices to join our dialogue. Voices to which I owe a lot, because they have taught me a lot, and made it possible for me to move (on). The voices have in common dissociating from the Cartesian legacy which we explore later, and that they have been published in books, articles etc.

The leading voice is expressed by Emeritus Professor of Communication, University of New Hampshire, John Shotter; who introduced me to another understanding of social constructionism (and therefore also the idea of being “systemic”) from the idea I grew up with. Shotter often refers to the third realm in this regard, which points to conversations he had with this friend, Tom Andersen. Andersen worked with three ways of describing events and activities (Shotter, 2011a, p. 74):

- 1) *The frozen but visible* that we can describe in terms of *nouns* as being *either* of this kind of thing *or* of that
- 2) *The living (moving) and visible* to be described in terms of *verbs* and *both-and*

- 3) *The living (moving) but invisible* that can be described in *neither this way nor that way*, that as feelings of “something” can only be *alluded* to by use of metaphors

Another leading voice is professor in psychology, University of Geneva (and many more) Daniel Stern, who among other things has introduced the vitality forms (Stern, 2010), which I will use as the background framework to distinguish life from things and mechanically processes.



The thesis is based on my experiences as an in-house HR practitioner since 1996. I have worked in different Danish companies, each shift with an increasing number of employees (up to 30,000) and with a greater complexity and global range. As previously stated it will not explicitly focus on my praxis, but it will be there in the background.

When I am referring to interactions with managers and employees I will either refer to it as an experience I have had, or construct it as vignettes (see description page 39). Other data, which would be considered primary data – for example external, independent practitioners – are considered data generating by me. Some of the data are generated via the events I as a practitioner have designed, led and received feedback on. The feedback is shared with me as an in-house HR practitioner with the company, in anonymous form, without revealing any identities. It is from this “view” I capture the data. Here we talk about concrete data from the first and second realm within the field of leadership and talent programmes.



When a turnaround appears I usually carry out a number of interviews (not related to the thesis, but because I find it helpful to include all voices as soon as possible). In one job I did 75 interviews, which allowed me to get a sense of the space we were in, and which position in the space people were taking. The relationship to the interviewees is that I meet them as an in-house HR practitioner. In other relationships I have interviewed a number of persons asking for explicit



permission to use their statements in this thesis. This has been done via mail or face-to-face. In these relationships I am not the in-house HR practitioner, but the researcher, and they talk to me as people wanting to help me with the research by adding important voices to the topics. In some occasions the interviews have intertwined these two identities of mine. For example in relation to my visits abroad and my job title I have interviewed a professor in educational psychology from Beijing University, and two professors from Moscow University. In all three conversations the topic was learning paradigms. I chose China and Russia since many of the companies I have worked for, cluster these countries into BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) with potential for rising market shares, and because I wanted voices to help understand my own Western legacy better. Furthermore I have interviewed a researcher in Indo-European languages, because I have a paragraph about language in an international company, and how the choice of corporate language influences the way we meet the world. All the interviews mentioned are background interviews, and I use no direct quotes in the thesis from them. However, their voices have been important for me, and led me to notice the phenomena I finally chose to write about.

Also in my identity as researcher, I have interviewed five in-house HR practitioners, three from companies I have worked for, one from another company and one from the company IKEA. IKEA was chosen because of its long history of customers and employees (as being part of the IKEA family), and with less focus on the Value Competition. Except from one quote, the voices are not directly quoted in this thesis, but they have been important especially in order for me to notice, listen and distinguish tones in the background noise of HR influencing the research.

As part of my identity as an in-house HR practitioner I have interviewed 5 senior managers (president level) as part of a reflection process I designed for a talent programme. I describe these interviews (named “talk shows”) in detail later. Beside one, all of these interviews almost turned into marketing campaigns; where the questions I was going to ask had to be checked by the spin-doctor, and rehearsed beforehand. Afterwards the company TV producers edited the talk

shows. The event still created the novelty I was searching for, and even though I chose not to use any quotes from the shows, the experience gave me an important notion of how the social phenomena is manifesting itself among presidents.

As part of my identity as a researcher I have interviewed six wayfinders (a phenomenon we are to explore further on page 69). In Scandinavia the phenomenon is called “pattern breakers” or “dandelion children”, because, from an outside observation (which we name “aboutness” later) it looks like this is what they are doing; namely being able to break the mould, with powers to break through asphalt or pavements, leaving their seeds behind. The children are used to dramatic, instant change, and practice different judgement criteria from children being raised in more stable surroundings.

It is a well-known label in Scandinavia and part of our cultural background and idea about a welfare society. Governments in Norway, Sweden and Denmark prioritize this group of children, breaking the premises of their parent’s upbringing so the educational level of each birth cohort may reach higher set targets (for example in Denmark 95 percent of a year group by 2015 are to complete further or higher education).

The assumption is shared by many that breaking the mould is linked to your parent’s educational level, and that the break creates changes in social status for the child over a single lifetime.

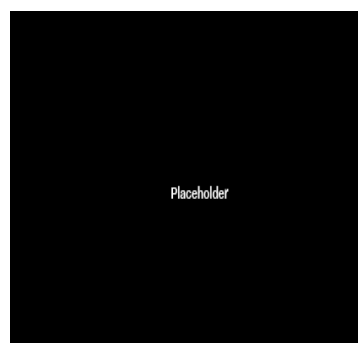


Figure 6 The dandelion

However some voices suggest climbing up and down the social ladder is also not only a travel away from the present educational level in the family, it is also an escape from poor financial circumstances, unemployment, housing conditions and other criteria linked to the fact that the parents have, for example, been clientised or pacified and therefore depended of help from others (Elsborg et al, 1999).

The children do not necessarily have back up from home, and they will not necessarily have learned the social and cultural codes which are criteria for getting accepted as good citizens inside the educational system or later as members of different communities. Because their journey starts from outside the community, they will need to use their energy researching invisible cultural codes (e.g. speaking with no accent, dressing in the right way, gesticulating and toning the voice appropriately) as well, in order to enjoy equality with their classmates. In other words I suggest that they are using judgement criteria of the third realm.

Mygind (2009, p. 11) has interviewed eleven well-known adults in Denmark, all of them having broken the mould, and she comments (Mygind, 2009, p. 16):

*“Like other emigrants they are delighted that they conquered the new land which has provided all the possibilities that they ever dreamt of, but still they miss their country of origin and the relations they needed to leave behind, because the mental distance became too large”. “(...) The climbing to the top requires constant concentration; however their view from the top is unique, because their perception is double, and the social codes are not taken for granted” (My translation).*

From *within* the lives of the interviewees the term “pattern breaker” does not necessarily resonate. They preferred “wayfinder” much more. They told me stories about three turning points in life (see example of interview frame on page 229) and being able to “see” the possibilities. As I see it, a pattern breaking (or gate opening) moment requires more energy, a focus and orientation towards something else, and an ability to see that this “something” would offer better conditions than the current ones. Often the pattern breaker does not yet know what that “something” is, and it sometimes makes them frustrated, but they keep trying.

A period of two years has passed since recording the interviews and sitting at my computer writing this. Two years ago when I asked the interviewees, “What will you be doing in two years?” they all assumed that they would be doing something different. And they were right; every single interviewee has changed job at least twice, and half of them have even moved to another country since. At the time of their interview all of them had lived in different countries, moved several times – not three or four times during their life, but 10–20 times! They speak several

languages, have tried out several professions, and are curious to learn more. These characteristics were my starting point, when I approached them to research whether this way of performing (behaviour) was also linked to ontological knowledge (phronesis – see description on page 74). If yes, I invited them for an interview. Later, I learned that I (also) was noticing (judging) them based on recognizing their special kind of movement (vitality form), that their stories very much related to ethics, and less to fixed indicators like rules, salary etc.

I would probably be criticized by Cartesian colleagues (I am going to describe Cartesianism later) because I knew the interviewees beforehand, but I do not think I would have been able to notice their vitality form of moving in any other way than to be close to and with them, and I would probably not have gotten the descriptions from them that I was asking into. Here is how two wayfinders describes it:

*B: “Do you think that we were able to have this conversation that we had just had, if we didn’t knew each other?”*

*E: “No, I don’t think so ... because I don’t think I will open myself anyhow. Because I would ... First of all I would just think: It is not worth spending my time sitting here and telling you anything about it, because it ... Why should I, you know? Just being totally egoistic [laughing] and say: No, I am not totally interested in saying anything about; what am I doing and why it is going into my .... I had like this that if I not knew you anyhow ... So I don’t think and I am pretty sure about this. I don’t think so”*

*B: “Do you think that our relation has had a effect on your answers?”*

*T: “Yes, of course, because it is this feeling that I easily can tell you everything about myself, probably more that I have told anyone for a .... very long time, except my husband, I would say [laughing] . Yes, of course. It is in good hands. I am in good and safe hands: she is not going out and telling everybody what I have been saying” (My translation).*

I learned very fast that the interviews I had carried through included the notion of a lot of new openings with examples on how they orient themselves in the world. However, they were not able to describe and reason why, which I two years ago found important to define. I had not yet learned about the Wittgenstein quote: “Tell me how you are searching, and I will tell you what you are searching for” (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 12). Neither did I at this point notice that they were

orientating themselves toward meaningfulness of their judgements rather than the judgement in isolation. If I were to do the interviews today, I would do it quite differently. However, the next layer (vignette) taught me how to relate to the wayfinders story from within, instead of from about, which I practiced two years ago. It has allowed me to notice the interviewees' and the other's stories in a whole new way than only paying attention to what happen in the actual moment of the interview.

Finally, I interviewed a physiotherapist about her practice where she focuses on the patient's movements, as I wanted to learn from practitioners with phronetic knowledge of human movements and trained in the oral and written descriptions of movement. The Norwegian psychiatrist Tom Andersen's work with physiotherapists has inspired me to this angle (see for example the DVD "Tom Andersen, Et intervju En samtale Et foredrag", lanssen, 2011 – *in Norwegian only*). As an in-house HR practitioner I am not allowed to ask the employee questions about their private life, their past or their health, so I used the interview opportunity with the physiotherapist to get inspired to new ways of "seeing"; palpating and exploring how the other is moving. Please see further description in Paragraph 5.2: "phenomenological methods".

To be able to distinguish the quotes from the interviews with other quotes (from, for example, literary references) they are surrounded by a light green frame.



A way to demonstrate the third realm (see page 34) is to use fictitious vignettes: a short description of the scene with focus on one moment. These are first person descriptions of events, which I imagine take place within the person's different kind of relationships with the world. You might recognize the idea from TV documentaries, where constructed scenes are played, so you will get a sense of how e.g. *harassment* occurs. I base the vignettes on the many stories I have been told from people experiencing a dramatic turnaround, trying to orient themselves accordingly.

Some of the vignettes portray episodes in which I have been present but cannot for ethical reasons describe, as it would be too easy to figure out who I am portraying. All the vignettes appear several days after the “turnaround announcement” (= t.a) and show that the “turnaround” can live for a long time. In the appendix you will find the vignettes’ relationship to a timeline and to each other, as I deliberately have not placed them in chronological order in the thesis (as this is the premise for the work of the in-house HR practitioner as well. Here the stories never appear chronological either. Especially not if the turnaround is taking place in different time zones or formats throughout the world).

I have chosen the vignette as a format for portraying stories, which contrasts with the accepted method offered to a researcher. I learnt this from anthropologist Jean L. Briggs (1970) who spent seventeen months living on a remote Arctic shore as the “adopted daughter” of an Inuit family. She writes about the intentions of the vignette in her book (p. 4):

*“I feel that this approach will make maximum use of the research situation: the smallness of the group studies, the intimacy of my living arrangements, and the resulting richness of the behavioural data obtained. I hope this behavioural description will also supplement previous literature on Eskimos. A great deal, both professional and popular, has been written about Eskimos; few peoples so fascinate the outside world. Much of this literature, however, consists of generalizations about Eskimo life, based partly on the writer’s necessarily limited observations and partly on Eskimo informants’ reports of what Eskimos do, or ought to do. As in all cultures, there are often discrepancies between what people say about themselves on the one hand and their observed behaviour on the other. The two kinds of data provide quite different perspectives on a culture and complement each other.”*

The stories all include a dilemma or a paradox shaped by the social phenomenon, and are all linked to the vitality forms. Because of word limitations in the thesis I left out the notion of time in the vignettes. They are snapshots only, relating to the **Us** in Barnett Pearce’s **LUUUUTT** model (2007, p. 212), the stories **Unknown**, **Untold**, **Unheard**, and **Untellable**, which would be shared with me when I promise not to act upon them. The vignettes give me the chance to portray the characters in a sympathetic way, in order to show how a person meets the world. It is often the very small events which make the difference, and which seldom are brought into conversation with e.g. a visiting researcher, because people think

the episode is insignificant, or they believe it will give them an image of being too “touchy”, “uncool”, or non-idealistic. So, the vignettes are just ordinary, common sequences. Had they been too stereotypical the possibility that the reader would connect with it from within his/her own life would be poor. They are used simply where I wanted to portray something extra, rather than in a structured way.

I find the relationship between the vignettes very interesting since I read the Danish author Christian Jungersen’s book “*Undtagelsen*” (2004) (in English: “The Exception”) where he describes office harassment through the first person’s eyes/voice of each of those involved, inviting the reader to keep track of the overall dramaturgy of the story. It is a method which explores various phenomena through the different but related stories of the protagonists. In his latest book “*Du forsvinder*” (“You Disappear”, my translation) from 2012 he furthermore experiments with a portfolio of different artefacts, “showing” the reader the books, Facebook profiles, or letters, which the characters in the story use when they relate themselves into the events of the book.

Instead of creating similar artefacts I concentrate on the third realm and invite you to sense how it is to be in the situation. I have chosen to do this as the narrators in the vignette may live only in the world of appearance, and therefore not paying attention to other elements.



As a child of the “linguistic turn” (Bernstein, 2010, p. 125), my systemic training focused very much on language, and the notion that the problems can be resolved by talking differently about them. However, it requires the insight of articulating – in words – very complex phenomena. In one company where I worked, the in-house HR practitioners were not trained or did not share a common praxis language, and we therefore communicated in everyday language. The inquiry and naming techniques from the systemic practice, which I introduced, were adopted quickly – I assume because it gave the practitioners the praxis language, which distinguished them from other functions. However, the tendency to diagnose problems and diseases did not

disappear. It only became more sophisticated. In the appendix (see 232) you will find a table of some of the words I pay attention to when I work with someone who speaks in a systemic way.

Therefore I began to use many images, artwork and other visual media in my praxis, long before I considered the doctorate. I link to others' work, and I create some myself (= the figures without reference). I find it only natural to include this layer in the thesis as well, as images have become a part of the way I "speak".

I receive inspiration from different places, mainly the Internet, but also from artist's work. You have already met Thomas Kluge, and later you will meet the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. He creates large-scale installation art and is inspired by philosophers like Maurice Merleau-Ponty. He has a "laboratory" for spatial research in Berlin and is a professor at the Institute for Spatial Experiments, Universität der Künste, Berlin. He creates art which we as viewers experience with our body.

Eliasson describes (2010, time 4.48, 8.34 and 13.24):

*"It is important to talk about to what extent we feel we have an impact on our world and surroundings. Does it make sense to vote? To participate or not? To step in our step out? To what extent do we feel a causal dimension to our life? Does it matter if we have an opinion, or that we're here in the first place?"*

*When I make something, which may be as a work of art, I want it to be in the world. I want it to be sincerely and honestly and responsibly in the world. I want it to have an impact somehow. (...)*

*When I work with whatever I work with, I think of the foundations of how what I work with is being constituted. Who determines if it's real or not? I'd like to hand that determination to the spectator, which means I need to include the spectator into the object hood. Of course it's about making a work of art, but essentially it's about evaluating from where and from what basis do people allow themselves to get involved with their surroundings? What does it mean to get involved? What does it mean to see this spot from which we are talking or standing at this moment? And am I able to see it, or is it a construction, a blind spot? Is it something that I need to see myself from the outside of in order to understand?*

*(...)*

*I often talk about my work as making a machine that produces some sort of phenomenon. Only the relationship you have with it is interesting to me. I try to allow people to see how the phenomenon is made. It's really about inviting people to co-produce the work with me. You hand over the responsibility for what they see*



*to the people who are seeing it. They construct it themselves by experiencing it and the way it's constructed. The phenomenon is sort of one closed unit. This is where I think the world becomes negotiable. Suddenly it's open and inclusive instead of being closed and exclusive".*

Eliasson demonstrates this by telling us about an experiment (2010). If you look intently for 6-8 seconds at a white paper with a large orange dot in the middle, and then turn away and look at another piece of white paper without any orange dot, your eye will "see" an after-image. A bluish dot. His point is that reality is dependant on how you "see" things. You are co-producing what you are seeing.

I also use videos published on the internet, for example, to underline the point I would like to make. Although in my work we create our own videos I cannot show them to you because of maintaining confidentiality, or because of copyright by others. However I can describe those videos instead.

## 2.2 Writing style

As I have indicated previously the systemic language can occasionally be criticised in companies as academic, or too distant from everyday life, though paradoxically I have noticed that systemic words and tools very quickly move into my new colleagues own vocabulary and practice.

I also notice that the usual expectation of the communication style from managers is that they should be clear and setup the message in a simple way. In one company I noticed the preference for always pointing out three topics, points or issues – and then repeating them frequently. This was done in "mass communications" as well as in everyday conversations.

The style resonates with that of the media today, and the phenomenon of TV-viewing, which we are to explore later. News channels often interview people who are easy to understand, and I sometime wonder whether this is linked to the Cartesian legacy, which we explore later. They point out something I already "see" or could very quickly be instructed to notice. Perhaps the assumption is that the easier I find this person's communication, the more sympathetic s/he or I become? The *simple* (mass) communication in which managers are trained is sometimes performed in a rather patronizing style. Transforming mindsets (the in-house HR practitioner's name for it)

is not a simple “thing”, but rather complex, as the way of thinking about it and within it is different. It is not nice to shoot the messenger, but to use children’s language or a generalised, reductive worldview to get there, does not help the project either. Let us instead accept that the topic is complex and reflect on how our writing style is not going to add to the complexity.

My resolve is to be very aware of the difference between monological and dialogical structured conversations/writings/presentation. The monological approach comes from and is targeted on a one-dimensional system of thought and talk (e.g. one person’s or one communities’ like a local HR community’s use of language, judgement etc.), whereas the dialogical approach is more “multistranded, polyphonic form of thought and talk” (Shotter 2011a, p. 78). Shotter describes how the dialogical approach, by using two (or several) voices, can fashion the “chiasmic complexity” (which we touched upon in the description of the layers at page 32). It can be two different languages (national or from a community of practice) or a shift between descriptions of problems to a description of suggested possibilities.

In addition the description of *movement* of the dialogue is pointed out by Shotter (2011a, p. 76). The dialogue moves in different ways in relation to whether we construct it as sequenced monologues without responding to the other or the otherness around us (e.g. because we have a fixed agenda with finished or completed “points” and “messages” we wish to stick to, or because we “hear” the others asking/crying out for certain action from us), or whether we pay attention to and respond to the previous utterance or expression at all. If we do the latter “transitory understandings and action guiding anticipations can emerge” (Shotter, 2011a, p. 76).

When I pay attention to how the dialogue is moving I have this image in mind, which I have constructed based on the most common questions I am asked:

Placeholder

Figure 7 The movement of the dialogue

The writing style of this thesis aims to focus on the movement of the dialogue in this way, this is so that I can explore and develop the dialogical approach further. In other words I intend to avoid the rather monological either-or approach in which I have been instructed/educated. Shotter (2011a, p. 76-77) quotes Russian philosopher Mikael Bakhtin the creator of the word “monologism”:

*“Monologism, at its extreme, denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities, another I with equal rights (thou). With a monologic approach (in its extreme pure form) another person remains wholly and merely an object of consciousness, and not another consciousness. . . . Monologue is finalized and deaf to other’s response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge in it any force. Monologue manages without the other, and therefore to some degree materializes all reality”*

(...)

*“Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium. . . . A person enters into dialogue as an integral voice. He participates in it not only with his thoughts, but with his fate and with his entire individuality”*

Sometimes it is quite amazing to witness how some who experience the dialogical approach say it feels like they have actually been in the situation, they read or heard about. They have a bodily sense of actually having been there compared to conversations after which you struggle to remember what it was all about. When we include the dialogically approach as criteria, we also imply our way of relating. You and I. Kenneth Gergen (2009a, p. 221) reflects on this in his book “*Relational Being*”:

*“As I write these words I am not simply conveying content. I am also entering into a relationship with you the reader. As I select the topics, the genre of writing, the narrative, the metaphors, and the way in which I define myself as author, I invite a particular kind of relationship. If I write as an authority I will invite one kind of relationship; to cast myself as a humble explorer, will invite yet another. To rely on personal stories will create a different relationship than will abstract arguments. And so my writing could alienate, invite you closer, or even put you to sleep.. horrors! Rhetoric and relationship walk hand in hand.”*

Even though I am referring to stories experienced as an in-house HR practitioner – and these are playing out in the background – my hopes are that you will meet me as a researcher who is inviting you to explore with me, rather than as an expert teaching you, and where (as mentioned previously) you may find a space to explore the movement in your inner talk. The style will try to do its best in letting us relate, explore, feel, imagine, how it is to be in the actual, portrayed phenomenon. The movements of our inner life are closely connected to how we “orient, address or relate ourselves” (Shotter, 2011a, p. 156) – in life, and therefore also in relation to this thesis.

So, when you notice my style of writing, I am aiming at the above. In other words it is a deliberate choice from my side, and nothing do with my limited English vocabulary, that I use an engaging style and not a traditionally academic, formal, “neutral”, objective style, as I aim at what Shotter (2011a, p. 169) describes as:

*“... providing practical theory, or at giving what we might simply call accounts: account-talk that is useful as an aid to perception to those involved in a situation, enabling them to make and to notice differences in their activities, thus affording them with opportunities to coordinate their activities in with each other in an intelligible way”.*

Together with the layers, the writing styles and the notion of relationships and movement of your inner dialogue, aim at a 3D experience (Shotter, 2010a, p. 205) and in this way offer an entry point other than the texts, which I notice many in-house HR practitioners find too difficult to read.


### 3. Meeting the World

Have you ever thought about what happens when you meet a person for the first time? Maybe your attention is concentrated around your *own actions*; either how you feel in the moment, what impression you make, whether your shirt is clean or not, or on your own actions in relation to the purpose of the meeting and the result you are hoping to achieve by this meeting. Maybe you look for signs from *the other person's actions* that you think will tell you something about him/her – how s/he dresses, talks, smells, approaches you, uses the tone of voice, and uses gestures? Or maybe you are sensing what kind of *relationship is emerging and created* in the meeting?

Regardless whether the meeting is planned or spontaneously happening, or whether you may already have imagined and thought beforehand how you will act, or how the person will act or how the relationship will emerge. My guess is that your inner dialogue is searching for signs in order to judge if the person is someone who thinks and therefore is likely to act exactly like you, or the opposite, as this will guide you in how you should act next, whether you are orientating yourselves into a similar direction or not.

To come to this conclusion may take a second or a lifetime.

Now, imagine that this thesis is a person, who you are meeting for the first time. Where is your attention?

 Maybe you are looking at the thesis as a representation of new knowledge which until now has been hidden from us all, curious enough to continue to read the whole thesis or simply jump to the “abstract” or “conclusion” to read the findings in short form? Your expectations may be that my findings are observable and therefore measurable and that the thesis will investigate hypotheses (arisen from previous research) in order to find the truth, a truth that will lead to fame and public recognition if it is so innovative and generic that it can be used to support or reject previous theories or models, or if the results are sustainable and proven to work. If this is your expectation I guess you will be expecting me to set up experiments, collect empirical data and consider how (well) the sample are corresponding to the “real” world, and anticipating the opportunity to reproduce my exact findings yourself. If this

description feels right to you, you are probably reading and meeting the thesis as a research of the objective world (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007, p. 11).

🔄 Maybe your curiosity is about me – about how (well) I transmit evidence (like a computer or a radio) from my world to your world about the topic that I am going to tell you about, on how (well) I am doing as a practitioner, or whether my observed findings are valid or can be transferred into your world and support the development of best practice in your world. You will probably look specifically at how I use words as a tool to name things, persons or events. Or you will expect my stories to have a point leading to the next point. Just like if you are watching a detective film on TV: if a person or thing is presented, it may very well be the clue to solve the riddle. As in research of the objective world, you may also expect the thesis to include descriptions on the methodology I have used, “methodology” being the name of the framework developed by others that I have been using to conclude my findings. For example discourse analysis, grounded theory, ethnography, CMM – so even if we recognize that this qualitative research is unique and only describes the particular situation, the expectation is often that the methods are based on a “real” methodology which is scientific valid, recognized by other researchers and possible to reproduce. If this description seems right to you, you are probably reading and meeting the thesis as research of the socially constructed world (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007, p. 13).

🔄 Maybe your attention is on how the thesis supports or challenges your self-image (“oh, what she writes there is easy, I already know that!” or “oops, am I as fully updated as I believed I was?”). The relationship between you and the other (the thesis or a person) is a constant reminder to you on how your self is doing. How the other person is looking at you, forms who you are. Maybe you have even set up criteria for when the self-image (your inner dialogue) is affected too much, so you will have to orient yourself away from the other person, or you stay and start reasoning, which “qualities” at the other person, who effects your self-image. If this description feels right for you, you are probably reading and meeting the thesis as a constant “reality check” on how

you are doing. The conclusion is showing, creating and forming your self-image as a human “doing” not “being” (Fisher, 2012, p. 101).

🔄 Maybe your curiosity is about what is co-constructed by this thesis? As you read the (con)text your inner dialogue will be co-talking to you in the background. In that sense we are having a conversation together – just like a face-to-face conversation between you and me, sitting together on a sofa in front of a fireplace, and in a joint action creating a dialogue with room for both our voices and experiences, referring to other voices we know, playing around with different stories to portray our points or finding different points in the stories, asking each other questions, asking ourselves questions, asking questions about others not in the room, etc. We recognize that different views point in different directions and that no single view is truer than others and that each account is unique. How you and I make sense of the data is through reflexivity. If this description feels right to you, you are probably reading and meeting the thesis as a research of the individually constructed world (Fox, Martin & Green, 2007, p. 15).

🔄 Or maybe you notice and orient yourself in relationship to the movement of the thesis. How does it touch us as a phenomenon, and where is it leading us? Like in the above scenario, we are having a kind of conversation together. However, we are not separate, passive subjects talking together, but always moving. When we move we are spontaneously responding to the surroundings, and we use them as guidance for how to proceed. How we experience the phenomena (the thesis, or any other social phenomenon) is related to the distance from which we chose to write or read the thesis, for example. The phenomena can have many expressions, and you may notice one “touch point”, and I another. Vitality forms like “time”, “force” and “intentionality/directionality” are also affecting the way we move and therefore how we are spontaneously responding). If you take a snapshot right now of yourself, then you will experience a vitality form based on how you are relating to the surroundings in the moment. The shape of the vitality form is transforming as soon as you are relating yourself differently. Inside us it can be experienced as if we are losing our self (Fisher, 2012, p. 102) when we

suddenly are touched by a phenomenon of e.g. bullying, harassment or anxiety as we suddenly notice another “snapshot” of our being. If this description feels right to you, you are probably reading and meeting the thesis from within, relationally, or what Shotter calls witness thinking (2011a, p. 2).

Inspired by John Dewey’s story about a man judging it will rain soon (1910, p. 6) and Dewey’s thoughts of stimuli and response (Dewey, 1896) we will explore a sequence of actions (an episode of movement) instead of a person or a thesis (first realm).

Now, imagine you are able to fly from your place into my place – the Kingdom of Denmark – so closely that you are able to see a house. The people in or outside the house cannot see you, and it is as if you are looking at the events taking place via a TV monitor.

Suddenly you see the door opens and a man comes out from a house. He looks up at the sky. You notice that there is a grey cloud in the sky. The man returns to the house and a couple of minutes later he comes out, this time with an umbrella in his hand. Based on this observation, you may conclude that the cloud was the stimuli in the outside world that made the man respond by fetching his umbrella. In other words *something* external (a stimulus) is causing the man to respond in this way. You may have learned about stimulus-response from experiments carried out with animals (dogs, rats, cats) in the middle of the last century. Some in-house HR practitioners offer feedback sessions, based on, for example, 360-degree surveys where carefully selected colleagues, managers and employees rate in similar ways how they conclude the intention of a person’s action. The feedback can also be based on exercises (e.g. in the woods) where external psychologists are invited to observe and give feedback, or based on questions in a “dialogue” template, which manager and employee are to fill out to evaluate the sequences of events in the last quarter or year, and based on this plan/predict future actions.

Now, let us look at the example with the man and the umbrella from within. Let us imagine you are this man. You prepare yourself for a walk from your house to the supermarket. You open the front door and suddenly you feel it is cooler outside than you have expected, and you start figuring out what to do. This process takes only milliseconds, and starts with your skin thermo receptors responding to the drop in



temperature and the rise in humidity. In other words there is a contrast between the temperature in the house and outside, which is higher or occurring more quickly than you had assumed. You use – maybe without thinking about it – the response to orient yourself around what to do next, as this is unexpected in relation to what you thought would happen just moments before you opened the door. Maybe you start to think about it and rationalize (search for an explanation). You look around to search for the external reason. You look up, and notice a grey cloud in the sky and you use it as data for your judgement; it is going to rain soon. Now the responses from your skin thermo receptors make sense, and you go into your house to fetch your umbrella. However, you could have judged otherwise, and decided that you would go without an umbrella, or you could have concluded that the temperature drop and high humidity was due to the evening dew and you would then use the time of day as judgement data. What about the umbrella you might wonder? Well, maybe you have borrowed the umbrella from someone, suddenly remembering after you returned to the house, or maybe you are going to be away for a long time and live in a country where it often rains? There may be a connection between your thermo receptors' response and the umbrella, but then again there might not be. In other words the cloud does not force you to your action. It is not a stimulus that causes your response in a way that others can predict in reflections or conversations of reflexivity.

Let us draw a distinction between the many ways of meeting the world, of which we have explored a few. W. Barnett Pearce (1998, p. 2) describes it as a distinction between thinking about systems and thinking systemically.

*“The distinction between thinking about systems and thinking systemically hinges on the perspective of the person doing the thinking. One can and usually does think “about” systems from outside the system. That is, whether we might describe the thinking as ontologically a part of the system or separate from it, in this instance the thinker takes the observer-perspective. When thinking systemically, on the other hand, the thinker is self-reflexively a part of the system and takes the perspective of a participant or component of the system.”*

If you are observing the system, you are relating to it as if it was a machine (when you leave, the machine will still be there). Being part of the system you act jointly and look at the relationship, phenomena and events created by this. When you leave, you and the system will be changed accordingly.

Another distinction is whether you – even if you think you are part of the system – prefer aboutness thinking or witness thinking (Shotter, 2005a, p. 146-7):

*“(...) aboutness (monologic)-thinking works simply in terms of static “pictures” set out in terms of separately identifiable elements and the supposed laws of their interconnection. Thus, even when we “get the picture”, we still have to decide, intellectually, on a right course of action regarding them (...) In ignoring all the already existing intrinsic (internal) relations between the others and otherness around us, it remains up to us as isolated individuals as to how we act.”*

Not only will you tell two different stories, you will also use different judgement criteria to orient your attention and your next steps, you will have different inner dialogues performed at different times and different self-images, making different kinds of meaning, and have different kinds of focus on whether this is meaningful or not. In the following we will explore the nuances further, in a list – however they may not necessarily appear in the chosen order, or even separately. The list has occurred during the many conversations within my practice.



Figure 8 Meeting the world

### 3.1 An imagined or an actual meeting with the world

We are now going to explore the distinctions further. The following are examples, which I highlight for those of you who embrace this thesis in order to be updated with the latest Truths. The examples will lead us to the next chapter where we explore

some of the meaning for the difficulties we have in the Western World to “see” distinctions, the examples below describe these.

When we experience an imagined or actual meeting with the world (e.g. when we imagine the man with the umbrella or via the notion of phenomena touching us or others), our sense of being in this situation is related to whether we use aboutness or witness thinking. The distinction is related to the three realms (see also description, page 33) through which we meet the world:

1. The frozen but visible that we can describe in terms of nouns as being either of this kind of thing or of that
2. The living (moving) and visible to be described in terms of verbs and both-and
3. The living (moving) but invisible that can be described in neither this way nor that way, that as feelings of “something” can only be alluded to by use of metaphors

Please take a look at this image:



[Figure 9 From within or from the outside](#)

If I start to describe the image with words, I am quickly drawn toward a description from the first realm, describing for example nouns, subjects and objects, visible. This is perfect, when I am using English language, which also operates with subjects, objects and nouns. For example: “At the image below you will see a tiny spot; the jumper stands at the roof. At the image above you see what the jumper sees; you are very far up in the heights. It is a sunny day”.

Moving to the second realm, my description may be: “The jumper is jumping from one roof to another. In the lower picture you see the context he is in, and in the upper you see him preparing for the next jump. The sun is shining”. When I learned my third foreign language, German, I noticed how German speakers have an advantage in the second realm as they are able to create nouns of the verbs, allowing them to use the first and second realm together. For example: “The jumper is about *to jump*, when we meet him”. The Infinitive in English is often matched by a noun in German: “Der Springer ist beim springen, wenn wir ihn treffen”.

Third realm – and now it gets difficult to keep on using words to point out the difference. Here is a try: “The two images show the phenomenon of urban parkour. It is an activity where the participants learn how to move through the environment (the city) by running, jumping, climbing, vaulting etc. If you zoom very closely to the phenomenon, you will notice, well maybe even sense, the fear the participant is experiencing if the participant is frightened for heights; how the weather conditions play an important role; and how precautions like a parachute are sometimes needed; when the participants chose where to go next”.

Even if you aim at using the third realm, the use of English – or Danish, Swedish and Norwegian for that matter – only as a medium transmitting the message, may influence the way we meet the world, or judge the way others do.

The turnaround companies I have worked for have employees in many countries. In Chinese, the language does not point out whether the person is a she or he, and they are able to express contours of phenomena in a poetic way, which is impossible for non-Chinese speakers. I have noticed this in my work, when I introduced learning portfolios and a Chinese participant described how, since a very young age, he used to express himself in poetry, however impossible for him to translate into any sense in English via an artefact in the learning portfolio (as the requirements was the artefact

should be translated into English). Also, I am aware that “he”, “she” may occur randomly in a sentence and therefore in the portfolio.

When the Scandinavian in-house HR practitioner works with colleagues with native, polysynthetic languages s/he should pay attention to that these languages – for example Greenlandic – create new words by adding on parts to the word stem, which in the English language are kept separately. For example the word *qimmersuagarusunngilaq* that means “s/he does not want to have a big dog”. *Qimmeq* means dog. *Suaq* means big, *quar* means have, *gusup* means wish to and *nngi* means not. The closing *laq* is referring to third person singular (Lundell, 2011, p. 50). Ngarla (Aborigin language) does the same and further more change the word order compared to English (object comes before subject and the verb at the end (Westerlund & Martin, 2010, p. 51)). Sometimes the attention is in the doing, rather the subjects and objects and the language in ways shapes how we meet the world and vice versa.

I have included the notion of language as I suggest that how we meet, think and talk about turnarounds, within international companies – using English as the corporate language – sometimes has an influence, because the differences are too big. My office is often situated in the headquarters, where the turnaround is “born” and discussed, often in the home language. When I visit company offices in other countries, I am almost always asked to describe the turnaround in “human terms”.

Sadly, I have only too often heard people (using English as lingua franca as well) suggesting that other’s poor English skills are synonymous with their IQ.

Language also plays a role when the shift is made between native language and other (non-corporate) languages. I have noticed this with people living in another culture for a long time, which some expatriate employees do. Some of them describe how they experience a mix of their language in their inner talk in a way so it also affects their self-image. Fausta Marinovic (Leijonhielm, 2010) is an example, however not an expatriate like colleagues in my practice. She moved from Bosnia to Sweden in 1992, and as a writer she describes how she learned IKEA Swedish, as this is how she met the Swedish language – assembling the parts to a whole. However, it made it impossible for her to express herself as she would in her own language. This affected

her identity and she became literally another person (Leijonhielm, 2010, p. 44) just by meeting the world with another language.

I notice that the challenges of language often shape the context for the conversation so we use less first realm descriptions, and more of the second and third realm. Well, in my own family, where the stroke sometimes affects my father's memory, we all have developed a language where "things" are described in ways, which fall within the second or third realm. For example "Brad Pitt" turns into "the man playing the leading role in the movie, where a bullet hits the wife while they are sitting in the bus in the country with lots of desert". Conversations (and worlds) of people suffering from strokes often are of this kind – sometimes making the description more complex to do so. Shotter describes (2009, p. 2):

*"A portrayal – whether we are sketching the portrait ourselves or entering into someone else's portrayal – requires a stronger inner activity on our part in order to hold everything together and grasp its coherence; the portraying is something we must do".*

We are born into a tradition of how the good citizen is expected to meet the world (see also page 74). It is not our choice, rather it is embedded into our history, culture, educational system, the stories we hear and tell, etc. However, I often meet systemic trained practitioners who (still) look at the system and are talking from a position distant from the other person. Sometimes in turnaround situations, what people are crying out for is caring from someone who is able to see and feel what they are facing, before any next step is considered. In companies where I have worked, it sometimes was bad citizenship to be sad and reaching out for care, because the culture privileged "fast learners with ability to change".

If a person wishes to shift from about to within (like the wayfinders chose to do and many practitioners strive for), it may be combined with losing friends and identity, if the others do not shift in similar way, and still others see little sense in the person's shift. A paradox arises where the person trying to shift feels sad, reaches out for support from trusted others, but is met with aboutness distance because others do not have the lived experience to judge from and so are distanced from it (indirectly given the other position) with the only option to think *about* it.

### 3.2 Judgement criteria

Thinking back to the two previous images of the jumper, we now explore the judgement criteria of the different ways of meeting the world. Imagine you had authority to hand in your recommendations on initiatives for young persons in the city, the nature of these would probably depend on your relational point of view. Aboutness thinking would be characterized with criteria from the World of Appearance. Fixed things, we can order and use for the search for causes and explanations. Shotter (2009, p. 1-2) describes:

*“We want to be able to say, “x causes y – all other things being equal”. (...) The problem with explanations is that they cut short the quest for understanding, which always needs to go further.”*

You take a position as a viewer from the outside, looking at the world, and at your recommendations. You are not part of the city, not living there, and your questions reflect this distance. Most likely you describe some characteristics of the target group, and other facts clear to you. In my job I sometimes have to make such reports. I am expected to hand in a fact sheet (a one pager) with answers on what, why, how, when, by whom. I also have to compare the facts with previous fact sheets, detailed developments since this fact sheet was created (e.g. how many of the persons from five years ago participating in an activity designed by HR are still working in the same job today, and how has their performance been since then, compared to the participants joining the activity this year). Finally the calculation should lead to a prediction for the future about whether changes should be made. It is very often the case in companies that the HR tools are targeting the employees for analysis rather than the phenomena or the flow of the movement. The fact sheets are used in board meetings to judge and make recommendations as to whether to start, continue or stop the funding of initiatives.

I sometimes use the expression “TV viewing” as it helps me describe that those of us who are watching are passive, we are not part of the world inside the screen. We can at any moment switch to another channel. Of course we can be emotionally affected by what is happening at the screen, but we are not part of the actual events, and when we later talk with colleagues about the television show we will be talking and reasoning *about* it from the position as television viewers.



Figure 10 TV-viewing

One of the wayfinders interviewed describes how TV-viewing feels like when it happens during a meeting:

*E: "You can see that they observe you a lot, you know... (...) They are really looking at you. They are really like ... yeah, yeah screening you, and then also they are pretty silent, because then when you meet with them second or third time, when they are already a little bit relaxed and they know you ... "Okay I planned half an hour, and now we need an hour, because you talk so much", you know it is huge difference (...) In [country name] we are a very curious nation generally. And you know in [country name] for example different people approach you on the street if they are curious about something. They would just ... "I really like your shoes, where did you buy it?" It will be pretty normal, or just smile on the street or if not, just, you know ... doing some, just being a little bit more open emotionally ... (...) here people are very much keeping everything in their ... below the surface I think. So it is hard to figure out if actually this person is positive according to you, or ... you are just talking and she or he is thinking about something else".*

If you should hand in recommendations based on witness thinking – and we continue to keep in mind the images of the jumper – your judgement would most likely be connected to the phenomenon *parkour* than to the young persons (or both). Depending on which other phenomenon you are relating it to (e.g. unemployment, fall injuries, city branding) you will pay attention to different kinds of data. A similar process takes place in the event of the turnaround, depending on which social phenomenon occur to you when designing initiatives (events and space) they may act as a speed bump for the ambitions you wish to achieve.

For some it is very difficult to switch their style of thinking. Dewey (1910) suggests it is then about not acknowledging that our choice of next step is related to our imagined



end in view, and that end in view is related to our definition of the problem, our judgement criteria and the data. He says (Dewey, 1910, p 12):

*“The problem fixes the end of thought and the end controls the process of thinking”*

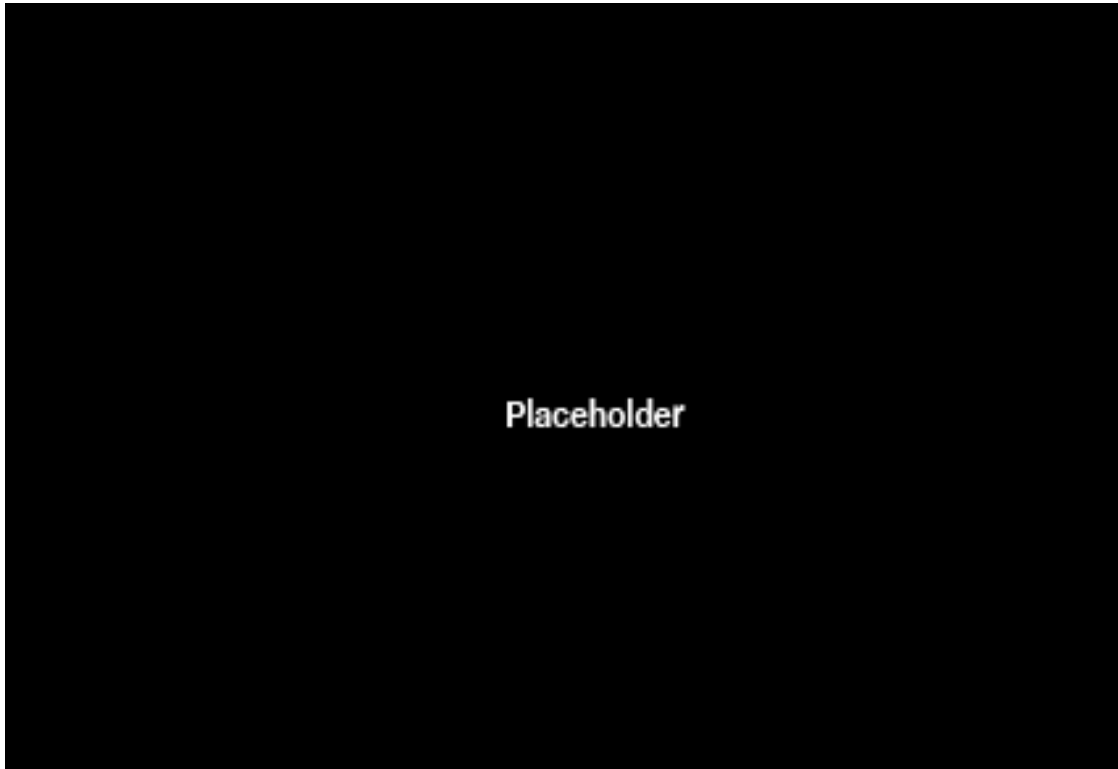
Dewey names it *reflective thinking* meaning: “judgement suspended during further inquiry; and suspense is likely to be somewhat painful”. Dewey’s point is illustrated here:



**Figure 11 UK General Teaching Councils model to evidence-informed practice**

I have built upon the model, so it relates to the points in this chapter and the following chapter. Before showing you the image, I introduce it to you step-by-step in order for you to see it in a multidimensional way rather than relating to it as a 2D model.

First we have to distinguish between *foreground* and *background* in human thinking (Shotter, 2011b). Foreground is our inner dialogue, which we are aware of and we may share with a coach or use as “baseline” at a talent or leadership programme. Our inner dialogue is going back and forth, in no structured order, between different positions creating a relationship with the data we have noticed.



**Figure 12 The foreground of our thoughts**

The background is the principles for our judgement. You might think that you just make a pro and con list and calculate what your decision should be, and that is *the* way to do it, but there are other judgement “methods” which relate to how we meet the world, which premises we have, how we name the symptoms, problems and dilemmas, which result in our judgement. I imagine a river with a flow, and a landscape, which affect each other.



Figure 13 The background of our thoughts

Please take a look at the top, right corner. It is supposed to show the relationships, which Dewey describes. I have added some: “The way we meet the world” (aboutness, or within) shapes how the “premises” or “criteria” we use to benchmark whether *something* is good or bad. The criteria shape which kind of “data” we will be searching for. (For example hard facts, emotions, concrete or abstract data. In other words first, second or third realm.) All of this shapes the “dilemma” we face, and the “problems”, which occurs from the dilemmas. We “name” all of this into names (wording; oral or written) or into an impression (e.g. we can express via painting, music, dance, boxing, running). Then we judge whether this is good, just, right, beautiful etc. (citizenship). We look for the expected symptoms, but may also notice other, unexpected symptoms – as data we pay attention to, and the flow continues. It all happens very quickly and not as mechanical and linear, as I have just portrayed it.

Now imagine that the foreground and background are intertwined into one process. What links your foreground and your background is “what you pay attention to”. Maybe it is evidence of the first realm, or maybe it is feelings manifesting phenomena of the third kind? It is similar to swimming in the river and sometimes the background is most present to you, and sometimes the foreground. Sometimes you pay attention to your body when you swim, sometimes you pay attention to the river – but when you are in flow you probably feel as if you and the river are one.

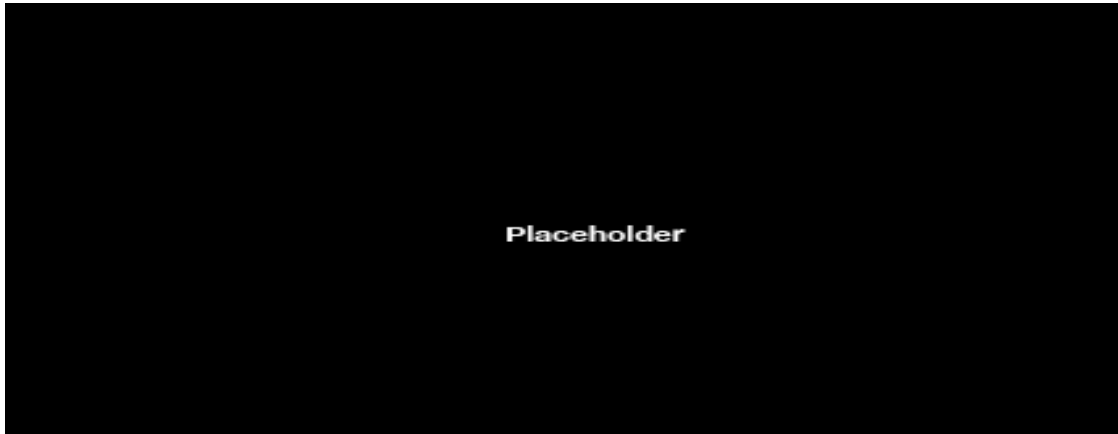


Figure 14 Foreground and background intertwined into one process

In turnaround situations with no clear judgement criteria (in the background) and changes of practices (the foreground) everything for a moment is turned upside down.

### 3.3 Attention toward

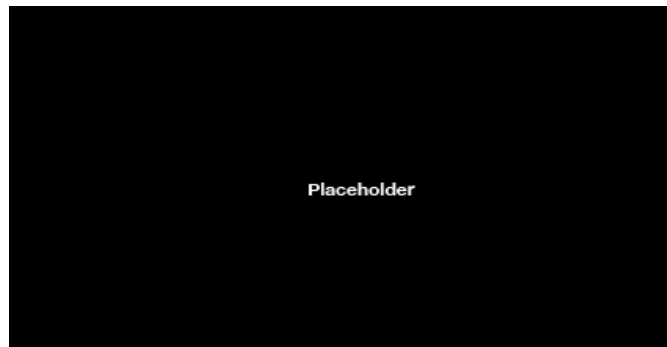
The judgement criteria both relate to how we meet the world and to our purpose for this meeting. A fireman's attention will be oriented toward one kind of data, an architect's toward another kind.

In the first instance we would think that our attention is connected to our eyes. This is aboutness thinking which indeed *perceives* things, and words like vision, envision, division, visionary are often part of the everyday language in a turnaround company. Witness thinking is *experiencing* the river, while swimming in it. The whole body is experiencing through all the senses and so spontaneous bodily responses are connected. In so doing we train our ontological skills: how we orient ourselves in the landscape, how the expressions are noticed as different impressions depending on which of our senses are aroused, and because we are constantly moving the expression changes form as we pass it, follow it, or lose it out of sight. Shotter (2011a, p. 191) describes the phenomenon like this:

*"It is our spontaneous, embodied ways of seeing and acting in the world that we change ... we change in who we "are", how we relate ourselves to our surroundings".*

Many of the managers I have worked with have been trained in aboutness thinking, guiding their attention to data, which are fixed, visual and which confirm that their management style works. Often you will notice how they are asking or answering in

relation to “what, when, why, how, who” milestones. Their focus is managing the employees, motivating them and selecting the best with potential to get even better. If some of the employees do not get along, they can invite them to a talk and mediate between them. The premise is that the manager not necessarily sees him/herself as part of the employee’s arena; the manager is the one ordering the change, and the employees are the ones changing. Often the managers tell me they believe they are expected to keep a distance and not attempting to get into the mindset of the employee.



**Figure 15** The aboutness manager is expected to keep a distance to the employee

A manager once told me “If I get too involved, I am no longer rational in my decisions. Someone has to take even the unpopular decisions and I can’t do this if I am too close to them.” He had formulated his leadership values into a PowerPoint presentation and showed it to his employees, who from that day did not involve him anymore in the ups and downs of the team. Another manager told her previous secretary, that she hated her new position very much, and that she could not wait to get through the agreed two-year period to achieve the required results, so she could move up in the hierarchy.

Their focus of attention plays a large part in the conversations I have with these managers when they want to discuss parameters with me; those they have included in their own on-going assessment of the worth of their self-image, and so their worth in the Value Competition.

Employees with aboutness managers often describe to me their sense that someone is continuously looking at them while not being part of their world, as in “I will control you, but the responsibility is yours”. Even though “we” is used in conversation, it is not

an inclusive “we”; it is an exclusive “we” just like when the nurse asks old Mr Hansen: “So, Mr Hansen are we going to have a bath today?” No one doubts Mr Hansen is the only one bathing.

When engaged in witness thinking – the corporeal thinking, or bodily sensation – our attention is not only on a fixed object/subject but also all around us. We are able to distinguish between systems such as one with order, patterns and purpose, and living systems. We might think that because an organization consists of people it is alive, and so view certain indicators differently: the values, the leadership competences we have chosen for our managers, the organizational chart we have created, the business models we use, the markets we have decided to dominate, the KPIs we have chosen to monitor, the titles we use, the still photos of all employees on the intranet or the standard operational procedures we have written. If these indicators are considered fixed then it's similar to viewing a mechanical device such as a car and comparing the indicators from today's car with a similar model ten years ago – you notice a change. Does it mean that the car has a life? Even if you facelifted the model? You can reduce complexity in the car assembly line, because the aboutness view allows you to work with the indicators as separate to you.

However, when we are engaged in witness thinking we embrace the complexity, as we judge this as life. If you explore this life inside the organization, you may soon notice how and whom colleagues address when they want help to solve a problem (especially if the one they approach is not formally in charge), what the atmosphere is like between people working in teams or between teams, how conference calls may be dominated by the leader's voice making everyone else passive, how conversations between colleagues compete with the official story about the turnaround, etc. Our attention is on the actual movement inside these social constructions, and how some of the social constructions and social phenomena affect the movements and visa versa. The joint actions or the social phenomena cannot be planned. The organization is not a subject with its own will. You cannot move an organization. The way you decide to move your arm in one direction is not the way you can move a team or an organization (Fisher, 2012 p. 95). It will always be people together constructing what they have heard you instructed them. Just because you decide you will have a team meeting about the turnaround, the outcome will not create the motivation you wish for, possibly quite the opposite. The senior management is not the brain, the corporate

functions are not the organs, and Operation is not the arms and legs, despite what one senior exec once chose to argue at the turnaround mass meeting. The social phenomena *bullying* does not go home, just because you ask it to, and it will never be one of your direct reports.

Bullying does not have its own will (so you can make it disappear with narrative externalization technique) and it does not follow patterns, rules or processes you can redesign or remove. However, you will always be able to find patterns if you change position and look *at* it (aboutness), believing we can monitor it, and predict its continuous “life”. The two thinking forms co-exist and often confuse us because of our use of language.

### 3.4 Inner dialogue timing

Most TV sets and TV channels offers *on demand*, so you can plan your day and chose to watch the programme whenever it fits best for you. You can press play, pause, rewind and choose fast forward, and you can anytime choose another channel. Aboutness thinking is almost quite similar. You can, when you lie in bed at night, replay the sequences. You can pause and, like a detective, investigate the episode. You can do it from a first person’s perspective, or shift to another person’s perspective to compare the judgements.

Donald A. Schön (1987, p. 26) describes this as “reflection-on-action”, and as opposite to the “reflection-in-action”. The latter refers to our spontaneous knowing-in-action, where we do not have to “think about” what we do, but just execute “smooth sequences of activity, recognition, decision and adjust[ment]” (Schön,1987, p. 26). We can still make a difference by actions aiming at reshaping the movement, while we are in the midst of it. Sometimes the effect of our actions surprises us, as we have expected another outcome. In such situations we either ignore the effect or we start to reflect.

In my work I am often unsure whether the other starts to reflect in the moment or does it later. However, I know that employees get very anxious in situations where for example the manager prefers to reflect-on-action. This is a description someone gave of his/her manager: “I never know what will happen next, because even though she says it is okay, she will constantly surprise me, approaching me the next day with “do you have two minutes?”, or concluding that I did wrong in a situation during our next

employee development dialogue. Then she uses a substantial prepared speech to describe why. It is like a court room”.

### 3.5 Inner dialogue (content)

The foreground aboutness thinking would repeat the monologues and other fixed details. Emotions are included and when we rewind the episode we respond with our whole body (getting sad, angry, high pulse etc.). We will most likely search for an explanation.

The premise is that we, or someone else, or another agency (e.g. medicine, the police, the politicians, the CEO) has the power to change the events. “Had we just known more, or acted differently.” The outcome of the analysis forms the self-image.

Emotions may also lead to a re-evaluation of the self-image. If you work in an international company where you are expected to communicate in English, you may be concerned about whether your language skills are good enough. Language becomes related to judgement criteria for self-evaluation. One colleague described it like this: “It makes me nervous, and I feel so stupid, if they speak English very fast, using technical words, and in a high voice. I think it is because, I don’t understand, and it only gets worse if they do not consider me, but just keep on talking. I am afraid that I will slow them down, if I interrupt, or they will find out about my poor English skills – and I think about it a lot.”

Our foreground, aboutness efforts are on authoring a preferred story, which provides us with agency. I sometimes hear the argument “Well, he is introverted, so I will have to help him access the sounds of what is going on inside his mind”. This leads me to assume that aboutness thinking is also preoccupied with a parallel inner conversation while the other is talking, for example, “which questions should I ask him next?” or “Hm... it might be difficult for him to talk about this; he might need my help”. In many situations the aboutness viewer may believe that what we actually say out loud is already captured on tape in the brain, before the mouth adds sound. I had a manager once, who kept on asking questions as if I was a tape recorder, and where he with the questions could turn on and switch off my stream of talking. He directed me to “pause”, “go on”, “slow down”, “speed up” and continue from where we finished off last time.



Shotter (2005a, p. 147) inspired by Goethe, describes the differences between two aboutness and withness “contexts”:

*“(…) in adopting this approach, we are misleading ourselves in ways that can in fact have quite disastrous consequences for us. Instead of us achieving that kind of easy familiarity to do with knowing our “way around” inside our own activities – that kind of familiarity we can have when feel “at home” in or “know our way around” inside a place or a circumstance – we achieve the power of manipulation and control instead. While this power of mastery and control is not without its attractions, it still leaves us ignorant of the ordinary, everyday ways in which we do in fact relate ourselves to the others and the othernesses around us, the ways in fact in which we first learned to be functioning members of the everyday communities within which we live our lives. Indeed, it can work to separate us from our surroundings in such a way that we cease to experience them directly and must cognitively “work out” what is happening around us”.*

We will explore examples of judgement from within in Chapter 6.

### **3.6 Next step action**

As described on previously our thoughts and next step actions (how we act) are as closely linked as our actions are related to how we meet the world.

Aboutness thinking continues the TV viewing of the event as if the episode took place inside a landscape. A two dimensional map we can look at. It gives us an opportunity to plan our actions, when we are sitting comfortably in a room distant from the events we imagine. We can even discuss them with a coach, and we can use the map as a reference point on how well we are doing.

Why do we use maps? Well, we want them to be as accurate and reliable as possible, so we use them as support when we navigate. We want the map to show us exactly the streets and POI we are searching for. Old maps, unless they are very old, are thrown away, because they are no longer accurate and therefore useless for us. Let us take a look at a concrete map – for example, the Kingdom of Denmark, so that I can also show you where I come from. The map is two-dimensional (length and width). It also indicates the major cities of the three countries, Greenland, Faroe Islands, and Denmark, and it shows us the ratios between the measurements in the map and those in the “real” territory.



Figure 16 Two-dimensional map of Greenland, Faroe Islands and Denmark

So far, we have been talking about the new territories connected with the turnaround the company is expected to go through when looking at the territory from a distance. The territory as such is unchangeable in these kinds of maps, and the TV viewers are standing outside the territory discussing the metrics and indicators experienced in the real life of the territory. The recent episode is now being evaluated toward the target set for the journey, and the next step aboutness actions will relate to this. It can of course be all kinds of actions – for example e-mail to a superior about the episode, an off-the-record talk with the in-house HR practitioner, a comment about it in the next management meeting, or one of the “you-should-know-that-she-indicates-that ...” advice to a peer.

The witness thinking uses other kinds of maps. Tim Ingold, professor of social anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, argues (2011a, p. 229) that there is no point in knowing the place on a map because what we actually do is travel *in* the place, not *on* it. In other words to point out the destination of a journey is something you can do when you sit in your sofa preparing for your next summer holidays. You think and talk *about* it because you are not yet in the place. But *in* life, we are already *in* it, and we wish to go in other directions so we can of course sit down in our present

territory and think *about* it, but then we would also be entering an aboutness domain. Ingold (2011a, p. 230 and 231) comments:

*“As I have already suggested, we know as we go, not before we go. (...) The traveller or storyteller who knows as he goes is neither making a map nor using one. He is, quite simply, mapping. And the forms or patterns that arise from this mapping process, whether in the imagination or materialized as artefacts, are but stepping stones along the way, punctuating the process rather than initiating it or bringing it to a close”*

Ingold (2011a, p. 231) summarizes the relationships between *mapping* (wayfinding), *mapmaking* (cartography) and *map-using* (navigation) like this →

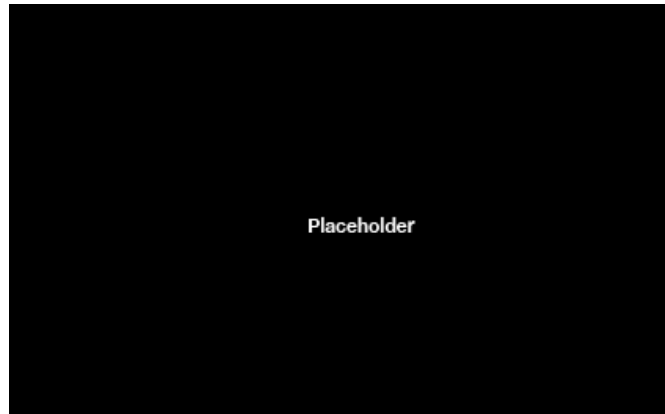


Figure 17 Mapping, Mapmaking, Map-using

Mapping is useful to find one’s way in getting around and finding home. Mapmaking is creating the map retrospectively based on the actual responses between you and the surroundings, and map-using is when you use a map created by another person. Mapping is a genre of performing responses as trial-and-error guidance, as you go along.

Ingold refers to R. A Rundstrom (Ingold, 2011a, p. 232) for an example to illustrate the point:

*“An Inuit traveller, returning from a trip, could recount every detail of the environment encountered along the way, miming with his hands the forms of specific land and sea features. Such gestural performance, after a long journey, could last many hours. It could also, given appropriate tools and materials, generate an inscription. Many of these inscriptions were produced at the instigation of Western explorers who made contact with the Inuit. They were often astonished at the accuracy of what they regarded as “native maps”. But for Inuit mappers it was the performance that mattered – the “recapitulation of environmental features” – rather than any material artefacts or inscriptions to which it gave rise.”*

Ingold (2011a, p. 233) comments that the maps being improvised on the spot within a particularly dialogical context, was not intended to be used beyond that context. This means that those maps were created in a way so they pointed out phenomena,

revealing aspects of how objects look like when you proceed along a path of observation from “here” and “there”.

Try to think of a time when a tourist asked you for directions. How did you help him? How did you use your body? Would your map be useful outside this particular context?

One of the wayfinders (= one who is mapping) I have interviewed to this thesis describes her movements as related to curiosity:

*E: “I actually asked my mom this weekend: Was I always ... because I did not know, I didn’t remember ... because I have a lot of considerations about the job now and the decision that I have made now and so on. But I asked her: Was I always like this that I was so curious? That I preferred to burn myself by check it. And then she said: Yes, and you were always ... you were checking a lot of strange things, like I was attending ... eh... church communities [laughing] for some time when I was 9... and I did remember this kind of things, and then she said: Yeah, yeah you were checking all of these things, and then ... the funny thing is that she was worried, when I was a little bit younger, that I cannot commit to anything. She was thinking that I cannot actually put some effort in one place, and commit into one thing, because I was changing it all the time. It was not all the time, but .. yeah...”*

(...)

*“I think you are getting bored a little bit about this what is going on around, and then you don’t have a kind of new input, you know, you have the feeling that you are turning around in the same thoughts all the time, and that you are ... you just don’t have different thoughts, and the... this is damn frustrating”.*

Now, I want to show you how easily the witness view can be infected by the aboutness view and how this affects the practice in turnaround situations.

In the landscape below you see two people looking at the map of the Kingdom of Denmark. Both people are looking at the landscape from a distance. They are trying to understand some of the events inside the territory and have therefore taken one hour out of the busy schedule to reflect. One person (the green) believes he is reflecting within actual events and later on these events.

Our green friend may be reflecting on action, that the events inside the territory are connected with the different views we have of the landscape, and we therefore judge differently according to our standing point be it in Nuuk (capital of Greenland), Tórshavn (capital of the Faroe Islands) or Copenhagen (capital of Denmark). An acknowledgement of polyvocality.



Figure 18 Reflection and reflexivity

The other person (the red) may ponder over the way she reflects inside the territory. She is curious about how the context affects her thinking, and how she may come to other conclusions if she were situated somewhere else. Archer (2010, p. 2) describes the distinction between reflexivity and reflection like this:

*“The distinguishing feature of reflexivity is that it has the self-referential characteristic of “bending-back” some thought upon the self, such that it takes the form of subject-object-subject.*

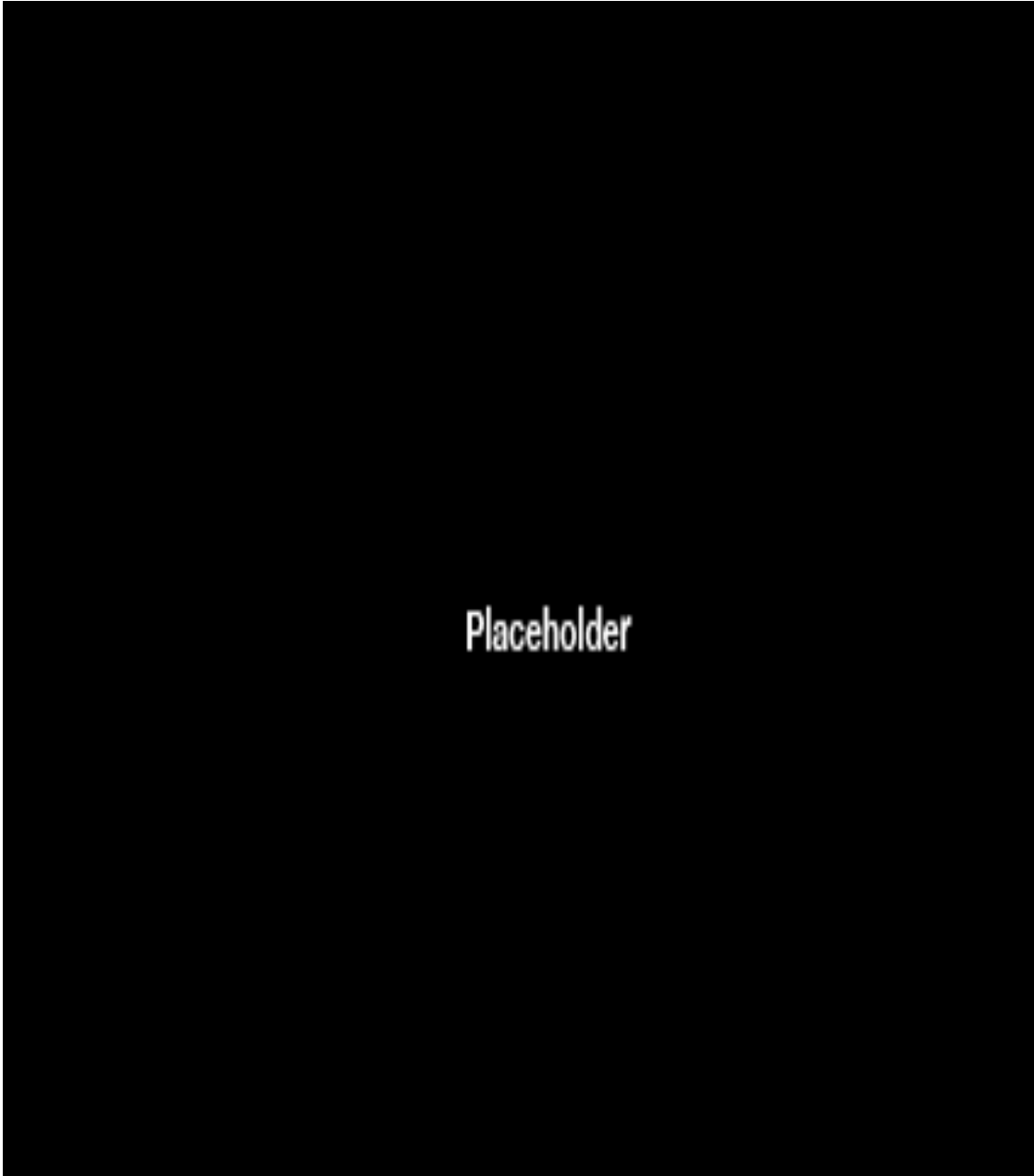
*Undoubtedly, reflection and reflexivity have fuzzy borders and can shift from one to the other. When attempting to make a device work, the question “What next?” is indistinguishable from “What do I do next with this?” and can segue into the fully reflexive “Can I cope with this and do I really want to?”*

So what is my point, you may wonder? Reflection and reflexivity are surely non-aboutness activities as we keep digging for another truth, we acknowledge different viewpoints etc.?

I want to show you how even with reflexivity we can take the position of observing the system systematically, not being a part of it, that we imply that everybody is looking in exactly the same direction and are being struck by similar “things” or phenomena in the landscape, or are even looking for similar purposes. But, as we explored in paragraph 3.3, our individual focus differs one to the other. A tourist preparing for a trip to Greenland may be particularly interested in data of weather conditions. A CEO

for the national Greenlandic health sector may be interested to learn where the inhabitants live, and how they live. The young person just starting in school in Greenland will most likely be occupied with quite different questions. Moreover, someone familiar with the particular landscape of Greenland will look for changes, and the person new to the landscape will probably compare it with his/her homeland or something similarly well-known.

I sometimes use a metaphor when I wish to show the differences in how we meet the world. I refer to the cartoon figure and the children's book, "*Where's Wally?*" (Handford, 1987). Maybe you know him? Children are encouraged to find him in the images presented in the book. If we use some of these images from the book we will get a sense of how it is to be Wally in the middle of (his) world, and how we should approach him if 1) we want him to notice us; and 2) we want to assist him in moving on. When Wally is moving around, he will use his senses to make judgements: "*this seems to be the wisest way forward*". He will most likely correct his actions, as he compares where he is right now with his destination (end in view) and considers the effect of the phenomenon (others or otherness) he meets on his way. He is aware that he has no control of what is happening, but the more he is practising, understanding and experiencing meaningfulness, he will allow wonderments to occur, allowing him even more sensitivity for what is outside his attention. As long as it is meaningful, he will continue walking. This technique is quite different from that which we would use if we stood beside him looking at a map. By the way, did you find him?



**Figure 19 Where's Wally**

Distinguishing between the two images it often makes sense that a question like “How are you right now” may be unethical, if you do not see the persons situation from within, but are rather expecting a “I am fine and can’t wait to start the assignment”. Then both of you are aboutness talking.

## 4. Good citizenship through history

Let us explore selected past episodes of the preferred judgement approach and how it shaped what one could notice to fulfil the membership criteria for good citizenship. An analysis of the so-called HR arena voice into this can be found in Appendix 9.5.

### 4.1 Ancient Greeks

To be considered a good citizen in the world of ancient Greece, judgement criteria of religion, legislation, or science, as we know them today were not used. Instead ethics as an outcome of the acts related to a social or political context were considered important (Flyvbjerg, 2009, p. 69). The Greek philosopher Aristotle identified five intellectual virtues (in three categories) describing the character traits for performing as a good citizen. We will follow Flyvbjerg's explorations into Aristotle (2009, p. 70-72) and briefly describe three of the virtues (Flyvbjerg has left out *Sophia* and *Nouns*):

#### Theoretical

**Epistémé:** Scientific and empirical knowledge, not depending on context, based on analyses and rationality

#### Productive

**Techné:** Craft knowledge, skill, art depending on context, oriented toward production, based on instrumental rationality towards a known target

#### Practical

**Phronesis:** Practical wisdom (also named prudence), ethical and value-based reflections in relation to praxis, depending on context, oriented towards action, based on a practical value rationality

According to Flyvbjerg phronesis and techné are only possible through long experience from within (lived experience), but to be a good citizen required all three virtues combined into a whole. This allowed them to wonder, and follow the phenomena striking and touching them, relating these to judgements of good, true, just and beautiful.

The judgement categories (good, true, just and beautiful) were part of the leadership academies where apprentices were trained in judgement criteria pointing at both a personal as well as a societal effort (Kirkeby, 2004). They were taught to feel, what they were thinking, so the obligation in relation to the norm has entered the whole body (Kirkeby, 2004, p. 25). They were taught to relate to the Greek Square (or the Great Square) (Kirkeby, 2004, p. 31) with the four corners; the good, the true, the just and the beautiful in relation to freedom.



In chapter 6 we will explore further examples of judgement from within, and link it to the virtues.

## 4.2 René Descartes

René Descartes, who lived 1596-1650, was a French philosopher. His name in Latin is Renatus Cartesius and “Cartesian” means to relate to the ideas of René Descartes. Descartes asked: *How do we know for certain that we know*, and by this question he introduced the subjective element into epistemology (Koch, 1995 p. 176). It does matter who observes the object. He is considered to be the father of modern philosophy. “Modern” because the ancient Greeks and medieval world as we have just briefly explored, are considered to be the first philosophers – by the West that is.

As a child Descartes was brought up in a teaching practice where the students adopted the wisdom from the church, from the ancient Greeks, myths or the occult. Attempts to think “out-of-the-box” were made by others, but Descartes was the first to question the Bible’s explanation of the universe and he found via mathematics (geometry) that he could come up with other explanations. By focusing on physical (Res Extensa) evidence like length, depth, breadth of matter that occupied space – and motion – it was, according to Descartes, possible to explain all natural phenomena (Sorell, 2000, p. 10 and Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 98). However, he never questioned the existence of God.

Unlike the Greeks, Descartes believed there were two ways to find the true knowledge about the problem; using our senses or using our mind (Sorell, 2000, p. 41). He concluded that the mathematical methods were more objective of the two (Sorell, 2000, p. 4). Senses were not to be trusted, not because they are not true, but because of the interpretation of the information they give us (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 48). In other words techné and phronesis did not count for Descartes. For example I taste an apple and dislike it. You do the same and like it. We are right in our subjective world, but it will, according to Descartes, not be enough to indicate any objective Truth. Descartes explained the difference was to be found in “space” and “time” (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 126):

*“The physical world consists of material objects which exist in space and time and obey certain laws that can be established by physics. The mental world is populated with thoughts which seem to be outside of space and time and which are subjective, private and unique to each individual”*

Because Descartes believed there was a risk of misinterpretation by the senses, he divided the human being into a body and a mind. A conscious mind and a physical body that is (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 104). A material world and a mental world. “Mind”, “soul”, “rational”, are words of the mental world, aspects of being able to exist without a body. We call this today Cartesian dualism (Sorell, 2000, p. 78). Even though the two systems lived alongside each other, the hierarchy between them was clear. Descartes is famous for his phrase; “cogito ergo sum” – “I think, therefore I am” – expressing that the only thing he could be certain of was that he was able to think (Koch, 1995, p. 176).

Descartes wanted to find a universal method to be able to find the right answer. Therefore he developed a methodology (reductionism) consisting of rules reducing the complexity into simplicity – for then, to conclude on a pattern that will explain the simple as well as the big scale.

He described his method like this (Sorell, 2000, p. 46):

*“The first was never to accept anything as true if I did not have evident knowledge of its truth. That is, carefully to avoid precipitate conclusions and preconceptions, and to include nothing more in my judgments than what presented itself to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I had no occasion to doubt it.*

*The second, to divide each of the difficulties I examined into as many parts as possible and as maybe required in order to resolve them better.*

*The third, to direct my thoughts in an orderly manner, by beginning with the simplest and most easily known objects in order to ascend little by little, step by step, to knowledge of the most complex, and by supposing some order even among objects that have no natural order of precedence.*

*And the last, throughout to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so comprehensive, that I could be sure of leaving nothing out”.*

To test the solution even further Descartes set up the criteria about universality – we would name it “theory” today – “which would offer similar guarantees of certainty about other kinds of knowledge” (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 61). Also, it was important to Descartes that the found knowledge should be shared with the public “so it can be read about in books and journals and kept in libraries” (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 60).

Descartes invented the “unknowns” by the letters x, y and z and the “knowns” by a, b and c. Descartes invented the modern way of expressing squares and cubes by using small numbers (as e.g. in  $10^{12}$ ) he showed how to use algebra to recognize many typical problems in geometry and bring together those which are related (Sorell, 2000, p. 19). Today’s HR praxis also has resemblance to the inventions – for example the people grid (see page 237) or when a management team is trying to predict the behaviour of employees or customers, it will also use unknowns and knowns as foundation for conclusion.

Descartes had success in his experiments, and in doing this he came to believe that all human knowledge could eventually be “mathematized” (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 88). With the lens of mathematics it was possible for Descartes to look at a world with order and stableness, and that each kind of thing had a proper and characteristic sort of behaviour and development, owing to its nature (Sorell, 2000, p. 41).

Linking to the methodology described above, Descartes not only wanted to map the repetitive patterns, he could also predict the effects if he found and isolated the cause of a “thing” disturbing the pattern. Therefore he was interested in understanding and explaining not only a clear and distinct solution, but also a clear and distinct problem. By “clear”, Descartes meant “that ideas in the mind must be as obvious and apparent to us as physical objects that we see with our eyes” (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 25). We see traces from this today, in e.g. narrative therapy, where also the problem is isolated (externalization).

In the methodology Descartes recommended he also focus on questioning the possible solutions to the “problem”. The “Cartesian Doubt” means to test the potential solutions to the problem sorting out whether they are true or false. The purpose is to be certain that your suggested solution is true (“the devil is in the detail”).

Later philosophers did not agree with all of Descartes’ ideas; however, they followed his quest to find the basis of certainty and knowledge (Thompson, 2010, p. 6). Today sciences like nuclear physics, astrophysics, chemistry, genetics, economics, linguistics and computer sciences would not exist without mathematics and Descartes’ initial theory of knowledge (Robinson, D. & Garratt, C, 1998, p. 93). This is in line with Descartes’ own view, as he “compared the whole of philosophy to a tree,

whose roots are metaphysics, whose trunk is physics, and whose branches “emerging from this trunk are all the other sciences, which may be reduced to the three principal ones, namely medicine, mechanics and morals” (Sorell, 2000, p. 94).

The legacy of Descartes affects the Western world today because the risks of not finding the right knowledge, the truth, the errors, are just too big to handle for the human being raised inside this tradition. They start doubting their own knowledge (epistemé), skills (techné) and value/judgement (phronesis).

Richard J. Bernstein was the first to use the expression “Cartesian Anxiety” emphasising that he does not suggest that the anxiety begins with Descartes or that philosophers after Descartes accepted everything Descartes suggested (Bernstein, 1983, p. 16):

*“To speak of the Cartesian Anxiety is to speak of a construct, but one that is helpful for getting a grip on the primary issues”.*

He uses the expression as a metaphor for the effect of how Descartes methodology is still used today, and to show us that we often still believe that the philosopher’s ambition is to search for a so-called Archimedean point in the search for knowledge (Bernstein, 1983, p. 16). An Archimedean point is a point “outside” the “thing” you are studying. It is a position, which is believed to make the observation more true and objective, because you are able to see everything. Archimedes was an ancient Greek mathematician and philosopher who claimed that had he only had the possibility to remove himself from the earth, standing at a distance from the earth, and with a long enough lever, he would be able to move the earth and examine it properly (Blackburn, 2008, p. 21). Bernstein continues:

*“Few philosophers since Descartes have accepted his substantive claims, but there can be little doubt that the problems, metaphors, and questions that he bequeathed to us have been at the very center of philosophy since Descartes – problems concerning the foundations of knowledge and the sciences, mind-body dualism, our knowledge of the “external” world, how the mind “represents” this world, the nature of consciousness, thinking, and will, whether physical reality is to be understood as a grand mechanism, and how this is compatible with human freedom. (...)*

*The Meditations [book which Descartes published in 1641 and has been read as the great rationalist treatise of modern times] portray a journey of the soul, a meditative reflection on human finitude through which we gradually deepen our understanding of what it really means to be limited, finite creatures who are completely dependent on an all-powerful, beneficent, perfect and infinite God.”*

The fear and anxiety of not surviving the challenges throughout the journey will according to Descartes be abolished the more I realize how completely dependent I am on a beneficent God, because if not I will experience a fear of having (Bernstein, 1983, p. 17):

*“... all of a sudden fallen into very deep water where I can neither make certain of setting my feet on the bottom, nor can I swim and so support myself on the surface, and the anxiety of imagining that I may be nothing more than a plaything of an all-powerful evil demon”.*

Even though God for some, today, does not play this role anymore, the idea of a journey with challenges persists, a journey in order to find answers and “satisfy our longing for ultimate constraints, for a stable and reliable rock upon which we can secure our thoughts and action” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 19). Leadership programmes are often characterized as a journey, with set up challenges. The “sink or swim” attitude is also still present, and used to conclude who is best able to rise to the challenge, when being thrown out in deep water. Deep water could be a turnaround, a new position, or any other situation that you have no prior experience with. Bernstein continues (1983, p. 18):

*“Despite the almost ritualistic attempts of succeeding philosophers to overthrow and murder Descartes as the father figure of modern philosophy, and despite the many attempts to discredit the foundation metaphor that so deeply affects modern philosophy, this underlying Cartesian Anxiety still haunts us and hovers in the background of the controversies waged by objectivists and relativists.”*

#### **4.2.1 Certainty**

At the time when Descartes lived, the consequences of not telling the truth were dramatic. Galileo Galilei, an Italian scientist, was in 1633 condemned by the Inquisition at Rome for teaching the doctrine of the earth’s movement (that the earth moves around the sun, and therefore is not centre of the universe) (Sorell, 2000, p. 31). A publication from Descartes was therefore postponed, as Descartes described similar thoughts in it.

At the same time witch burning was used in Western Europe targeting men, woman or even children who supposedly experimented with herbs, magic and life, and were considered a threat to Christianity (Lund, 2010).

With a fixed methodology, like Descartes’, enabling the researcher to “read” the world, prove and re-prove by others as well, human beings could be certain that the right

knowledge would appear – and so they were saved from possible persecutions. According to Bernstein (1983, p. 117) it also enabled to serve us two closely related functions:

*“They enable us to extend our knowledge systematically, and they ensure that nothing will be admitted as knowledge (and consequently as true) unless it satisfies the rigorous requirements of the specified rules.”*

However, according to Bernstein (1983, p. 117) knowledge was defined almost exclusively as the epistemological role of experience. This means that knowledge at that time was a propositional or “knowledge that” form distinct from “knowledge how” (techné and phronesis). As the knowledge was based on what you have read of events in the external world, you would not ask to demonstrate knowledge on how events related to you and the evidence/data you chose to select. In other words how you make sense of it all.

### **4.3 Scientific management**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the industrial arena had entered Western culture. Acceptance of violence and survival of the fittest were norms and good citizenship was linked to physical hard work. Workers clustered in unions, and what was recognized in Scandinavia as the Danish model was introduced, and regulations in the industrial companies had to be agreed on in a system of three: A side (the management), B side (the workers), and the government. If A and B cannot come to an agreement, an attempt to solve the conflict is made in the independent Conciliation Board, and after a sequence of warnings of strikes or lockout, the government transforms the proposal from the Conciliation Board to law. If an employee was in doubt the union was there to help. If an employer was in doubt, the employers’ association was there to help.

The three-part system was a response to scientific management privileging the manager to decide on the processes of how the work should be carried out (techné). Managers, inspired by, for example, Frederick Taylor – the father of Taylorism – used a stopwatch monitoring the progress of the speed of workflow (Fischer, 2012, p. 26).

Looking only at the processes the norms of good citizenship changes – it is now all about acting in the right way in relation to the workflow decided by the manager. The manager had the right to change the processes with immediate effect, and the good

citizen showed his/her ability to quickly adapt to the new setup. You may wonder why people accepted this, but it was rationalized in a way so the benefits were both for the company and for the worker. For the worker it was suddenly possible to be developed so they could adapt more quickly or climb the career ladder, which brought the possibility to contribute to decision making. They felt a new freedom and believed it was possible to change their own situation if they wanted.

A kind of “gas station attendant pedagogy” (Larsen 2001, p 99) – when knowledge from the teacher-/the books/the event is transmitted to the student, within a pre-set duration of time – emerged.



Figure 20 The gas station attendant pedagogy

The focus is not on how much time an activity takes in a certain tempo, but it is on what you can achieve within the time slots. Punctuality and efficiency are valued, as first emphasized by Taylorism in the early twentieth century when this intense focus on time was introduced. The person is still intact after the “fuelling”.

The gas station attendant pedagogy is further complicated in Danish language, and maybe therefore it still exists? The word for *Teach* in common Danish is *Lære*. And *Learn* is *Lære*. We do not distinguish between these modes as an English native speaker would do because we use the same word for two very different ways of being in the world. Corporate employees with Danish backgrounds tend to call everything “learning” in English, which sometimes leads to misunderstandings.

#### 4.4 McKinsey & AI

Now, we take a giant leap to the Millennium. Though we can find important examples of good citizenship in the years between: tools and an underworld of management consultant blossoming in relation to the behavioural wave within psychology. Relationships between manager and employee were occasionally privileged over skills, and reputation among colleagues started to play an important role. However, to

be concise we will only portray some of the turning points in history, which show in one way or another within turnaround situations today.

Many reasons have led to unions losing members and the employee feeling isolated and searching for meaningfulness. Today more employees are skilled and able to judge for themselves without needing a manager to instruct and delegate how the work should be done. Proud, established companies experienced tough challenges and noticed how new companies approached their audience in different ways, and that traditional growth strategies were no longer as easy to execute as in the time when monopolies existed.

To be considered a good citizen aims at relationships beyond the work sphere to outside suppliers, customers and governments, and with the phenomena dominating these audiences. The CEO has to relate to a “global economy” such that what is happening in one country will influence a number of other countries as well. The customer sets new imperatives for companies (environment friendly, sustainability, no child labour, etc.), the competition is harder, the attitudes to how companies make (easy) money have changed, the way we publish and share experiences have changed, the speed is faster when companies take advantage of different time zones and offer faster processing time whenever interacting with the customer, and responding to media and online communities only a few hours after important events (political changes, environmental disasters, or other events connected to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) requires involvement of the company, to mention some of the landmarks in the new territory.

In the late 1990s, but a decade later in Scandinavia, the arena again changed radically, when the consultancy Mckinsey & Company in 1997 ([www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com)) coined the expression “the war for talent” as their suggestion of a phenomenon making meaning and solving all the challenges the change brought.

In other words, to be considered a good citizen was associated with being considered talented. We will explore two separate tendencies dominating today; selection of the right people (identifying and cultivating the talents) often in Scandinavia named “Talent Management” (which in other countries sometimes mean the whole “work force”) and identification of your inner strengths (talents) often named AI (Appreciative Inquiry) or positive psychology (the two disciplines are not the same). The two



tendencies are examples from a continuum of different approaches, and often a mix is practiced:



**Figure 21 Continuum of approaching dominating in post-recession age**

Please see appendix (Chapter 9.5.3) for examples of the continuum

The idea of a war resonated with many senior executives I have worked for – especially in Scandinavia, North Europe and North America – for three major reasons:

- 1) Demographies showed a shortage of young people, with long-term effects on the competencies of the company. In other regions of the world the educational systems have not produced the expertise these companies were used to recruiting.
- 2) An internal challenge was that a company only needs one CEO, and also there are few senior executive jobs, so how does one manage the expectations from the many who fulfil the criteria of good citizenship?
- 3) Some companies gradually adapted to changes in the surroundings, others did not succeed swiftly enough, and proud companies had to close. Political and economic crises forced other companies to adapt more rapidly than others, and tendencies in research, literature, business schools, newspapers and daily conversations have indicated the need for a rapid adaptation of best practices in a company.

The McKinsey idea was to pay close attention on the shortage of individual talent and on how to turn talent into a source of competitive advantage and resilience to sustain major change.

Together with other business strategies, this war rhetoric created a thinking and talking about strategies for the planning and execution of how to obtain the people resources for company interests and how a grand strategy in a particular market could be sustained. With the strategies follow expressions from war like *tactic*, *operation* and *policy*.

Both talent management as well as AI & positive psychology are oriented towards the community. To be considered a good citizen is to be loyal to the greater community and to act on behalf of the community. There is cohesion between the development of

the individual and the company. The manager is called a leader and is expected to be a good leader by showing visionary skills, taking the lead, and being able to focus, amongst other things, on the social and emotional needs of the employee. The hero leadership image was reborn, however this time it was a more human version.

Before we explore some of the characteristics, you may wonder why so many approaches seem to co-exist.

Graves (2009) researched different bereavement strategies and points out that the coping strategies are never static; the individual usually shifts between confronting the loss and avoiding it. If we set up the premise that a turnaround situation brings instant change and will also require a coping strategy from the good citizen, we will notice similar swings in the pendulum of the citizen's coping strategy.

I borrowed the metaphor from Barley and Kunda (1992) who pointed out two dominating management ideologies (and thus judgement of good citizenship) swinging like a pendulum in parallel, resonating with the cycles of economic expansion and contraction, when you study the upswings and downswings in long-term waves of macroeconomic activity. They suggested poles of the pendulum to be of either "rational" or "normative" rhetoric of control. They describe (1992, p. 384):

*"Proponents of scientific management and systems rationalism argued that productivity stemmed from carefully articulated methods and systems. Each portrayed the firm as a machine, either mechanical or computational, that could be analysed into its component parts, modified, and reassembled into a more effective whole. Both rhetorics exhorted managers to be experts: to bring rational analysis and a body of empirical knowledge to bear on the firm's problems. Furthermore, both assumed that employees were calculative actors with instrumental orientation to work. Employees were said either to understand the economic advantages of an efficient system or to be powerless to resist a well-designed structure. Since compliance was therefore unproblematic, control could be readily exercised by manipulating systems".*

(...)

*The rhetorics of industrial betterment, human relations, and organizational culture emphasized normative control. Proponents of each claimed that organizations are, or should be, collectives. Whether the dominant image was of community, group, or culture, each depicted the organization as a locus of shared values and moral involvement. Accordingly, all three blurred the boundaries between work and nonwork and between managers and workers. Because advocates of each envisioned cohesion and loyalty as the ultimate source of productivity, they exhorted managers to be*

*leaders; to set an example, to inspire, to motivate, and to provide for the employees' welfare. A sentient, social being, employees were said to perform more diligently when they were committed to a collective whose ideals they valued. Control therefore rested on shaping workers' identities, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs".*

I have tried to illustrate their point below. The upswings and downswings of the macro economic are illustrated with a wave (in the middle). However, the waves are also corresponding to the bridge between the normative rhetoric and the rational rhetoric landscape:



**Figure 22 The oscillation of the pendulum**

*The pendulum is swinging between normative and rational rhetoric in relation to global financial growth wave*

The coherence between macroeconomic and good citizenship become suddenly related, which I sometimes illustrate like this for managers:



**Figure 23 The relationship between macroeconomics and good citizenship**

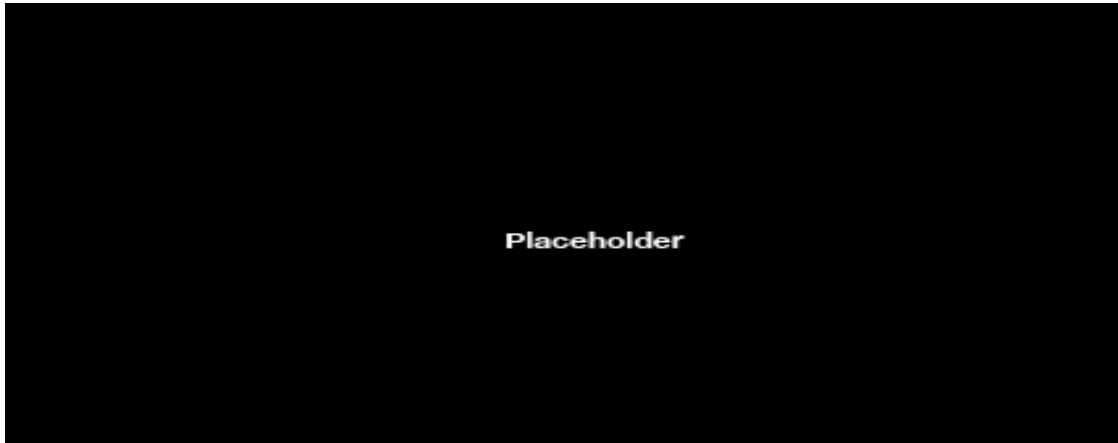
*The image shows how the world economy is affecting the norms of good citizenship. On each layer is a “model” from each of the communities of practice inside the company. Communities of practices are now related, and change of best practice in one community instantly affects the others.*

Now, let us briefly explore some of the differences between the two arenas: Talent management and AI & positive psychology in relation to how one can act as a good citizen.

Talent management focuses on a clear value proposition of the employees. Just like you would do when you compare which new kitchen machine to buy, key factors such as performance, aesthetics and economy are considered for employees to be labelled talented with potential, or not. This effects how the employee will be able to access opportunities for development, compensation and benefits, or not.

Language, tools and judgement criteria from communities of practice like Sales & Marketing, Supply Chain and Finance become part of the expectations to be a good citizen. The focus on the “customer” within the Sales community may encourage certain relational patterns influenced by employees identifying themselves as suppliers and customers to each other. Supply chain terminology is used when employees position themselves in hierarchies, reward systems, leadership pipelines, succession planning or when rotation programmes are designed and critical competencies are mapped. Finance terminology can be recognized when investments in people (e.g. training) are compared with the returns (ROI), and people

reviews, audits or assessment centres are carried out to analyse high and low performance.



**Figure 24 Climbing the leadership ladder**

AI & positive psychology focus – general speaking – on positive images and on what works well, and how to focus on the positive instead of (only) talking about the negative or the improvements needed, and on the stories and how both the stories and our identity are shaped by the relationships we live in. A whole new language has emerged, so no one feels positioned in a semantic polarity they do not identify with (Grønbaek & Campbell, 2006), and the good citizen furthermore collects his/her vocabulary from new sciences (for example biology, neurology, philosophy), or religion (for example Buddhism). Doors into a new world of language, body-mind, emotions, senses and ancient meditative methodology have been opened and lead to an industry of tools, books, conferences and training of employees, managers, in-house HR practitioners – as there is no longer a strict division between the roles. The urge to find the inner resources, the positive self-images, and the positive language is a response to the intense Value Competition in the market, where exclusion and unethical power demonstration make people sad. Peter Elsass, a Danish professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Copenhagen, decided to explore Buddhist psychology by personally joining Buddhism to understand it from within and be loyal to it. He spent years meditating every day and every month he read texts together with a Buddhist teacher. He also often travelled to Tibet and North India, visiting mentors and capturing their replies to his questions on camera. In his book and DVD he gives others a possibility to join him in his research (Elsass, 2011). One of his

conclusions is that the import of Buddhism methods into a Western therapeutic room transforms “it” to be evaluated according to its success in the creation of mental health, symptom relief and “wellness” (2012, p. 16).

The criteria for being a good citizen have transformed from focus on phronesis to be more about epistemé. The authority to define what is considered good citizenship has transformed from mentors close to the practicing to the CEO, boards and subject matter experts far away from practice. “Turnarounds” hardly existed in ancient Greece in the way we experience them today. Of course employees have always been made redundant and companies have changed core activities, but it is only within the last 25-30 years that the “roll out” has been technocratized. Despite the Millennium shifts, the good citizen is often still hunting for techné, while practicing the aboutness view on the world.

#### **Sarah; + 300 days a.t**

”I feel I’m fire fighting all the time and I am so tired of it”, I take a sip of the glass of red wine. My best friend sits in front of me in her sofa in her tiny apartment in the city. It is Saturday, and we have had this talk over and over again the last ten months. She is a good friend, but I always have this feeling that she does not quite believe me. And maybe she is right; I am dramatizing it, being too sensitive to how people approach me and am too impatient. “Did you contact that coach that my friend recommended you?”, she asked while she looks at me in a caring way.

“Yes, I did. He was okay. He challenged me and asked me to draw a circle surrounding things I can control, and leaving the things I can’t. Obviously, I am too ambitious ... Then, I had to list ten activities which make me happy. You know persons and so .... As homework I have to find ways to mark my territory as statements to the others that I’m in charge of ... and I have to test it, then we are to reflect about it next time”, I replied.

“Oh, that’s a good start”, my friend seemed satisfied with my answer this time. “I don’t know, Megan. I am so tired, and in a meeting today I almost burst into tears, just because someone said to me that I had to take the responsibility for a new customer loyalty index, which the CEO thought we should have. He had met some old friends at a meeting and they had success with this new idea, and now we must have it too. I don’t have more time, and neither do my employees. All these “I-also-want-this-in-my company solutions”. They all have to be implemented within twenty-four hours ..... (I pause) .... I feel like a loser. You know I can’t quit, what will my network say? “She couldn’t handle it”, or something like that. I’m not able to mark my territory and say “Oh no, this is not my responsibility”. I am sure everybody noticed that I was about to cry”.

My friend looked at me with an “oh no here we go again” expression. She said: “Tell me about being a fireman”, now transforming into her coaching mode, which I enjoy ... and hate.

“What do you want to know?” The fire metaphor is used by so many I know, and I do not have the energy to talk about all the episodes. The red wine seems to have an effect on me now. I am more relaxed. It is nice. “It’s someone who has to extinguish the fire!” I reply, irritated, but I quickly regret this. I know she is only trying to help. I continue “... but then there is just another fire somewhere else, and I just do it 24/7. I never reach my targets in this way. My employees

are complaining, and I am sure this is notable in the next employee survey. I never have time to prepare the presentations to my boss, and it is always handed in the last minute. People ask me if I am stressed, but I am definitely not. But you see, being about to cry all the time is not really convincing them, is it?" I take another sip of the red wine. I know that I will have terrible headache tomorrow after just two glasses, but who cares.

My friend now tells me about a fireman she knows, and something about how he works inside a burning house. Something about oxygen tanks and his personal security. I don't really listen to her. I am thinking about what I should do next. My boss does not care. HR is ridiculous and I can't trust them – just take the example of the woman who tried to apply for a new job without telling her boss. She was isolated, and sacked because of disloyalty. I have doubts in a way I have never tried before. I don't like it at all. Everybody tries to give me alternative metaphors so the choice seems easier for me. If it were so easy, I would already have done it. Should I stay or should I go. I don't know.

The doubt, usually helping me to better results, has become my enemy, and I am so tired!

## 5. Social phenomena

We have so far explored examples of how different curricula set the norm for good citizenship over time. However, how we embrace the world today is very different compared to life at the Millennium. It is not so simple to choose the right curriculum anymore, and it is not enough to identify with membership of only one community of practice. Let me give you some examples of the many kinds of citizenship co-existing in a company:

In an international company where I worked, the praxis of expatriating employees into new markets was stopped. It was too expensive and the success rate was debatable. The assumption that a Scandinavian thirty-year employee could teach Chinese employees knowledge (epistemé) and techniques was replaced with a local attention on best practice (phronesis). It affected our idea of a homogeneous, triangle organization with everybody oriented toward similar procedures at each level. And towards similar curriculum.

Another example is how the demographic pyramid varies by geographical region. In Northern Europe and North America it looks as though a need for skilled labour will arise in a few years. In Asia, Latin America and South America the shape leads us to assume that an even tougher competition for the skilled labour than only ten years ago will come. Cartesian companies are right now trying to figure out how to relate this to the whole idea of one international approach from the company, and the idea of one top-down controlling mechanism.

A third example of the difficulties of living in the world with only one curriculum, is the number of jobs each person has in their lifetime today, compared with previous generations. The traditional single lifetime employment seems to be over. The portfolio worker expects continuous self-development and motivational challenges for many reasons; because this is important for them in their own journey – their own curriculum; because it will increase the employee value proposition. It comes up during job interviews where the added value from and for employer and employee is now negotiated, “Taylor” data, like cost and productivity, are no longer the only topics discussed.



A fourth example of several curricula in action is the possibilities provided by a virtual infrastructure, connecting people across time zones so that they are instantly alerted 24/7 via smartphones, wherever they are. They no longer wait days for a response, or are dependent on access to a mailbox at the computer in the office. It is they who must disconnect by choosing to go off-line, while messages still arrive and wait. This may force you to stay inside your mailbox the first days after returning from a holiday, for example, or to decide to be online during the holiday to keep the flow. I had a colleague who four hours after she gave birth to her daughter, texted her employees to instruct them in taking over as she had to go off-line for a week or two.

This timeless scheduling is challenging our traditional way of dividing time into one curriculum of work and spare time – additional challenges being different public holidays, different seasons, and different local events. The intimacies of relationships are thereby affected (see concrete examples in Sherry Turkle's book from 2011: *"Alone together. Why we expect more from technology and less from each other"*).

In the past these were mostly considered separate; *work time* – you are paid by the company and the manager is in control; and *spare time* – you use and enjoy the earnings and you are in control. This challenges the whole concept of leadership (or one way of relating to what am I expected to do, if I am considered a good citizen) so identity and feeling at home is also being questioned, because who are you if you cannot present yourself by referring to your work title? Because you chose to have several different employers throughout your life time, or because you lost your role during the turnaround, and are now off-line 24/7?

A fifth example challenging the idea of one curriculum is the notion of all practices today being intertwined, and therefore also the curricula. Let us take a look at a company on a randomly chosen day (this is inspired from and added to the short description from Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010, p. 29):

The manager lives in North America, the employee in South Africa – they meet face-to-face twice a year, the rest of the relationship is via phone, conference calls, e-mail, video or Internet calls so they depend on stable IT systems as a permanent third party. Therefore they frequently call the IT support helpdesk in Chennai, India. When employees around the globe share their desktop with the IT support person he can easily fix the issues. This morning he helped a Chinese colleague working within

sales. She interacts with individual customers like in the good old days; however, the customer is no longer orienting him/herself in relation to clusters of country of origin, age, gender etc., but to subcultures or megatrends moving around the world. At the same time the sales woman is expected also to interact with the online community and social media of global users of the company's products. Some of the customers are relating to her in her role as sales manager, others as if she was responsible for all the actions and ethics of the company. She interacts with customers through the sharing of values. The recruitment capability based in the Netherlands is outsourced to a company with "sourcing" as core competence and which works entirely for this company we are visiting today. They are looking for shared values when they invite potential candidates to an interview, paying attention to the candidate's activity on social media where values and beliefs on limited spaces like Facebook and Twitter are expressed, as well as looking at the traditional application and CV. The recruiter is measured on the number of potential candidates he connects to – using English as the common language. There are different forms of English (e.g. British, American, Indian) with different kind of accents or constructions from another languages (e.g. Chinglish, Czenglish, Franglais) with different ways of highlighting meaning. This is something the Russian engineer experiences every day as he is expected to design products which the company sells to different countries' power standards, and in addition to speaking in English he has to distinguish between quite different metrics globally in order to be certain that the power will not destroy the products. Clear metrics do not exist for the Danish financial controller who can never be certain whether the cash flow she is calculating, coheres with the rolling forecast she did one month ago, and she has to do again today. Exchange rates between countries differ according to world economics, and what was predicted profit yesterday can be a deficit today. Financial control challenges are experienced in Brazil where the supply chain manager is expected to manage storage facilities in Australia and the time zone difference, which sets him and his colleague apart, makes this inconvenient. They have to agree the date for creating the report or else the variation between the actual stock number and the number in the warehouse system is too large. Today he is expected to join a conference call about the variations, twenty people will be on the line simultaneously and it will last for 1.5 hours. Yes, a long meeting in a hectic working environment, but it is not a problem; he can interact with his employees via Communicator (instant messaging) during the meeting, adapting their activities in

relation to what is decided (instructed) in the meeting. At the other end of the Communicator is Sandra following her manager's messages. She is single, and the company has replaced the need her parent's generation had for a family. She is actually not supposed to use the time on Communicator today, as the local team are gathered in a cottage for two days practicing team building. But it is okay; she informed the others about this beforehand, and everybody understood her choice. She has three conversations open right now. The other one is with the manager in North America. He has an interesting vacancy, for which Sandra – off the record – is in negotiation. The third one is via Facebook with one of her "friends".

Zooming out from the individual, and the companies, and into the layer of society we notice that political leaders have begun quite different conversations from those of ten years ago. Examples of good citizenship come up in conversations on sustainability: if we continue to pursue the lifestyle of what we think is good citizenship today we will run out of the resources on earth needed to do so, resulting in oil, water, food crisis problems along with the increasing population. Aside from financial considerations, the way we have constructed our present understanding about what it means to generally be a good citizen is changing so that judgement is becoming more focussed on what footprint we are going to leave for future generations, and how we transform our priority to an economy based on criteria other than GDP growth.

Zooming back into the layers of companies, some companies – either because they share these worries for the future, or because they see this as a branding opportunity (and therefore more EBIT) – are in this decade also transforming how they interact in the world, so for example their products are sustainable – fulfilling the need of the human, but also solving important obligations in society. New types of companies appear: The socioeconomic companies as a response to sustainable discussions.

Zooming further in, all of this affects the norms of good citizenship and the practices we perform. There are too many views, too much information, too many dimensions to relate to and it seems meaningless to search for only one, all encompassing viewpoint. A new way of relating to good citizenship is accepting the premise that we are all interacting from a (stand)point and our views are either on worlds we feel separated from, or from within one of the worlds, where we are aware that our thinking and being are related to the surroundings.

However, there are so many diffuse and complex expressions floating and surrounding us, and if we search for the best, certain, aboutness view, we might forget to acknowledge our own viewpoint, and explore it and learn to know it. This would enable us to acknowledge the different viewpoints, instead of only aboutness judging other's expression or blaming ourselves. This entails exploring from where in the world I am thinking and acting (or *performing* as we shall learn later), so I can meet you in a way that takes our different (stand)points into account, so we both are enriched. It entails acknowledging that I cannot explore my own (stand)point alone and separately; I do it as I move around in the territory and meet otherness. Listening to your ideas and what you notice from your (stand)point gives me an idea of where I am – in relation to you, and to your ideas. I hear your descriptions of the territory around you as well as the way you portray it as words and examples from lived life – for example, “a turnaround” or “having a father suffering from several strokes”. This is how I judge how close or distant our embodied conversations are from each other.

In this way we drop the assumption that it is possible to identify *one way* of being (a good citizen, a good leader, a good father) which fits into everybody's view and assume instead that it is enough just to have insights (epistemé) about a topic (e.g. leadership) to claim the rights to power.

Let us illustrate this with a painting as example, and you answering some questions. Please take a look at this painting by Thomas Kluge (1996):

Placeholder

Figure 25 A portrait

1. What do you pay attention to in the painting?
2. Do you recognize her? Do you know her?
3. What, do you think, does it mean to be this person?
4. What, do you think, she thinks she is?
5. Are you and her sharing a (stand)point? (Which similarities, which differences are there?)
6. Are there some places, do you think, where she feels "insiderness"? What about "outsiderness"?
7. Do you think she judges some places safer than others?
8. How do you think she experiences her day? Is it pressured, rushed and speedy, or boringly slow and endless?
9. What, do you think, is her experience in relating to others? (Aboutness or from within?)
10. Is there a mood/tone attached to this?
11. What drives her? Where is she moving and orienting in the territory? What does she find meaningful?
12. What background utterances are being expressed which supports her oral descriptions (e.g. how she is performing the feeling "distant")?
13. How do these expressions affect you (as impressions)?
14. What do your imagined answers tell you about own (stand)point in relation to the person in the picture?
15. If you were to meet her in real life, which actions would you use to explore further?
16. If you chose *questions* as action, what would you ask her about?
17. How, do you think, would she meet your questions (create meaning)?
18. What would she pay attention to (for example, your language, discourse, your reason for asking, your style)?

19. Returning to the first question: What made you pay attention to the point, you referred to before, and which made you answer the other questions like you did?
20. How will you name the embodied narrative you constructed via questions 1-19?
21. How is this kind of narrative meaningful for you? In what way?
22. Is the meaningfulness, you just pointed at, meaningful for you?

*The questions 1-12 are inspired by Finley (2011, p. 230).*

In the example above, we had enough time to notice, to reflect, and to articulate the answers while we closely observed the painting. If we met the person portrayed in the painting we would not be able to observe at such close proximity, and if we were, it would only be for some seconds.

The painting portrays Queen Margrethe II of the Kingdom of Denmark (the Danish Realm which comprises Denmark and the two self-governing countries, The Faroe islands and Greenland). When Thomas Kluge first revealed the painting to the public, there were many reactions, each relating to personal (stand)points and individual ways of being (seen) in the world, in the light of the painting. Elderly women complained that Thomas Kluge had violated the beautiful image (they had of the Queen) by showing her wrinkles and the one eye slightly squinted. Others closer to her paid attention to her charisma, and yet others, familiar with Thomas Kluge's style, noticed the effect of the background in relation to other portraits he had made, compared with other paintings with similar black backgrounds.

The painting is both provocative and unique, both beautiful and ugly depending on the viewer's judgement, and even if one is relating to the painting as ugly, it will be possible for some to find beauty in the picture. Your judgement is relating to other and otherness surrounding you, regardless whether it is a piece of canvas with paint and a surrounding wood frame, or a living person. Your relationship to the painting creates feelings of "something" of the third realm, which is invisible, which can neither be described in this way nor in that way, but described in metaphors, in feelings, or in the example of the elderly women; in complaint to the painter. In other words; it is the otherness, which appears when you relate to the painting (your standing point), which calls for your response. It is not the painting doing anything to you or forcing you to react in a particularly way. The dialogical approach is happening all the time; we cannot pass the painting without relating to it, and if we decide we do not want to

relate to it, or do not notice it at all, this is also a way of relating. Others around us would offer other descriptions, because they do not share our (stand)point, or have not stayed here as long as we have. Therefore to talk about a consensus curriculum, a consensus “problem”, a consensus “solution” or how a certain group of people would describe the painting like this, is meaningless. It is impossible. The meaning is always created by the individual.

Let us turn back to the painting of the Queen and notice its expression. The lighting, the contrast, which for the elderly woman highlights her wrinkles. We now also pay attention to what expression, composition, structure and effects are used in the painting. We can assume someone from a particular (stand)point will respond to whether it is good citizenship to portray a head of state in this way. We can allow ourselves to explore the expressions without having to agree in a consensus co-constructed with others, which many strive for in a Cartesian company turnaround situation.

The Dane, Torben Sangild, PhD, postdoc at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at University of Copenhagen, researched how we meet art, and the common belief that art is a medium to express feelings to others (one is sender, the other is receiver), which makes you able to “see” what the artists felt through the art (Sangild, 2009). Sangild says that the premise make us buy biographies of artists more than ever, because we want to find out the story behind it all, and how the art really is supposed to be interpreted. The Cartesian premise encourages us not to trust our senses and promotes the understanding that there must be a right, objective, hidden truth *about* the art, which we should search for. However, Sangild’s point is that even computers can create music and robots can paint in a way that the outcome seems to express a voice from a tortured soul (Sangild, 2009, p. 7), like “the Scream” (see description page 9). In his opinion the actual expression of the art disappears, because we are preoccupied with our own response, and whether it is right or wrong, and the artist’s thoughts and feelings (Sangild, 2009, p. 9).

Sangild calls it “objective sensibility” (2009, p. 214) which does not refer to Cartesian objectivity, but rather to the expressions of moving objects, which we meet in the world. They are expressing something to us – even if these objects are dead and as such have no purpose or message to communicate. Even a stone has an expression,

which I notice when I slip on it. What is important to Sangild is that art also has such an expression. It is not (only) negotiated in the relationship we have with it.

In other words, aesthetic experience, which we and Dewey named “reflective thinking” at page 59, requires more of us, in a relationship with art or any other non-organic object – e.g. social phenomenon – than just being able to describe it. Zooming into the company, the in-house HR practitioners, or any other people working relationally, are exploring the interactions as much more than a conversation between partners. There is much more to it than only being able to describe the difficulties in relation to for example the new strategy, or the different views on it. It is much more than recording “like, dislike” on the inner smiley sheet. The witness (by some named *relational*) approach wishes more than just being able to view the art, including talking *about* it, and judging it. The approach will search for moments in which we are giving the possibility to notice and to distinguish the many expressions and responses to, for example. the turnaround from all kinds of positions in the space we (with different intensity, directions, speed) are moving in. The curiosity of the “who” is therefore important in order to judge from which position they speak, which community of practice they belong to, which kind of membership they possess, what strikes them and to which expressions call on varieties of responses and so on.

Sangild (2009, p. 165) encourages us to distinguish between the *experiencing* of art and experience of the art. We are experiencing the turnaround, where the experience changes the experiencing subject (the person doing the experiencing), who becomes a different person. Next time you see a painting, a photo, or actually meet Queen Margrethe II, you will most likely have an alternative experience – looking for wrinkles or her eye, perhaps? An experience with the art is, according to Sangild, not something you achieve after only a few moments; you experience new aspects of its expression as your relationship with it evolves. He compares this with music where we do not all notice the complicated rhythmic shifts immediately, but some do, because of their training. If something in the music makes us relate to it in a certain way, we can look into the music to explore how the expressions are created or unfold. In other words the music and the painting can express fear and anxiety without you sensing these utterances or expressions (for example, see Munch’s “The Scream”).



Imagine you meet the elderly women referred to earlier who viewed the painting and you notice how they are upset. Soon the atmosphere around becomes affected, you begin to feel this yourself. If you feel in this way, the *phenomena* they are responding to is also touching you. The theme could be “age”, “ethics”, “death”, though you would probably not think about or discuss this together. The *phenomenon* is calling out for your response. You might not see it, or feel it, but the way the elderly women and you are responding can be noticed by others as a shift in mood and therefore in your movements and behaviours. Aesthetic experience, or reflecting thinking, allows another relationship between you and the *phenomenon* as you now recognize it, and notice the fragments of their responses, pointing in the direction of particular elements of the *phenomenon’s* expressions. Now, you can either join their conversations and contribute to the atmosphere, or you can distance yourself from it, try to avoid it, or get the best out of the situation where the *phenomena* is floating, has been floating, or you expect it to be floating soon.

Our Cartesian friend would most likely read the section above while shaking his head. “This is too weird, Birgitte”. Well, try to read it again, but this time replace all the words in italics with the word music, and then let me know what you think.

Once I heard Sangild on radio (Sangild, 2010) describing expressions and impressions by referring to a very hot chilli con carne meal. Instead of focusing on the motives of the chef or your sufferings during and after the meal, or your narratives about the episode and so on, his attention is on the meal, and on the chilli. In this particular moment it is the number and sort of chilli in the dish you are responding to. An alternative perspective is that the chilli is doing something to you and your relationship to your ideas of norms of a good meal, which you cannot control or wish for, regardless how many procedures you follow, or action plans you prepare. It happens, because you are in a situation where chilli is part of the dish you enjoy.

Maybe being in such a situation calls upon you to respond in a way which is recognized as anger, perhaps because the idea of “how to sit in a nice way and eat” is judged. If your idea of “how to sit in a nice way and eat” includes the bodily reaction to chilli, it is likely you would not respond with anger. As you do not notice the connection between these you might choose to target your anger at the chef, the restaurant, or yourself for choosing a too hot a dish.

In either way you are responding by doing emotions, you are not feeling them (Gergen, 2009a, p. 102 & Gergen, 2009b, p. 99). In contrast to our Cartesian friend who has a dualistic understanding of body and mind, we are now uniting the thinking and the sensations in the body to a whole. Motion and Emotion are united. The emotional doings are different according to which relationship we are looking at. For example I show “anger” quite differently towards someone I know very well than to someone I have just met.

Try to think about the different ways you show (or perform) “anger”, and whether this relates to the kind of relationship you are within. You might notice that “anger” shows itself in episodes where the situation calls upon a dominant narrative (often of dualistic relationships which most people in Western Culture give preference to). Maybe you have another kind of relationship with “anger” and it is part of your preferred narrative? You might also notice how the anger traces a profile of “it’s rising and falling strength as it is contoured in time” (Stern, 2010, p. 21). “Anger” is transient but extends for some moments before it vanishes, and “anger” is a trace of the phenomenon, which calls out for your response.

According to Gergen (2009a), it takes enormous cultural education to perform an emotion. He compares it with actors performing a role at the theatre. Some will deliver a great performance, others poor, when we judge the actor and the role he is supposed to perform for us. Gergen (2009a, p. 103) reminds us that just one expression, such as “a limp wrist”, may disqualify the performance, and when an emotion is performed poorly we may doubt its existence. And so we are back at the expressions – the tiny elements touching us, regardless whether we decide to be touched or not, which we tend to overlook when we notice our response as an emotion and something between us in the relationship.

Zooming out, humans, just like ants and other living organisms, are responding to expressions visible and invisible when they encounter “things” along the road. We make sense of the expressions we experience and judge our next step accordingly. Unlike the ant, for humans the moment of the actual encounter is more complex, as people can relive the encounter later or imagine that it will take place in the future.

When we look carefully, we see how the shape of the phenomena can be noticed with help from the responses from the ants or yourself. Your responses are traces left

behind. If you think about the sea, and anger as the wave, the structure of the shoreline and the seabed is determined by the waves intensity and duration, and in turn they shape the waves' intensity and duration. The beach is responding, adapting, responding, adapting. But you can see that the phenomenon (e.g. the tsunami) has been there or is there, by noticing the height and intensity of the waves and the shape of the beach. You might also notice other traces of the phenomena: the tree, which is alive, is marked by its response, struggling and adapting to keep alive in the changed environment. The houses, the road, the cars, which are not alive, are affected too, and you can see how they are marked. However, as they are not alive, they are not adapting to anything; they will keep their shape until someone rebuilds them. Harlene Anderson describes (2012, p. 7):

*“From this perspective [living] systems are always in the process of change; their change is random, unpredictable, discontinuous, and always leads to higher level of complexity”.*

In other words there is no such thing as a fixed system which we can change. It is already constantly changing, responding to the phenomena calling out for its response. In this thesis we will not create a distinction between different kinds of phenomena; we will only take into consideration social phenomena – those influencing and being influenced by an individual's responses to others and otherness in the surroundings, in a turnaround situation with instant change, and by the contrast in the way we experience the world.

However, you may wonder how, if we do not live by a fixed Cartesian perspective and we are not sharing a similar (stand)point, can we talk about social phenomena?

One way of describing “it” through the third realm is to think of us, the other and otherness surrounding us, as floating objects, performances and social phenomena. If you think back to the image on page 23 (the eco-system), imagine you are about to learn how to dive under the water. By conceptualising aboutness you would anticipate what you could meet below the water surface. Then you will dive and after a while come up again and analyse what you did well, and what went wrong. In order to make sense of it all, you would separate the experience from what is actually floating around below and search for fixed objects, which can explain, for example, why you did not succeed in reaching your target fifty metres lower. This leads your inner dialogue to an investigation of “why”, “how”, “what”, “when” and “who” are affecting

your emotional state, making you like or dislike diving. You are imagining a story, and puzzle the pieces together so they make sense to you. Then you look for further data to confirm the imagined world. The direction of your next step targets the removal of bad “things” or attempts to heal the cause, so bad effects are removed.

This way of meeting and being in (separate to) the world allows you to notice and experience a particular type of other and otherness – objects and phenomena; like, for example, a dangerous fish, or Cartesian Anxiety, for example. “what if I fail?” The premise is that the world as such is empty and you are responsible for constructing the meaning, or you can be made responsible for the meaning others construct about your actions. You therefore try to construct the narrative in a way that makes the meaning meaningful: “Someone wants me to fail” or “I am to blame that I feel this way”. To compensate you choose to be active so when you act you can show others, and indeed yourself, that you are in control, or are striving to be, and are worth the pay you earn and the time others use watching you. Then, others cannot blame you for not at least trying to perform agency.

When performing witness – looking at it from first person perspective - my attention is on what my whole body senses in the water. It is in the water as I move around and other objects and otherness move around as well. We have sizes, shapes and forms throughout many variations of perspectives. I am paying attention to what I am doing and how I am doing it, slightly altering my movements if, for example, it results in too much disturbed silt so I cannot see, or if my movements are affecting others’ movements. I am slowing down, or speeding up. I am searching the space and if I notice how some of the objects prevent me doing what I intended, I would need to try other ways around it.

My senses direct me to what I need to pay attention to; which objects and otherness I notice. It is not the other way around – that I decide what to pay attention to. When I reflect, the image I am analysing does not represent the world I have experienced. I am rather using reflection to sharpen the impressions (via my senses) of the world I am already in (a Merleau-Ponty point described by Thøgersen, 2010, p. 24). Maybe you have noticed this too, when you walk in the city, and suddenly the scent of freshly baked bread reaches your smell receptors. Then you look around ... and yes, there is a bakery just around the corner!

Back in the water I may notice another person (but with aboutness view) enter the water. I will not only notice the person, but also the otherness surrounding him; for example, the Cartesian anxiety. He is responding, as the social phenomenon touches him and calls out for his response. The movements he is making are affecting the surroundings, pushing some of the stones, or creating small waves, affecting the small fish around him.

The waves are affecting the water, where I am, too. Regardless whether I meet the other person from within or from about, the Cartesian anxiety has now become part of my experience of the world as well. In other words I can notice and experience the social phenomena in the eco-system regardless of whether I have any *reason* to be anxious myself, or whether I have constructed a narrative of anxiety).

The social phenomena “anxiety” is manifesting itself through the other person’s responses. My attention is both on any expression he might make that I can identify as anxiety, and on how the person is in the world. How does he experience the world, down here, below the waterline, which the other person might judge as dangerous? How far away or how close am I to him? What may the world be like for him if it could be possible for us both to see other social phenomena coming into being?

The easy (aboutness) answer to these questions would be that the other person should move into a safer place, or just kill whatever frightens him. From within we are instead reflecting on the expressions we meet below the waterline. We explore them, and sharpen our senses so we know how to tune into the situation (how to approach him), so the outcome of our meeting is not dangerous or raising the level of anxiety.

If I do nothing, either because I too have aboutness view on the other person or because I choose not to look for the social phenomena, I can easily be infected by the waves of anxiety, as well, and then I probably am more interested in getting away as fast as possible. A worse scenario would be that I only pay attention to myself, move away, not noticing that Cartesian Anxiety has touched the other person. I would carry on with my actions, decisions, own feelings and intentions, maybe trying to figure out why others do not just do the same, or if I had the power, reprimanding my employees for not being so bright and optimistic about life as I am.

But maybe I am struck by something I sense for which I have no name yet. Maybe I am moving a bit closer to the person in order to better observe what it is that s/he noticed, or maybe I start to ask questions, or answer the ones I hear. Again we can think of it as my movements, my performances, which create small waves affecting my surroundings. My actions are not neutral, not even an innocent question is so.

The small pressure waves, from the other person, and from me, are not the only pressure waves down in the water. There is always a stream of movement, like an ocean current. We notice them in the air, but also in the water, where rivers of sea water meet and effect each other's direction and flow (e.g. The Gulf Stream). We can think of the pendulum swinging as movements affecting the turnaround situation we are within, regardless of whether our company has to experience turnaround or not. Companies around us are experiencing tsunami-like changes and it will affect us, even if we are far away from the epicentre, with no reason to be concerned about cash flow. The phenomenon touches the banks, journalists, politicians, people in the bank, the employee pay rate, consumer rates ... and your household cash-flow. I cannot see the ocean current, but I can judge it is there, because of how objects in it are responding in relation to it.

From this premise, viewing and experiencing from within, while we, others and otherness surrounding us are moving, the body becomes central to us. It is through our lived experiences sensed via our body that we notice the expressions and the movements surrounding us, and how they transform from one kind of state to another; for example, the rise and fall of anger.

Leaving the ocean and the divers, let us explore an example of social phenomena in an office within a turnaround company. After a round of layoffs, a colleague is the only one left in the open office. Her new manager has his own office, and walks by every day, because the open office leads into the room where the coffee machine is. In the morning the manager says "good morning", and in the afternoon, he wishes her "a nice evening". They do not have any further interactions during the day, but are busy doing what they are supposed to do. Once I asked him whether he had considered paying special attention to the employee. He responded, surprised: "Why, she seems happy, and hasn't said anything". The clear Cartesian criteria were fulfilled and the conclusion was just as clear: "She is okay, don't worry", and the premise that he does

not have to change, because others do, might be operating in the background because before the turnaround announcement he did not interact any more than these morning and afternoon greetings.

If we zoom into the employee, her way of performing the vitality forms, which we explore in the next chapter, changed after the turnaround. Here are some examples of responses:

- Time of arrival – she arrived later every day, explaining there had been traffic congestion, or her children were being lazy, or the car had problems, etc., if anyone asked, but usually no one did
- Increased number of sick days
- Almost no actions in meetings – having usually interacted before
- No participation in social gatherings – having been the one organizing events previously
- Not often able to meet deadlines – she used to involve others in the prioritization, now she never did
- When, eventually, someone asked her, how she was doing, and she liked the person, she would go into lengthy, detailed descriptions

The data, her responses, could be named differently and you could argue, that I have only selected Cartesian criteria – and that we right now are only looking *at* her.

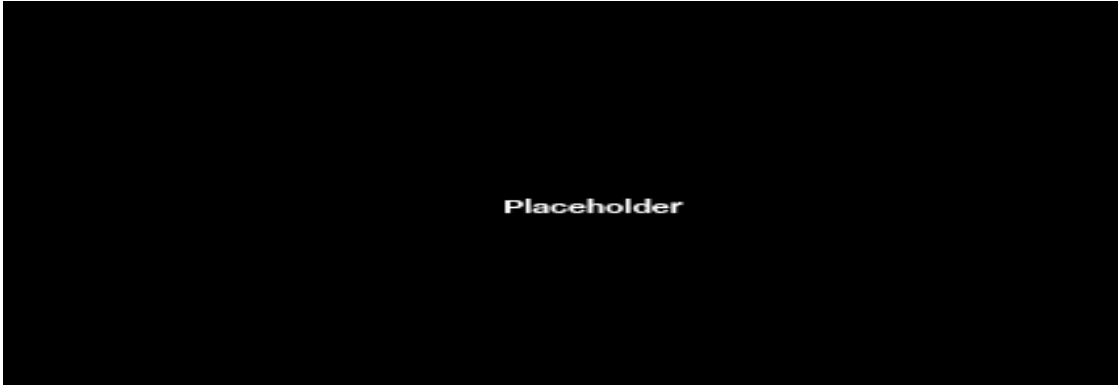
One day I asked her about how it feels working in her role, being in her shoes right now? Spontaneously, she responded: “Lonely!” It seemed as if she was surprised or ashamed to say it out loud, and I noticed how intensely she awaited my response. Would I laugh, would I rationalize her feelings to be either her own fault, or a misjudgement? She instantly raised her shoulders and her look sharpened when I replied: “yes, I thought it would be”. For a moment she just looked at me ... then she described how she noticed mostly the silence in the room now, worst in the morning, in contrast with her busy, noisy morning with children, traffic and so on. She was also struck by the many emails in her mailbox addressed to the recipient who had been laid off. “People are polite; they know I am not responsible. But the tone changes when they send me a reminder the second and third time. Then it is suddenly my problem.” We reflected to find a name for the lived experience, the phenomenon, as it felt like from her (stand)point. The name was “aloneness”. Later she said she was happy to finally be able to externalize it all into a phenomenon, as she had used hours thinking she was to blame, since no one seemed to care. She spontaneously connected her eagerness to perform anti-loneliness – which meant *talking* – with

others who could be strangers or even those she was not especially fond of. She had noticed responses from the others as perhaps trying to avoid her, without being able to story this as meaningful: “they are just as busy as I am”. She became able to conclude that it made sense to focus on other conversational partners, and indeed her own (well)being in the room instead.

She did not like the word “phenomena”, because the word had several meanings in her language - so we called *it* “Mr Loneliness” instead (despite my critique of relating to the phenomenon as a subject). Mr Loneliness existed even though he was invisible for her colleagues and it helped her to describe her colleagues differently: rather than say they did not care, she said they had not noticed. Of course she would also find positive aspects of the relationship with “Mr Loneliness”. For example, she loved to go, once a year, on a weekend retreat alone. The difference was that she had chosen, and was in control of, when she wished to interact with “Mr Loneliness”. She was not in control now. She had not asked for him to come. He had appeared in the room unannounced. It was the layoff situation – changing the actual human interior of the room – which manifested the shape of “Mr Loneliness” calling out for her response, as it touched her, and opened a dialogue within her about, for example, colleague citizenship, the good life, etc.

For the Cartesian manager the space around him and her is only furnished by fixed elements. They have as such no function for his choice of “Good morning”, or his self-image as a friendly and appreciative person. Even the colleagues from other departments, who walk the same path to the coffee machine, and who notice her changed performance, will judge in relation to whether they meet the room as empty or with social phenomena in it. In this story many only saw an empty room, and stories emerged about her: “She talks very much, so we better try to find another way to the coffee machine.” “This is a side she has never shown before.” “Well, she might have been nuts all the time, we have just not been able to see it, because the others were covering for her. Now, when the others are gone, it’s become very clear.”

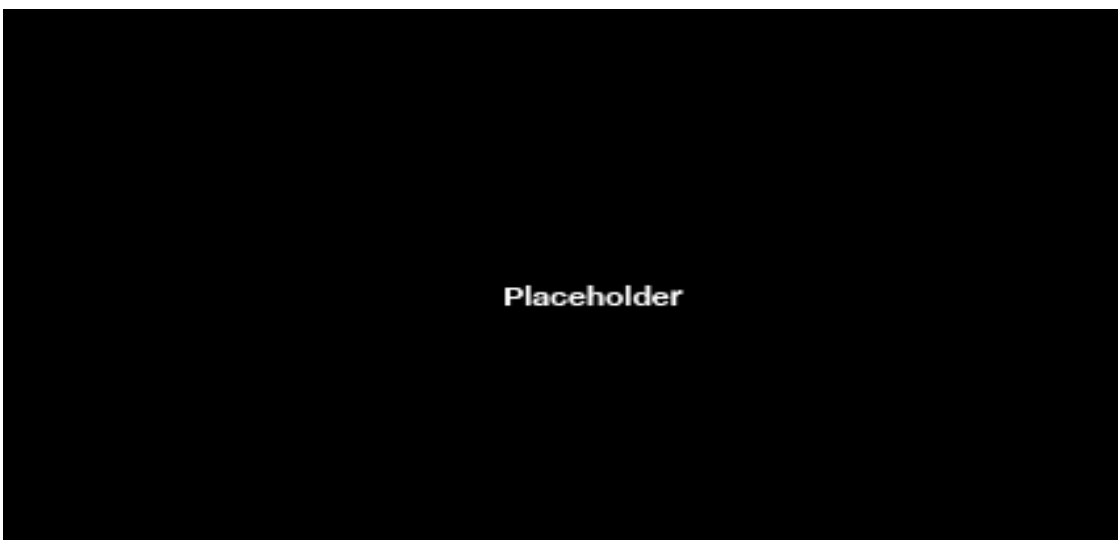




**Figure 26 The aboutness room**  
*only consists of the persons, and the furniture in it*

The aboutness room is empty. What happens in the room is either his or her responsibility. It is as if there is an invisible rope between the two, and when the rope gets knotty, we blame one person at either end for the messiness.

Now, let us explore the situation again, including the phenomena she pointed out. This time we are interested in the pivotal points (fixed points about which something turns, which we describe further on page 117), which have changed: her former colleagues, the abandoned furniture, computers and the increased number of e-mails in her mailbox. These are expressions, which call for a response. The phenomena “loneliness” manifest itself through her responses. She feels lonely. It is a sad loneliness, which is uninvited and unwelcomed. She is over-sourced by the phenomena loneliness, which is coloured grey below.



**Figure 27 The withness room**  
*includes social phenomena*

Depending on her relationship with Mr Loneliness she can either feel lonely or feel isolated.

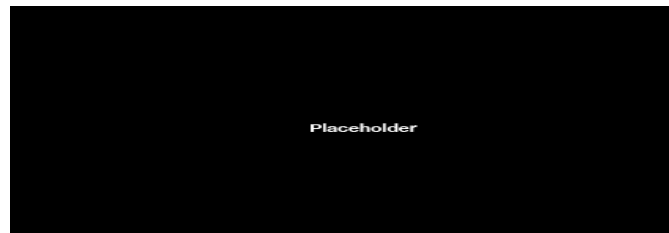


Figure 28 Examples of continua of responses to the social phenomena

The longer she is touched by the phenomena, the more the anxiety is likely to transform into a fear of being isolated. As her senses are sharpened towards this they sense data of all kinds to assess (judgement) whether she is experiencing her worst nightmare. Her assessment concluded a narrative, re-confirmed by the senses, of indeed being excluded from participating in the rooms where the others are. As time goes by her movements are likely to take (permanent) shape of the spaces where the phenomenon is integrated. Then, you might see and recognize traces of the phenomenon in her.

### 5.1 A reversed logic – judging from within

Including phenomenon into one's praxis is like thinking with a reversed logic. I often think of it as the negative of a photographic image (from the time before the digital camera). The negatives allow you to notice "things" you would not normally pay attention to.

Having this reversed logic, the judgement from within, as a background frame of reference while studying the previous story we would conclude that everybody is responsible to interact. The manager has the legitimate right to change the pivotal points, or ensure that the employees do not have to fight for their right to belong. Colleagues are responsible for making sure she is not isolated. There are no invisible ropes between us, and we are in relation to each other, though we may not have a common objective, or even like each other. Whether relationships are growing or not is something we cannot entirely control, the environment forms and shapes the relationships. The turnaround has changed the space she is in, but not the colleagues' space so she has no legitimate right to invite herself into their space but

they have. However, she has the legitimate right to invite others into her space and she does constantly. There is joint responsibility to relate to the situation differently which starts with dialogue about which spaces “feel safe or threatened, enclosed or exposed, included or excluded, free or trapped, at ease or stressed” (Finlay, 2011, p. 129). The responses can be different, and everyone acts out their emotion in the particular way they have learnt to, and the feelings differ depending on each person’s (stand)point. It can be felt like e.g. pain, sadness or desperation.

By the way, we may not forget to include the manager’s responses in this example. Which kind of phenomena do you think he is touched by as he approaches the room with the coffee machine?

The consequences of a stroke or a turnaround force us to reorient ourselves in the world, whether it fits into our personal action plan or not. If we keep holding onto an idea about the space as it was before the change, we are likely to bump up against “things” and rationalize in a Cartesian way. Merleau-Ponty used research on phantom pains to criticize the Cartesian explanation (Thøgersen, 2010, p. 34) which is that the person holds onto an image about the missing limb and can, with this in mind, create the phantom pain – the control tower (the brain) keeps sending messages to the missing limb. However, Merleau-Ponty, using reversed logic, described how the body sticks to its habits from before the limb was amputated and the actions are related to the whole body in the space as it was before. When the person meets a well-known situation, s/he will try to act as previously, so now it is a well-known situation *causing* the phantom pain, and the lived experience pain is related to how the world is experienced by this person, communicated by the body. In our turnaround story the well-known situations (how we do meetings, how we interact with the boss, how we negotiate salary etc.), are those we spontaneously relate to as we used to, which call upon phantom pains referring to the “amputation” we (individually and as a company) have experienced.

In the previous story from before, the employee sitting alone in the open office is relating to situations in the ways she used to, and is also very much integrated with the room. Merleau-Ponty describes this further by pointing at the blind man’s stick (Thøgersen, 2010, p. 117). After using it a while, it will no longer be understood as a separate unit (or object) but as an extension of the man’s sense of touch as the blind

man gets sensory contact with the world through the use of the stick. In other words; a turnaround is extra dramatic because the tools employees are used to change, and because employees are moved into new roles where the use of other tools are required, in order to be considered a good citizen. The tools suddenly become separate to the employee and they have to learn how to respond to the new situation with *lived* experience so the bodily sensations learn it too.

Our Cartesian friend would most likely argue “but she only has to get used to it. After a time she will have adapted and it becomes a habit”, following the rules of motivational coaches: “do it twenty-one times, and it become automatic for you”. The underpinning premise is time.

Merleau-Ponty (Thøgersen, 2010, p. 118) would reply that the “getting it” is when the body gets the movement it is trying to perform. My expression for “the habit” is “being able to master the situation”.

To be able to learn new habits means that we are able to respond to a situation, because our body knows which actions are appropriate within it. It means a special kind of attention to preparation, training and readiness.

## 5.2 Phenomenological methods

Now, our Cartesian friend may interrupt us asking, “How can you be certain? Is it not only your subjective interpretation which defines the phenomena?”

The phenomena are accessible only through a phenomenological method (Merleau-Ponty, 1962/2009, p. viii), but there are many books written about it, and I refer to them for detailed descriptions on the different approaches within the discipline “phenomenology”. The purpose of this chapter is not to offer you a clear, Cartesian diagnosis and treatment plan, or to describe in detail a phenomenon as a phenomenologist would do, but to inspire your inner dialogue to think of situations, using different notions such as reversed logic as a frame of reference.

Working with social phenomena is quite different from a Cartesian analysis. Finlay (2011, p. 234-35) points out that themes do not pop up or emerge automatically from the data we have collected, as we would expect they would in a Cartesian approach. She describes:

*“Mostly, meanings have to be searched for as they are implicit and themes have to be painstakingly shaped up in successive iterations”. (p. 234)*

(...)

*“The eventual form taken by themes can vary, but a good thematic analysis is one that does more than string together extracts from the research. Instead, it will seek to identify and synthesize themes that are **coherent**, convincing and grounded in the data (...) Ideally, themes should be more than ordinary category headings: they should also be interesting, written in a lively style or they should **resonate** in some way”. (p. 235)*

We will now visit a different professional who practices phenomenology, and this approach is central for her practice, in the way we described above.

Lenette Sørensen is a physiotherapist. She used to practice from a private clinic where resourceful humans came because they had a short-term problem with for example, a knee. A job change made it possible to relate to her practice and her phronesis in a different and more meaningful way. The pivotal point was a change of the space to working in a hospice, in a palliative team caring for the whole family. The patients in a hospice are seriously sick, but you cannot always conclude this by looking at them. Lenette has to use another method; she palpates.

*L: “It means touching with the hands or examining the tissue with the fingers or hands. Touching” (My translation)*

She searches for the consistency of the tissue’s characteristics, the homogeneity, or it can be a tumour (either growing outwards enabling us to “see” or inwards not possible to “see”) and how her pre-findings (the anamnesis) relate to the inconvenient motion pattern of the palpation, which creates pain. She uses her fingers’ touch to sense how the body responds, how it gets softer and softer, more flexible, warmer.

*L: “If something happens, then I think “this has been a good séance” in the sense that I judge, I have effected something, and that I have improved something, and that I have been allowed to come close to the person. But on the contrary, it does not have to be bad, if nothing happens, because sometimes the other person is just so tense, so we need to meet several times. Again, it can be related to trust... because they have just met me (...) maybe they have never, ever ... I meet several, who never in their entire life, have tried massage, and who do not know what they have said “yes” to. And they use some time to figure out what it is I do, right? And sometimes one needs more time for this ... but then again others are used to massage (...) I know that when they lay down on the bench – the patients or relatives I have now – I know, that a lot of stuff is concerning them. Worries, sorrow, anxiety, and all kinds of negative, sad things. So therefore it is okay, if no physical improvement in the tissue is noticed, and that they keep on being tense, but I have given them a nice experience, and maybe later they say “Wow, this was wonderful, I should have done this much earlier. I think I would do it again”. So you can say*

*something physical comes out of it – you know I will always set something physical in motion by my touching. For them, there will still be some affects after the massage, an after effect, which is positive, but which I never witness”. (My translation)*

Unlike our Cartesian in-house practitioner friend, the physiotherapist is confident that she is making a difference. She does not have to get a clear verbal statement that “it works” from the patients, so her full attention and judgement is focussed on the bodily responses to her touching:

*L: “I notice whether they are motoric troubled. Do they lie on the bench calmly, or are they fumbling around. How are they breathing? Do they talk? Do they talk about this and that, or are they quiet and passive? Sometimes they ask me “how long have you worked as a physiotherapist?” and sometimes they only concentrate on their own little world”. (My translation)*

She looks for the movements all the time, not only at the bench. She does home visits and does a lot of improvisation in order to meet the person where s/he is:

*L: “If I come to a new home [and the door is opened by the relative], then it is often because the patient is too ill to come and open the door. (...) There are so many ways of being welcomed. I only have a miserable little note with the diagnosis [from the doctor], so I never know who I am going to meet. I don’t know whether the patient lies down, is standing, is walking (...) I meet them in many different ways, but it always includes reaching out for my hand [to say hello]. I can tell a lot from that handshake ... and I look the patient in the eyes (...) I notice instantly “this human does not have a lot of forces” (...) Then I notice how the conversation is growing. Some first need to find out who I am, and what a palliative team means (...) I listen to their tone of voice. Do they sound tired, or do they, as the conversation grows, get warmed up, coming alive? Actually they often do.” (My translation)*

Unlike our Cartesian friend her aim is not to reach a consensus negotiating approval from the patient regarding what her palpating tells her, and which phenomenon she judges the patient is responding to. It is her sensitiveness to the situation, which guides and leads her. She is always including the patient in the choice of methods, instead of offering a one-size-fits-all solution and cure.

*“I am the one deciding what I have palpated, and it might be that I say it out loud (...) It is something which happens within me and I am usually quiet while I am palpating. (...) Many of them do not have the body image they once had (...) because they are heavily medicated, with much morphine, which dulls. Then there is a lot who have sensory disturbances – paraesthesia – because of chemotherapy. (...) maybe they have had an enormous loss of weight, 20-30-40 kilos (...) and they are only skin and bones, or someone goes in opposite direction, having had a lot of prednizolon, where they get... kind of barrel-shaped, big moon faces, and in this way they have also gotten a whole other body form (...).”*

*“Those whom I judge have a bit more resources, I build up [e.g. with exercises], while those I sense have too few resources, get the massage. We reach an agreement, and that is fine. Also even though I can see that there could be several things they could do, but if it demands too much of their physical, psychical resources, I rather let it be, so they can use their energy on other things. (My translation)*

As different from our Cartesian in-house practitioner who is expected to come up with designs and methodology solving all kinds of problems despite their varying characteristics, she distinguishes between the phenomena (e.g. the cancer), its state of existence (e.g. how it appears and manifests itself), examples of names (e.g. tumour, breathing), the variety of responses (performances of bodily movement) and the end in view:

*“A tumour lives its own life (...) [and] you can say that it is the tumour which decides (...) or at least it tries to control, and then we try to fight it with radiation and chemo and so on, but in the instances where I meet it, it has taken over the control, has taken power, and is spreading, living its own life. While you can say that as we are talking about muscle infiltration or myosis, or some muscle tissue, which is inhomogeneous, well then I can effect and improve, right? But I can't with a tumour. You cannot do it with your hand. At least I cannot ...”*

*(...) Tumours are different... (...) they are called different names, according to where they sit, which type and so on, but (...) you cannot change it with your hands, you can't.” (My translation)*

### 5.3 Preparing our selves for Chapter 6

Our body, and our movements – vitality forms – suddenly become central when we work with reversed logic and so explore social phenomena from within. Before we look more thoroughly at vitality forms in the next chapter, I would like to show some other examples of reversed logic in action – to prepare us to tune in and have this background frame of reference. We will set it in the foreground for the moment:

Let us start with an example from Fischer (2012, p. 180) who describes a car crash; specifically, a car crashing against a tree. We immediately judge that the tree is the cause of the crash as the driver crashes against it very fast. We might want to cut down the tree thinking that this will prevent future accidents. Now, using reversed logic, we notice a person inside a car driving very fast, which effects the relationship to the territory so there is not enough time to fully orient towards the distance to objects and relate it to the movements in the territory. Therefore there is not enough

time to judge the consequences of each tiny step the driver takes. The tree is moving as well, however upwards, very slowly as it grows. The branches of the tree may also be swaying in the wind, and maybe the season of the year has left the tree bare and almost impossible to distinguish from the dark field behind, when coming along at high speed ... The crash is unavoidable.

Fischer (2012, p. 248) assists us with yet another example of reversed logic from within a company. The phenomenon of “leadership”. Leadership is not in a person, but exists relationally among us, and he would invite the teams he works with to – jointly evaluate their combined ability to create good leadership in relation to the task. Thus it becomes everybody’s responsibility to contribute to make good leadership is possible, and it suddenly allows dialogue about innovation to emerge. Fischer describes how it is important that the team jointly design the questions they wish to use as evaluation. This allows them to get into dialogue about good leadership, gives them time to bodily adjust, and to keep an eye on the here and now to notice if “leadership” is shaped differently. He admits that it is not an easy narrative to work with in Cartesian companies, where the expectation is that leadership is in the person, and must be guided by negative feedback, and the focus is on homeostasis (Fischer, 2012, p. 255), so that following rules is important and we only talk about innovation when instructed, or when someone else has given it some thought.

If the whole team is responsible for leadership, how can we then meet the “employees”? Having been used to naming things and persons and looking for identical matches and patterns: “Here is an employee. And here is one” we attempt to compare them in relation to what they do, how well they do it, and then provide them with best practice. When using reversed logic employees become living beings, and not things or machines we can describe using measurements like height, length, width etc. Secondly we rather wish to describe them by their “place” or “position” and their “complex unfolding interrelationships” (Shotter, 2011a, p. 96). In a turnaround situation we would therefore be much more interested in exploring the differences and their choice of methods and actions according to the space they occupy in the territory, or in their own relationship to phronesis).

This leads us to a reversed logic about knowledge. We used to search for knowledge (epistemé), which can help us “picture” a future state for our self and others. Our








focus is also on how convincingly we can tell about this future state. With the reversed logic, we search for the practical matter of “knowing one’s way about” where to go, what to do next (Shotter, 2011a, p. 96), in other words phronesis. It requires listening skills and sensitivity to the situation which enable us to distinguish whether the person is asking us for help, or simply complaining, struggling with difficulties of orienting or reasoning (see also paragraph 6.5). We can discern whether the person can or is ready to articulate their lived experience, if the phenomenon the person is touched by can be articulated (e.g. abuse). We can notice whether the person has the resources or experience to concentrate and focus on significant moments and relate it to orientation, and whether they have had satisfactory experiences of letting strangers such as an in-house HR practitioner into their lives, or trusting people they know.

## 6. Vitality forms

In this chapter we explore the human bodily movements further as, in the previous chapter, we found it to be central to our notion of social phenomena, and how we relate to our (new) surroundings. However, to include the bodily movements we would need to pay attention to (new) non-Cartesian judgement criteria – from within some of the characteristics of being a human being. Furthermore, though this time in the background, we explore how good citizenship is judged from within.

According to Daniel Stern (2010, p. 3) life shows itself in many different forms of vitality. It seems almost impossible to describe aliveness because by freezing the living in order to describe it, it is no longer living, but deadened. Nevertheless he, just like the physiotherapist, explores the traces of vitality forms when he meets another person, by noticing “their emotions, states of mind, what they are thinking and what they really mean, their authenticity, what they are likely to do next, as well as their health and illness” (Stern, 2010, p. 3). He suggests our movements are very much linked to the expressions of vitality resonating within us (Stern, 2010, p. 4). Stern outlines five different theoretical vitality forms, which together shape an experience of vitality and by this a sense of witness thinking.

-  Movement (chapter 6.1)
-  Space (chapter 6.2)
-  Time (chapter 6.3)
-  Force (chapter 6.4)
-  Intention/directionality (chapter 6.5)

Subtitles in 6.1 are based on Bateson’s description of how all biological systems (organisms and social or ecological organizations of organisms are capable of adaptive change (2000, p. 273). The subtitles in 6.2–6.5 are traces and expressions of the deep listening I did in conversation with my team members and my inner dialogue (see appendix 9.6.3, page 261 for further descriptions).

The vitality forms exist simultaneously and we can use our notion of them when we explore the social phenomena’s grip in us. People are performing the vitality forms while living. The form can be robust if they are, for example in an environment where less adaptation is needed, when the human is orienting from within – “grounded” as it may be called in everyday aboutness language, or fragile if, for example, too many shifts happen or if the person is not aware of their own (stand)point. We can use the

notion of identifying the pivotal points locking the motion pattern in “pressure waves” causing pain, and so we can explore the conditions shaping environments with other motion patterns.

Stern does not describe the vitality forms in detail, but we will try to explore them further in the following. However, it is impossible to separate the vitality forms in the way we are going to do next; therefore you might disagree with me on how I “ordered” the examples. Life is complex, and you are right to judge if the traces of each vitality form are present in every example we are going to explore.

## 6.1 Movement

Living systems are, unlike mechanical systems, moving. Well a car moves, all right, but only if you start it or forces around it push or pull it. According to Stern (2010, p. 19), movement is life’s most primitive and fundamental experience. When movement happens fast, we conclude “a change” by comparing the moving object in relation to its (new) environment, or by comparing the object’s expressions from yesterday with those of today.

We often get the impression the movement has a permanent structure (aboutness, fixed view) but when we explore the movement, for example, in slow motion (see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0KLzG6jLMs>), we notice how the movement leaves a kind of trace behind, which forms and shapes the structure of the movement, and vice versa. The trace and structure can be so deep or robust it is almost impossible for the movement to change its character. The movement is locked, and now the robustness is both shaping and re-shaping the movement (Fischer, 2012, p. 140). In a company turnaround where instant change of movement is required, the slowness of the movement shifting process is sometimes interpreted as resistance to following the new leadership. The assumed resistance is often responded to with pressure or threats. Fischer (2012, p. 141) uses the water swirl as an example to show us how vitality forms cannot change form and structure, just because you instruct them. He uses the name “attractors”, which we name “pivotal points” in this thesis, to describe the elements locking the movement in its form:

*“A swirl in the water will not disappear and does not resist dissolving itself. It just cannot do otherwise under the conditions prevailing. Its resistance is a form of movement under certain conditions. Therefore a changing of the conditions can only change it. Maybe we can approach the changes in the same way. Maybe we should change some conditions*

*preventing the attractor in changing the shape. The point is general; changes will not happen if we only attack the components of a process [movement's] form. The conditions under which it turns out, means something.” (My translation)*

Not every vitality form leaves a trace behind. Think about flock of birds or shoals fish, flying/swimming together. They are only leaving a trace while the vitality forms are here. In the image below the single bird is responding to the birds near it simultaneously co-shaping the flow and shape of the whole movement – which is responding to the movements of life-threatening birds or weather phenomena.



Figure 29 Black Sun

However, the traces we notice on the picture only last in the moment of the snapshot. We cannot control the movements of the flock of birds, we can only perturb them. Each time this can be traced immediately in the shape of the whole group. What our Cartesian friend interprets as resistance, we notice as traces of the phenomenon. Instead of pushing further, or using time in separate rooms meeting with the next level of management, initiatives should rather respond to the traces manifested.

As people we do not leave traces behind but we do have characteristics in our movement. Try to think of how it is you sense from far away whether a person walking

towards you is going to stop and talk with you or not, and how you are able to distinguish this person from others by their movements?

Bateson (2000, p. 274) helps us to explore further details of the movement (resulting change):

*“(...) adaptive change takes many forms, such as response, learning, ecological succession, biological evolution, cultural evolution, etc., according to the size and complexity of the system which we choose to consider”.*

In the following we explore further these subthemes of movement resulting in change.

### 6.1.1 Response

Movement is everywhere (Bateson, 2000, p. 20). We listen to music sensing the specific sounds moving in different directions. We watch a dance and we feel, even not dancing ourselves, how we follow the rhythms and steps in the dance. We are moved when we experience something making us happy or sad, or when we read something that invites our imagination into a moving moment.

Shotter (2010a, p. 9) notes:

*“(...) as I speak, you can see my body moving in synchrony with my voicing of my utterances, my hands in synchrony with my intoning of my words, my eye movements with my pauses, and my facial expressions with certain of my linguistic emphases – I shall use the word “orchestration” to denote the unfolding structuring of these intricately timed, creative intertwinings and inweavings of the many inter-related participant parts or “bodily strands” of our responsive-expressions”*

The body is not separate from our minds and we respond to the phenomena with the whole body. Just like influenza. You are not only having influenza in your nose – but influenza is understood in relation to separate symptoms in the whole body. In a similar way we capture the responses from others via our body. Neuropsychologist Louis Cozolino (2006, p. 298) describes:

*“As experts in receiving and analysing social information, our brains and bodies are primed to monitor and react to those around us. We accomplish these tasks through a variety of experience-dependent neural networks dedicated to receiving, interpreting, and sending information across the social synapse.”*

Cozolino (2006, p. 298) summarizes this into four response categories:

- Smell (olfactory and pheromone systems): identification, attraction, repulsion
- Sound (hearing): grunts, groans, sighs, laughter, volume, tone, prosody, rhyming, song
- Touch (skin): affection, nurturance, grooming, sex, support, soothe/calm

- Visual (vision): facial expressions, smiling, gestures, pupil dilation, blushing

In other words the phenomena are not only in front of us, like at a cinema screen. They occur around us as we move. We cannot move without responding. The effect of our movements is our responses. Todes (2001, p. 62) illuminates the phenomenon of responsiveness to us:

*“In forward movement, we generally know what we are doing. In back-ward “movement” we rarely know what we are doing; we appear not so much to be doing something as to be un-doing things (...)*

*Taking backward “movement” as the paradigm of awk-ward “movement”, let us consider why this is so. If I approach things backwards, I first become aware of them only after I have already passed them. Therefore, I cannot come to have them in any way. Things first appear to me as passing away, without having ever apparently come into my presence. In order to develop a habit of responding to something, however, I must be aware that something is coming, before it comes, and even before I know what it is. My knowledge of what it is, is largely fixed by my response to it, which is first possible only after some anticipation of it. To develop a habit in respect to something, I must be able to anticipate its presence, that is, to face it while it is still before me and before I have reached it, or it me. Then I can pass it by responding to it.”*

Todes (2001, p. 63) also reminds us that when lacking anticipatory knowledge about our own movement it becomes impossible to anticipate the motions of objects coming to us. In situations with a turnaround in a company, the middle manager may not know where he is heading and how to fix its nature when the shock waves hit, and is therefore unable to anticipate how to respond to the new strategy. Todes (2001, p. 67) comments:

*“If we do not know what something is, it tends continually to escape our attending to it [moving away from our attention], much as we tend to lose track of a fly ball if we do not feelingly know what it is to catch it; that is, if we do not know with our bodies how to catch it; in a word, if we cannot poise our self to catch it”.*

You probably noticed this when you enter a room full of other people. With help from your mirror neurons you judge in the first few milliseconds whether they are talking about a funeral or the next summer party by looking, listening and sensing the responses in the room. In this way you are being guided by others’ responses for your own next movement. Thus Shotter (2011b) argues we are only responsible for 50 percent of what is happening in the meeting – as the other 50 percent are responses we perform to respond the other person’s utterances. Inspired by Tom Andersen’s

drawing (2006, p. 173), I added Shotter's points so we notice the form of the movement, I call it "the 50-50 percent responsive game":



**Figure 30 "The 50-50 percent responsive game"**  
You are only "responsible" for half of responses in the room

In a chain of communication the spontaneous utterances can "call out" for a response from the other and "what ever we say can never be wholly up to us – all our utterances are to an extent jointly produced outcomes between ourselves and others" (Shotter, 2010a, p. 86). Imagine you are telling me something, and I suddenly wrinkle my eyebrows. You would probably, without thinking, mull over what you just said and either say it again perhaps with other words, or, as a therapist you may ask me a question either now or a little bit later, using the eye brow movement as data (a pivot) for a change in the movement. However, if you believe you can control your actions try to notice next time how you adapt what you intend to say by assessing the other's responses. Would your utterances be different, if the utterance you notice had not appeared?

One of the wayfinders describes how she deliberately uses some time to explore movements every time she changes context:

*T: "I am walking around and talking with the others, to find out: what do you think is my task, and ... also to find out who I feel good about, who I can talk to, you know, who is responding. If I ask them about something, do they reply with a short answer, or do they take time, and we are talking easily ... back and forth. So, who can I approach and say: do you mind helping me with this, it is ... finding some allies ... in that moment" (My translation)*

As we speak, a dialogue emerges; we know because of our bodily responses, our listening and speaking. The dialogue (as a phenomenon) can touch you. It is captivating because the words in it have a power to move us into new meanings and a mood, we could not have imagined before we meet the phenomenon (see also the image at page 45). Merleau-Ponty compares the dialogue with the touch from a distance (Thøgersen, 2010, p. 193). Shotter (2011b) agrees and describes how the distance can be noticed through the attitude – like an invisible shape expressing how much the dialogue is important and therefore how close or far to it I am.

Merleau-Ponty's point goes further than “you” and “I”, saying I hear myself in you and the other speaks within me (Thøgersen, 2010, p. 194). We respond as the dialogue seduces us, and we notice that the other's way is my way, too (Thøgersen, 2010, p. 194).

#### **Sarah; + 185 days a.t**

Am I a manager or an agent for my employees? I am sitting in the train, heading back to my apartment after a long day at the office. It has been an awful day. First the executive committee disapproved the perspective we had worked on for five months. It took them six minutes to tell my colleagues and me it was the worst proposal they had ever seen, and we had to be more ambitious. Then, when I told my team, Melvin began to cry. Oh dear, he is fifty-four years old, and should be a role model for the younger. It was embarrassing for everybody and of course for him, when he chose such a childish response.

But what really irritates me is the “development dialogue” I had with one of my employees!

I try to rewind the conversation as if it has been a movie, for my inner vision. I recall how my young employee, Jeff, treated me like a football agent searching for the best opportunities for him. He acted like an impatient diva, and had only eyes open for himself. I deserve more respect than that ... I guess he must be introvert, because he is not very good at getting to the point, and he easily gets angry. Maybe he should be offered the oral skills training?

I am interrupted by my mobile phone. I look at the screen; it is my boss. I only meet with him every 6th week in an One2One in his office, where his personal assistant is also present. The phone calls are my only private time with him, although they are rare and with an average length of four minutes. But today is going to be different. I will use the opportunity to tell him about Jeff.

- “Hello, this is Sarah speaking”. I sense how my stomach pulls together.
- “Sarah, how are you?”, but I cannot reply, before he continues.
- “Did you have a chance to read my mail?”

I had read it, but I lie, when I reply.

- “No sorry, I was occupied by meetings all day. Development dialogues, you know, so we can be the division who turns “green” on the corporate scorecard first, you know”.



I held my breath – I am already aware he is going to destroy my evening, or what is left of it

- “Oh, that’s good. Now, listen, we have received a complaint from one of our customers. I met him over lunch, and I promised we would look into it. I guess you already heard from one of his employees, right? Mr Hansen is the customer’s name. Well, I promised we would look into it. It sounded like the problem is ours. I have a meeting with him tomorrow, so...”

He pauses, and out of nowhere I hear myself reply:

- “No problem, I will look into it right away, and send you the details per mail later”.

- “Excellent. Well have a nice evening. Bye!”

The call only lasted two minutes, and the complaint, which we easily could have rejected, has now suddenly turned into a problem we are responsible for. What does he take me for – a servant?

Sometimes it feels as if it is only the other person moving. But you are moving too, though you may think you are not. The implicit moving gets clearer when we think about the phenomenon of a stroke. When the father is hit by the stroke he starts to move (relate and respond) differently. The family members relate and respond to the stroke as well, as I described in the prologue, but they also start relating to him differently and differently to each other, and to others surrounding them, and so on. It has an immediate ripple effect.

### 6.1.2 Learning

In the movement there is anticipation of the future. We are moving in a direction. Traces of this anticipation show when we prepare ourselves through training, building sensitiveness, adopting certain stances, etc. (Shotter, 2011a, p. 97). We are, metaphorically speaking, moving into new territories of knowledge when we learn something new, or when we are trying to imagine the actions expected by us in, for example, a new role.

Johnson (2008, p. 19) says:

*“Movement is one of the conditions for our sense of what our world is like and who we are. A great deal of our perceptual knowledge comes from movement, both our bodily motions and our interactions with moving objects”.*

By orientating ourselves according to the response from the other, we learn, but we also learn from our own responses. We learn about our needs, and which end-in-view we are pursuing, only because in a moment of movement we experience the other or the otherness.

The effect of movement is learning and growing. Bateson (2002, p. 104) argues how growing is dependent on the state of the growing surface at the time of growth (template coding). In other words, if the turnaround intends a change of current practices, and lay-offs are conducted as well, the success cannot be compared to a situation where training was done before, or instead of, the lay-off. Bateson uses the example of a palm tree to describe the moving (growing) point is at the top – we notice the tree is getting higher. However, the whole tree is moving (growing), as the wood is pushed “backwards”, and in this way the shape of new a piece at the top is determined by the shape of the previous growth.

This somehow contradicts the common sense of many in-house HR practitioners in Denmark: Namely heliotropism, an argument referring to people’s need of acknowledgement in order to grow. The sunflower has turned into a symbol for this understanding. However, Bateson argues, yes a growing seedling bends towards light, but it grows more rapidly on the darker side in order to do so (Bateson, 2002, p. 104). If nothing was growing on the dark side, it would not be able to bend towards the light; it needs cooperation from the whole plant. In other words, by investing only in high performers, these “talents” may not lead you to the growth in the whole organization you intended. But at a local level it is often a dilemma, because if you are part of a plant not growing – for example, the top has been removed, only part of the plant has got nourishment or the roots have been cut out – the wisest action may be to search for another plant, or you will vanish too.

Often I come across the expectation that employees ought to be clones and perform a certain kind of style instead of designing moments of learning so they become aware of their own repertoire of movements and the kind of social audience they are linked to, and so they reflect on the kind of speech genre (Bakhtin, 2007) expected from them in their new role. This means that social memberships are made available and the person being promoted is taken seriously when the movement is synchronized with the expectations of the position. Sadly, too many refer to (status) symbols to show themselves and the world they entered the C-suite. They buy a new car, they start to eat with others at lunch, they dress differently, but are still performing the way they did before the promotion. I know of examples where the new manager sometimes acted in a parental role by getting angry, or disappointed, and then shifting again to teenager ways of behaving – very sad but also very happy. The manager

rationalized the response of the employees as jealousy of the promotion, or as too lazy to join her in her emotions, and asked HR for a workshop “dealing with demotivation”.

### 6.1.3 Cultural evolution

When a company chooses an instant turnaround and moves into new territory, this in turn has a ripple effect inside the many networks of the company.

The risk for aboutness view is large when we explore social change e.g. cultural evolution. We wish for certainty for a particular change to happen, so we explore the change as meaningful. However, in relation to vitality form movement evolution is always happening and if we look for Cartesian fixed indicators we might not see the transformation at all. Take a look at the British campaign “Look out for cyclist” and explore this point further: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNF9QNEQLA>

New habits, based on the actions, Bateson (2000, p. 274) calls it “feedback”, are formed when we solve the “problems”, not before. The problems relate to the distance between us and the phenomenon (e.g. the turnaround). Bateson refers to deuteron-learning when we learn again and again for each shift. We need the problems in order to evolve the culture. This is reversed logic compared to technocracy producing stacks of rules and policies, which, attempt to avoid the problems.

### 6.1.4 Ecological succession

Ecological succession helps us notice e.g. the shadow organization, where humans continue acting in old roles and relationships, which often runs in parallel with the new organization. It can live on for years until employees resign, retire or are laid off. When we call on reversed logic it is not the employees rebuilding your company, it is ecological succession, which shapes the form of the movement, unless you disturb the pivotal points.

Bateson (2000, p. 437) describes ecological succession:

*“[I]n a balanced ecological system whose underpinnings are of this nature, it is very clear that any monkeying with the system is likely to disrupt the equilibrium. Then the exponential curves will start to appear. Some plant will become a weed, some creatures will be exterminated, and the system as a balanced system is likely to fall to pieces. What is true of the species that live together in a wood is also true of the groupings and sorts of people in a society, who are similarly in an uneasy balance of dependency and competition.”*

Now, imagine the time after a fire in the woods where trees are totally destroyed. If you do nothing a new community of forest trees grows up in a couple of years. But until they grow up other plants enjoy the sunlight, away from the shadows of the trees. The phenomenon is called “secondary succession” as something happens to an already existing community. I have learnt about it from my father’s work with farmers, and he distinguished it from primary succession taking place when the farmer wished to grow something where there has never been something grown e.g. places destroyed by lava or (as we have no volcanoes in Denmark), sandy fields near the sea. The farmer has to work with the “soil” first before s/he can plant any trees. A turnaround often includes both a change of existing practices (secondary), and entry in new markets (primary). Usually communities in new markets and old are expected to work together and share best practices, but the phenomenon of ecological succession leads us in different directions, as their (stand)points in the territory are very different.



**Figure 31 Secondary succession**

When we think of a company’s succession planning in relation to the image above it becomes possible to notice which challenges the high performers are expected to solve. They are selected on previous performance (in the past, before the fire) to create an imagined, new world in five years, not having any phronesis in making something grow again. Their success is measured according to how fast they reach

the targets, not how sustainable their actions are. The underlying premise is based on a Darwinist “survival of the fittest” growth narrative. From this (stand)point it seems reasonable to link succession to individuals in groups of age, to talk about structured career paths; enabling the acceleration of the speed of movement for individuals with clear, ambitious goals in relation to a certain job, who focus on maintaining their present market value outside the organisational system. Whether a company can offer career possibilities or not becomes an important matter to consider. Career paths, talent pools, and other initiatives do, for a while, provide some peace. However, the narrative of an assembly line flourishes with fixed roles, and promotion promised following performance targets met, calling out for individuals who prefer map-using (see also page 69). In relation to a turnaround what a company need most is rather quite the opposite: wayfinders.

#### **Lars; + 40 days a.t**

Boring, boring, boring. This is one of these management meetings of eight hours with almost no breaks and a way to ambitious agenda where we discuss everything from “are employees permitted to buy iPhones or should it only be management who may buy the expensive smartphones?” to “market development plans globally”. We are already twenty minutes behind, and only four hours into the meeting. The guests we invited, we kindly ask to speed up, so instead of speaking for thirty minutes they do it for fifteen.

I sit here together with six peers and our president to whom we all report. We meet like this once a month, but just after the turnaround we met every week. Tons of papers to be read are sent out fourteen days ahead, but the guests supposed to present the papers at the actual meeting always bring with them changes or new stuff we have to relate to. Later, the secretary is challenged in summarizing it all into a list of actions we all can recognize, take ownership for and actually go out and complete.

Some of my colleagues use this opportunity to talk, talk, and talk. They just love to hear themselves talking, and I think they try to cover up that they actually did not read the stuff or prepare themselves.

Now the HR partner is on. She explains the procedure of the coming People Review: “And this time, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have to do it better. The forced ranking curve should look better, so we are aligned with the targets from corporate. Please remember this when you rate your own employees. I know you think your employees are good, but they cannot all be at the top”. She laughs, but no one laughs back. “And another thing: we have to appoint five from this division to the next high performance programme. Any suggestions? I will need names before EOB [end of business] today”.

Roy, always thinking he is a smart guy says, “Well, not surprisingly I have five top performers who should join, or else I am pretty sure they start to look for jobs elsewhere. Lars got his part last year.” He looks at me, reminding everybody that for the last two years I had an employee who got accepted into the programme.

Hugo joins the conversation. “Well, I think I at least should have one of the seats. After all, my personnel are located in the BRIC growth markets”.

Our president looks around, obviously tired of this kindergarten discussion. Then he says directly to the HR partner, “Everybody sends you candidate names via e-mail. Then you make a list you and I can prioritise from and which shows we considered diversity as well. I think we should send more than five names to Corporate, because I know they have a few wild cards, and they might just as well go to us, instead of any of the other divisions.”

The HR partner interrupts “But the deadline is today.”

“Well, tell Corporate to call me, if there is any problem”, the president replies, and continues on the next topic on the agenda.

The HR partner nods and we all know none of the HR people dare call the president. I have already finished my list of names during the conversation. This is how I got two seats the last years – because I was the first to reply.

Our next guest is waiting to present for us. She seems a little nervous, poor kid – but then she will never notice that I send my list right away via my new smartphone.

### 6.1.5 Biological evolution

*“We are born into the world screaming, squirming creatures, and through our movements we get “in touch” with our world, taking its human measure.”* (Johnson, 2008, p. 17)

In other words it is through movements and feedback that the little child meets the world. The method is a process of *trial and error* and a mechanism of *comparison* (Bateson, 2000, s. 274).

Bodily movements are supported by “imitation”, the child adapts to our movements using its mirror neurons. If you open your mouth the child does the same. Imitation leads the child to the development of its first relationships (Bauer, 2006, p. 45). Bauer, who is a neurobiologist, psychotherapist and psychiatrist, describes how the mirror system can only be developed if it is offered in a relationship suitable for the child. (This is portrayed by, the still face phenomenon, where the caregiver meets the child with no facial responses, does not allow the child to develop the mirror system properly – see video example at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0>). Later, voice and other motor resonances are imitated as well.

Mirror neurons were introduced into our vocabulary in 1996 (Bauer, 2006, p. 18) and for a while many phenomena seemed to be “explained” by the cause and effect of mirror neurons. Bauer seems fascinated by these “explanations” as well, and let me emphasize, this is not a thesis of neurobiology, and other neurobiologists may disagree with Bauer today. Mirror neurons or not, imitation appears often in relation to

turnarounds, as a silent negotiation of the appearance of good citizenship behaviour, those who are in, and those who are out.

### **Kurt; + 125 days a.t**

Some months after the announcement of the turnaround, Kurt is working as usual at the workstation in the production plant. They used to change positions every hour so it is not too hard for the body to perform the repetitive movements. He likes his job, but has for years wanted to change to the warehouse in the neighbouring building. Now it seems wiser to stay, as the warehouse might be outsourced. Or at least this was inferred in the turnaround announcement.

The mobile phone in his pocket vibrates. It is an incoming text message from his colleague a bit further down the plant. They are not supposed to use mobile phones, but they do, whenever the boss is not around.

“The new boss is here. Our plant manager shows him around, and seven of the little bosses join them”.

Kurt looks around. He is used to office suits passing him every day, following the coloured path on the floor for visitors to walk on. Kurt does not bother anymore. He doesn't know them, but know they would not be able to afford their expensive office suits if it wasn't for Kurt and his colleagues' repetitive work.

Oh, here the delegation comes. It is easy to see who the new boss is. He is not very tall, and maybe around fifty years old. Thanks for that. Usually young men at twenty-five or thirty are appointed. The delegation hardly notices the colleagues at the workstations they pass. Some in the delegation talk into their mobiles. Others talk with each other. Though, everybody has one eye on the new boss.

They stop only metres from Kurt's workstation. The plant manager is very eager in his storytelling. “This is where we assembly the JI25 devices”. The big (little) boss looks at the front panel of the JI25. “And here is one of our dedicated blue collars, Kurt – how many years have you been working for us Kurt?” Kurt is surprised, normally they never communicate with the animals behind the fences in the zoo. “Twenty-five years”, Kurt replies. He hates the expression “blue collar”. He did his apprenticeship, and completed several technical training courses within the JI25, but the office suits seemed to think only academics, the white collar, are the one with training.

The big (little) boss smiles and says, “It is because of good men like you, Kurt, we are successful”. The lemmings surrounding him, all nod and smile at Kurt. Then, the delegation moves on. Kurt notices how they all had changed the style of ties. The big (little) boss has a very colourful tie and an iPad under his arm. iPads used to be forbidden, but the others also carry one under their arms.

When they are out of sight, Kurt texts his colleague back: “They've just left. They talked to me. They had iPads and we are not allowed the mobiles!” His colleague immediately answered “Well Kurt, you survived the meeting and it seems you are on the safe side now, so that is what counts, isn't?”

The previously accepted admission criteria no longer count, it only takes a few moments to sense whether new gates are opened to the communities we are moving towards and trying to enter, in a turnaround situation. *Segregation* (Bauer, 2006, p. 82) appears when a person is systematically discouraged from mirroring himself into

the community or mirroring the behaviour from the community outside the community. The person senses how moving in this direction seems to be a dead end by noticing how the other person performs a rejection every time they meet – for example, very short resonance reactions when passing by, or avoiding the different possibilities for acknowledging the other person through, say, eye contact. When responses of “welcome” are absent, the effect is a feeling of being locked-out, socially isolated and the experience of not being good enough. In other words the mirror neurons are a social orientation system (Bauer, 2006, 88).

One of the wayfinders describes:

*E: “I just sometimes think I don’t fit in here very much ... I mean, sometimes ... even if you are a person like me, used to the changes, and so on and you are used to work in the different, not work but at least be in the different setups and be in different societies and so on, if you all the time meet the wall, or all the time meet people who ... you have to explain basic things, then you think: Why am I wasting time here? You know ... And maybe I can go somewhere else, and actually this would be ... a little more understandable”*

Bauer (2006, p. 84) draws our attention to how living organisms need a minimum of sympathy resonance. Children or offspring of mammals respond with high regulation of their stress genes but also by a continually high sensitivity of these stress genes. Bauer also demonstrates in his book (2006, p. 85), how the exclusion of communities is sensed and felt like a “real” pain would do.

However, the exclusion may not be intended. Bauer (2006, p. 115) says some individuals may not learn to “read” responses as you may expect, either because of their cultural or family background. On the other hand, you instantly know when you are welcomed and included despite any cultural differences in how this is shown.

One of the wayfinders interviewed for this thesis describes what resonance feels like:

*B: “How would you spot someone is also on the move? If that is possible?”*

*E: “I think you can feel it a little bit with the way people talk about their life. How they ... see the chances ... they are not so afraid to try different things (...) Once I went to ... I think it was a party ... with a friend, or just some kind of place, and then ... she said: I really like being here because there were a lot of players, not followers (...) I was like: What do you mean? ... She said: Yeah, yeah you could feel it in the atmosphere. Then she said, the people were creating the place all around them., so that was why it was interesting for her to be in the place. I think it describes a lot ... that you just have a feeling when you look at people and then see.”*



Biological evolution is also related to change of genotype, somatic change under pressure of environment and environmental changes (Bateson, 2000, p. 346), as these are difficult to explore in relation to this thesis and also difficult for the practitioner to explore and notice in a turnaround situation. We do not cover them further here.

However, we touch upon two other phenomena: *habituation* and *sensitization*. These are very dominant in turnaround situations, or when “reflexive movement” is happening without our ability to understand the bigger picture, as the Danish neurobiologist Therese Schilhab (2000, p. 142) describes it. We simply get used to the situation (the new pressure waves, the new movements). Progress is achieved when the activity is repeated and is, in other words, not dependent on or related to what we understand, what meaning we make from it, or whether we find it meaningful or not.

Habituation (Schilhab, 2000, p. 142) is very smart when the movement from the organism or the objects around it could effect a lethal danger, so ignoring the movement is useful when it turns out there is no risk anyway. The arousal level is not affected, and the organism learns not to respond and avoids using energy on indifferent information. Sensitization is the opposite, and is related to more responses as the arousal level is increased (Schilhab, 2000, p. 143). You probably heard the expression “fight or flight” where the organism responds with an increased preparedness.

Schilhab (2000, p. 144) uses an example of a snail to show us the difference. Imagine a snail in front of you, touch it carefully, keep touching it carefully. After a while the snail ignores your movements, because you are not hurting it (it demonstrates habituation). If you then suddenly touch it again with, say, a weak stream of water, it responds with extreme arousal (sensitization). Finally, if you return to your careful touching, it responds again with high arousal. Schilhab continues (2000, p. 144):

*“When we bicycle without being terrified whenever cars are carelessly passing close to us, it is only due to habituating to traffic. This will also happen, if you stay for a longer time at a construction site, where in the beginning the noise is quite loud, and after a while you will not be able to tell when they stopped, because you stopped noticing the sound of them.”* (My translation)

Employees on maternity leave often experience this when the turnaround is announced. Not only is the situation in the new mother's life changed in the family, it is now also changed in the company. When she returns her colleagues are now used to the turnaround. The new mother is surprised and wonders why her colleagues appear as if they are not taking the consequences of the turnaround seriously. "Are they really only thinking of themselves? Egoists!" So she starts to ask them questions about the turnaround, about the intentions of the new manager, about the intentions of the new colleague, about each other's intentions. Depending on the new mother's position in the team, it can create a dramatic team response. The habituation has turned into a sensitization. When the sensing is not experienced, it cannot be modulated and escalates (Levine & Kline, 2012, p. 11) as, for example, an outward response (such as anger) or an inward one (anxiety). Some name this "trauma" (e.g. Levine & Kline, 2012) and highlight how it "disconnects" us from our body. We become Cartesians. Everything we learnt to master is undermined and we feel helpless and without hope. However, the trauma does not lie in the event which we experienced, even though we tell our stories as if it did. It now lies in the body's way of relating to the event (Levine & Kline, 2012, p. 30). If we furthermore experience the trauma in a space where we feel influenced by some with more legitimate rights to the space than us (see description of space at page 133), the relationship between the wisdom of the body and the healing of the trauma takes longer to shape.

#### **Karen; + 275 days a.t**

It is Amanda's final day at the office. I was so surprised and sad to learn she chose to leave us. I don't get it. She has no job waiting for her, and still she wants to dedicate more time with her family. She lives alone with her son, and he is about to graduate ... Strange!

We all got an e-mail five minutes ago from the boss. We were to come to the conference room right away, to say good-bye to Amanda and enjoy a piece of cake. So, here we are now. Forty people, so other departments must have been invited too. Amanda is nicely dressed today, but she looks sad. She is standing here, in the middle of the group, alone.

The boss of the boss is also here. This is also strange. Now he speaks. He says something about time to look forward, and enjoy the good moments of life. Then the secretary gives him a flower bouquet. The senior boss takes them, and walks ... what ??? ... towards me!!!!

Everybody around me stiffens. This must be a mistake, but still I sense how my face turns pale. What is going on? Am I going to be fired too? I suddenly feel sick. Time seems to stand still.

The secretary begins to cough, and my boss discretely (but then again everyone's eyes lies on the senior boss, so the attempt of discretion has quite the opposite meaning) pushes him into Amanda's direction.

“Oh, I am sorry”, the senior boss replies. Then he gives Amanda the flowers and a handshake. We all wait.

Even if I am now out of danger, my pulse is high, and I am sweating.

It is customary for the person leaving to make a little speech. Amanda says “Thank you.....” It is difficult for her to continue. I hate these ceremonies. Give her a break, it is clear to everybody she has not chosen this, but we all play the game and pretend. “You are like a family to me. I will miss you”. The tears prevent Amanda from speaking loud. She folds the speech paper she has in her hand. “I am sorry, but I am not a good speaker”. That’s it, and the crowd surrounding Amanda and the bosses begins to break up. Some walk directly to Amanda and give her a handshake, some even a hug. Others take a piece of the cake and return to their computers where they will stare into the screen for the rest of the day. Others use the mobile phone-get-away-technique, “forcing” them to disappear behind close doors.

My heart is still pounding, my mouth feels dry, and I feel a bit dizzy as I approach Amanda. The senior boss does not say anything. He is in deep conversation with my boss. He hardly notices that I give Amanda a hug. “I’ll miss you,” I say to her. “Promise me we will stay in touch”, she replies. I nod. We both know this is probably the last time we meet.

In some of the companies in which I worked for, I noticed an almost permanently high arousal level several years after the announcement of a turnaround. Those living in an empty space, for whom it is not possible to have a notion of the phenomena, blame, for example, the previous managers. This is free of charge as the managers are no longer present. Sometimes a manager is challenged for years by complaints and struggle and then the day a new leader takes over, it shifts and the stories are turned towards the previous leader’s incompetence.

Biological evolution’s effect on our movements also has to do with the infections we come across (from virus to biological weapon). Movements change when panic spreads. Bauer (2006, p. 117) noticed this phenomenon by animals as well. Moods spread like virus, similar to when you notice someone yawning and you start to yawn too. These *social resonance phenomena*, as Bauer calls them (Bauer, 2006, p. 82), effect the employee or for that matter the in-house HR practitioner who cares not to distinguish group responses from individual responses. Bauer says the only way to learn this is from role models who resist “group pressure” and are not “infected”. He notes the phenomenon neuromarketing is already here (see Lindstrom, 2008) using this resonance phenomenon as well, and I guess in a short time HR directors may notice it too.

## 6.2 Space

We have already explored how the aboutness view meets the space as empty, whereas exploring from within allows us to notice the room as full of content calling

out for our response. Zooming in a little closer we also notice how the space elicits a response whether we plan for it or not, or whether we search for an explanation at all. Spontaneously many systemic in-house HR practitioners think of “context” and “context markers” when I begin to talk about spaces. I notice how *context* for some is the abstract code used to explain a sequence of episodes examined and explained after they have happened. A problem is identified, and a search for answers in the context (e.g. a family dinner, World War II, or an exam) gives us the last piece of the narrative puzzle.

Therefore this chapter introduces what Stern names as “space” (2010) to explore it as visual, measurable and specific, and as invisible, untouchable and unspecific within which our movements are flowing. Stern uses the vitality form “space” to describe the invisible aspect and to demonstrate how space itself moves (2010, p. 4). As we shall see in this chapter space as such has no intention of communicating a certain meaning, unlike the context, which is full of meaning. However, how you relate to being trapped, or even lost in the space, how you enlarge the space by relating differently, and how all of this effects your judgement, is what we explore in this chapter. Your (stand)point allows you to set up a contextual framework to use as explanation in your narrative and the next steps you are about to take. Let us look at an example:

Imagine you are at a rock concert in a concert hall. The concert ends and you and all the rest of the audience want to go home, or out into the city to party. You search for the exit options, and notice there is only one, so you line up in a queue heading for the exit. Maybe your cultural background suggests other methods like approaching the exit door as water would do, not in a straight line. Minutes later you enter the exit door, only to find you’re in another jam, now standing in a small walkway. At the front of the walkway jackets and coats are being handed back from the cloakroom. This is preventing you and others behind from moving on.

You start to get irritated, and a beautiful rock concert turns into a badly organized event. Thirty minutes later, you have “walked” ten metres and now you notice how others are starting to complain, and because of the alcohol consumed during the concert some even get into a fight. Security tries to enter the situation and later, when you finally manage to come out of the building, you notice an ambulance arriving. You are wondering if there is a connection to the fight you saw.

If we do not notice the relationship between the movements and the surrounding space, we could conclude that people drinking alcohol have a higher risk getting into fights. As in-house HR practitioners we could divide the people in the queue into clusters of behaviour and type – low/high performers, introvert/extrovert, fair/unfair, switched-off etc.). From within we notice other connections and consider that fights are related to the individual's responses and their "picture" of the situation, and to others' responses as well, which are all aspects of their relationship with the space and how they respond – for example, by trying to avoid standing too close to the fight.

The space forms the vitality form and the vitality form defines the space (Stern, 2010, p. 4). We notice the similarities with H<sub>2</sub>O. We recognize it as steam, snow, ice, dry ice – and of course as water, a liquid we can pour into a glass. H<sub>2</sub>O has many forms and its state relates to the temperature in the surrounding space. It is the temperature in the space, which calls for a response. H<sub>2</sub>O freezes to ice with low temperatures, people put on extra clothes or go inside. They also have the choice to train themselves to stay outside, or arrange for the temperature to rise again.

When we enter a room our vitality forms are responding to the room. If the person you meet there has arranged the height of his chair so it ergonomically fits the length of his leg, you might find he sits a bit higher or lower compared with your position. He now looks down or up at you and this may affect how both you and he perform the vitality forms, unless you respond to it, and change position – for example, stand up, or move into another room, or switch chair. I recognize this in open offices, where employees have height-adjustable tables, and many awkward situations are created – especially in the "do you have two minutes?" conversations, which are supposed to be quick, so you stay at your desk instead of having, quite often serious, conversations in a separate room.

I meet employees in many kinds of spaces, different from the spaces that the external therapist or consultant would see employees in. The stories I am invited into are told in the corridor, in the bus, at lunch, on the phone, before and after meetings – well everywhere where there is "no" space, where rights, responsibilities, and norms of good citizenship differ from the formal spaces. A cry for help sounds very different in the different spaces, and it sometimes takes a lot of improvisation to navigate.

For everybody in a turnaround space, it is difficult to navigate between the many differences. Managers are approached outside their offices. Employees may not have an office, because they are waiting for new workstations to be available in the new department into which they are transferred. People meet and talk in the canteen. Agreeing on what we are going to talk about as we start, or preparing an agenda beforehand, is far from possible. Some resolve this by turning into chameleons adapting to whatever shape the vitality forms around the table call for; you never quite know where you are with them. Others operate the same way regardless of the space – for example, acting formally, as if in the boardroom, and others make fun of them when they join relaxed spaces such as lunch groups, the grocery store, a party, with this continued formality.

Unlike the external, independent practitioner, people inside a turnaround stay in the situation. Maybe they meet again at the bus-stop in a couple of hours, or they meet again tomorrow. Sometimes it does not make sense to continue a dialogue from where you left it yesterday, if in the meantime your department has been announced as outsourced. The space is not closed, it is never left.

#### **Mira; + 35 days a.t**

Mira was looking at Sarah. Mira was standing in the front of the train, and Sara was sitting in the other end. Sarah had not noticed Mira. It seemed like she had a lot on her mind, but again this is how she looked most of the day. Mira had never talked with Sarah, and she guessed she never would. Sarah was very distant and mostly looked through her. Sarah's phone rang, she holds the phone to her ear with one hand, while she uses the other hand to cover her mouth – most likely because she did not want anyone to hear what she was saying. Mira noticed Sarah was not saying much, and wondered why she had to cover her mouth.

Mira was new to the company, a month tomorrow to be precise, working in HR as the HR partner. Sarah was one of the managers she still had to connect to, but maybe next week would offer an opportunity. Then the People Reviews started, and Mira was expected to facilitate the process.

Mira had been introduced to Mr Excel – a nickname for the HR colleague who talked and acted only using terminology from the software Excel. For example, he would suggest to “ungroup the discussion” at a meeting (= include the individual voice), or ask for “advanced options”, “sum” and “average” during a conversation. He would “filter”, “sort”, and with his hands and body show “pies, columns, tabs” when he “calculated” solutions together with others. Mr Excel had advised Mira to use the data from last year to familiarize with the concept “fairy advocates”, which the HR was responsible to attract more of, and to ensure a normal distribution. He had also asked her to make sure the managers would go into the system and “tick off” the boxes indicating they had talked to the employees. Otherwise HR would get in trouble. Mr Excel had also instructed Mira to be careful not to challenge the management too much, and to even take over the documentation obligation, if some of the managers refused to use time on the Excel spread sheets. “This is a turnaround, and we are quite focused on

rolling out new tools. We do not want some of them getting in opposition, because we are too pushy”, he argued.

Mira had not been used to People Review, employee surveys, or tick-off boxes in an IT system at her previous HR job in another company, so she had been overwhelmed this first month. Mira was not sure of the expectations of her role yet, but hoped someone could explain it to her, before she had to meet Scary Sarah and her peers.

Now Mira’s phone rings and Mira also takes up her hand so none of the other train passengers can hear her. It is the sales manager from region North, the area Mira covers as a HR partner. “Please prepare a written warning”, he demands. Mira wonders whether he can’t hear she is on a train, and ask him for permission to call him back. But he insists and ignores her question. “It is for Josephine. She is demotivated, and I have just visited her shop. It looks terrible. We will never be able to reach the figures in this way. I told her she had to make it look better, and we would have to talk about it tomorrow. Then I want to give her the warning. How soon can we replace her?”

Mira shakes her head. She is supposed to be at the kindergarten in less than ten minutes to pick up her son. She has promised him they would go to the park, where the nice dog and the old man use to sit on the bench in the late afternoon. How could she talk the manager out of his idea?

“Sir, we do not hand out warnings without any reason. I am not sure what it is you are warning her for?” The sales manager, now raising his voice, replies: “I don’t want her in my team. I have to give her a warning first, right? So now I visited her shop, and I saw one of the light bulbs were out of order.”

“How did she explain this?” Mira asked politely.

“There had been a lot of customers in the shop that day so she prioritized them. But it is still not good enough, the shop must look absolutely perfect. You never know when the mystery-shopper arrives. She should be thankful it was I who discovered it.”

“How long has she worked for us? Can you give me her personnel number? I will have to look her up on the system.”

“I don’t know her personnel number. It’s Josephine we are talking about. Don’t you as an HR person know the employees?” The manager’s tone of voice sounds angry now. “I don’t see how her seniority is relevant. We need more hunter types than farmers now. I can’t use her.”

Mira notices how the passengers in the train look at her. She lowers her voice even more; “What about another job in the company? Is this not an option we should work on instead?”

“Speak up, I can hardly hear you! She lives near the shop, and has kids. She has to move for a new job, and she is not the type who would do that. Are you mailing it to me tonight? You have to think about the time zone difference, I fly off to China in five hours, and am off-line the next ten hours. We have to act now, so we can give her the notice by the end of the month!”

Mira looks at the watch, now there are only three minutes before the kindergarten closes. She hesitates.

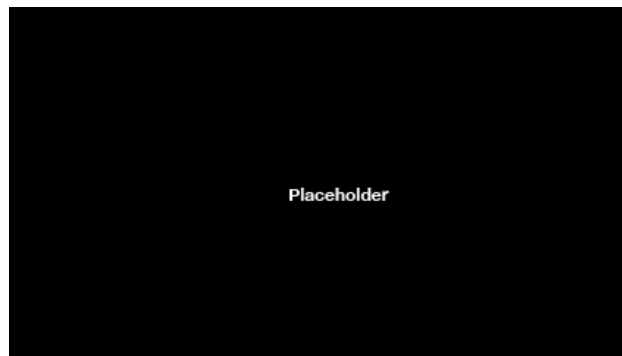
“Okay, I will write you a draft. Promise me you to use it if you see no other option. Maybe she has fixed all the light bulbs tomorrow, and then you cannot use it.” Mira doesn’t want to challenge him about ethics because he is going to “hand over” the warning by phone.

“Thanks. Appreciate it. Have a nice evening. Bye.”

The train stops, Mira rushes out, but is calm. She will do a quick copy-paste of the warning she wrote two days ago, and replace some of the words and of course the name of the employee. It will take two minutes and she can do it from her laptop while she is in the park with her son. Maybe Josephine really has everything in place tomorrow, and then the warning will not be issued after all.

As the space is far from visible to us, we have to switch to another pair of “eyeglasses” enabling us to notice the depth of the space we are in, allowing us a sense of deeper vision, deeper listening, and deeper lived experience. Bateson calls it switching from analogue to digital coding (2002, p. 103), but since Bateson wrote his book, the computer literate readers of today probably link the word *digital* to computers and not “digital” as a discontinuity between “response” and “no response” which was Bateson’s point. So let us stay with the word “depth”.

Being able to notice the depth can be described with support from the image below:



**Figure 32 The whole and the fragments**  
*John Shotter, 2008*

To use deep vision, our attention is both on the fragments and on the whole (= all the fragments, jointly). Our actions relate to the whole space even though we only explore the fragment. If you think back to the foreground-background image on page 62, its design is based on the same premise.

However, we never have a full picture of the whole. We primarily experience some of the parts only, and therefore we only get an impression of the whole and where it is moving. Our guesses about wholes are continually being verified or contradicted by later signals from other parts. It is perhaps so that *wholes* can never be represented for this would involve direct communication (Bateson, 2002, p. 106) with the whole, which is of course impossible. You will never be able to “see” the social phenomenon or “speak” with it, even if you try to externalise it, and in this way make a deal with it.



Let us explore an example. Imagine you are at a big conference, sitting among 500 other participants in the room, waiting for the conference to start. Suddenly in the distance you see a person you might know; you get the impression this is a person you know – or is it? What do you do to find out?

Most likely you use your eyes to search for fragments, expressions, to help you judge whether you recognize the person or not (like the example at page 47), but as you in a seated crowd, you only have few movements to judge. If it was possible to use eye track computer techniques we would be able to follow your eye movement in your search. Alfred Yarbus, a Russian psychologist, was one of the pioneers using this technique and in the image below he shows us how a person's purpose (end in view) effects how he moves his eyes in the search (Yarbus, 1967). Try it out. Please look closely at the first picture in the top left corner before you look at the rest of the image. These images show how your eyes probably move, when you relate to the headline of the image and the image in the top left corner:



Figure 33 Eye tracking

Yarbus' recordings show how our attention is attached to the fragments, which resonate with our end in view. To help us "see" this Bateson articulated the phrase "the difference which makes a difference" (2000, p. 462) for the information we use to judge between varying types of difference. He describes (2000, p. 463):

*"But there are differences between differences. Every effective difference denotes a demarcation, a line of classification, and all classification is hierarchic. In other words, differences are themselves to be differentiated and classified."*

In other words we navigate the space surrounding us in relation to the effect of summing differences (Bateson, 2002, p. 102).

We are able to "see" depth as an extra dimension because we play with the difference between information provided by one of our eyes' retina and the other (Shotter, 2011a, p. 28). The differences are from a different logical type (Bateson, 2002 p. 108) and the extra dimension allows us to "see" (Shotter, 2011a, p. 28) e.g. vitality forms and connections. Connections allow us the experience of "getting it" (Shotter, 2011a, p. 113) as we spontaneously see the parts as related and parts of relationships with wholes, which enable us to view the phenomenon developing from these relationships. The territory becomes well-known and we are able to move again.

We are trying to "get it" all the time, even in this moment as I write and you are reading this thesis. I am playing with different fragments back and forth as if shaping a sculpture; puzzling a little bit here, moving away to see the whole thesis as one coherent piece of writing, zooming in again and adjusting, adding, moving parts and so on. You are probably reading the fragments (chapters, phrases, images etc.) of this thesis as "parts" as well and as you read, you might be imaging a "whole" and the "end in view" you think (judge) I would like to portray for you, or you use them to judge the differences in our (stand)point, etc. through different ways of responding to the expressions I point at. Then you read a bit more; you either keep your sense of a whole and the end in view you already imagined, or you fine-tune it, or even change it. If you change it, and you reflect on what you have read so far, you probably understand these already read fragments in another way than on the time of the reading.

If you are performing the ladder, you might recognize Bateson's description offered by his daughter Nora Bateson. She has made a film about her fathers practice "An Eco-

logy of Mind. A Daughters Portrait of Gregory Bateson” (<http://www.anecologyofmind.com/> & <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTsGtTeVEAI>) and she recalls (Bateson, 2011, time: 4:01) how her father used to point at her hand:

*“When you look at your hand you are trained to see five fingers. But, really what is important are the four spaces. And if we can look at the world in terms of those relationships, those four spaces, of what gives your hand its articulation, its potentiality, all the possibilities, its functionality. So in terms of the role of psychology, he was looking at the world in terms of relationships. What are relationships made of? Communication!”*

Gregory Bateson was interested in finding out more about the whole and he learned from the German writer, botanist, biologist, physicist and polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, how to look for the patterns which actually connect the fragments to a whole (Bateson, 2002, p. 15). Goethe used many hours every day, for three years, in his garden observing the flowers etc. In the beginning he focused on all the plants in the garden, but then he began to look at one plant in detail (Shotter, 2008). Just like Goethe, Bateson notices a sort of syntax, grammar or relationship in the anatomy of flowering plants. Bateson describes: (2000, p. 276):

*“A “stem” is that which bears “leaves”; a “leaf” is that which has a bud in its axil; a bud is a stem which originates in the axil of a leaf; etc. The formal (i.e., the communicational) nature of each organ is determined by its contextual status – the context in which it occurs and the context which it sets for other parts.”*

In other words nothing happens without a whole – it always happens in relation to.

If we look for similarities in an organization, the objectives, strategy, roles, procedures, KPIs etc. (the fragments) are defined by vision statements (whole), which are themselves shaped by the fragments. Our Cartesian friend would probably get the impression that *objectives, whole and end in view* are three names for the same “thing” – namely the goal we are moving towards on our two-dimensional map. Our current actions would tell us how far from the goal we are. In other words the fixed objectives/whole/end in view and the actions are separated. The actions are the levers we can turn and adjust right now, in the short run or in the long run. When you think about the objectives/whole/end in view and the fragments as separate units, it makes sense to look for the behaviour as in synchrony with the ideal behaviour.



Figure 34 Cartesian objective-action relationship

Now, let us compare it with judgement criteria from within. Imagine you have an ambition to run a marathon in about twelve months. The Cartesian way would be to **think** about it as a fixed goal in the future, to set up a plan with milestones and train accordingly. From time to time you can check how fast you are running and how this fits into your pre-set targets. If they do not, you must adjust your actions.

With our deep vision we are able to look, listen and experience **more deeply** and learn how our impression of the end in view and our sense of the whole effects how we feel in relation to our actions in this moment, and how this shapes the end in view. The whole – the idea about the marathon – is constructed right now, and connects with how we relate to how far we believe we are from achieving it.

If it is your first time training for a marathon your imagined end in view could be focusing on crowds of audience cheering for you. If you have tried it before, you might want to run faster this time (you start to compare). If this is the case your sense of the whole/the concept/idea/impression you have of the marathon, and of being one running a marathon, can be judged by looking at the fragments; namely, your actions today. Maybe you changed your lifestyle completely and run and eat in a way that responds to the energy level required. Maybe your imagined end in view is only to

move yourself 42.195 kilometres which should be possible even at the speed of walking. If this is the case you would not need to do much right now except look for a pair of good walking shoes, and maybe try them on before the run.



**Figure 35 Preparing for a marathon from within**

In other words your lived experience and how near or far away you are in relation to achieving the marathon, result in rather different judgements in your present now. Later, we explore further differences between the experienced (expert) and the inexperienced (novice) way of judging (see page 186).

Returning to the turnaround company we notice similar differences. After some time looking more deeply into the system, you are most likely to notice several different uncoordinated fragments in the daily life, which make it difficult to imagine and sense a coherent whole. It might as well be chunks of fragments, which point to different ends in view. The effect is you sense quite different wholes in the present moment unlike the one stated in the turnaround announcement or the annual report.



**Figure 36** The contours of the whole are already manifesting today

Different, uncoordinated wholes create paradoxes/dilemmas. Below is an example of paradoxes explored by an organization where the purpose was to act as service function to other departments and divisions of the company, which before the turnaround took care of the services themselves.



**Figure 37** Examples of paradoxes

*YY (the name of the strategy), and x-company (name of company) are used to protect the team*

Some have more legitimate rights to be in the space between now and the turnaround's end in view, even though you can label it in a nice way ("let us talk about your strengths and what you are most proud of"), or you use time getting consensus forums to select the high and low performers – but without the ones in question present – the phenomenon of being included or excluded is being manifest. Your rights are documented in your file (well, sometimes it is kept a secret and you never know the real reason for never being promoted), and are accessible by your manager, your future managers, HR employees ... and IT employees. Everything is accessible by at least a group of colleagues in every company, even though you are told the opposite. If it is a secret (the logic being that you may be too sure of promotion if we tell you that you are considered successor and you might use it in the next salary or contract negotiation, or making us too dependent of you), and you are not told, there are other ways of judging whether you are granted access to the part of the space or not. If your access to senior manager's electronic calendar is suddenly cut off, if your access to websites only accessible for the level above (and their trusted, close reports) is cut off, if you are not invited to social gatherings with special invitation only (so no one can claim a right to be invited as well), if your expense reports are not approved (or it happens very slowly), if you, unlike your colleagues, are prohibited similar benefits (parking spots, trainings, participation in conferences) or when your manager suddenly stops telling you about his/her whereabouts but keeps performing busy-ness for you, then you have probably lost your successor potential.

Sometimes I describe hate speech (or hate language), in order to get persons defending this practice to pay attention. With hate speech you discriminate groups or individuals from your part of the territory, and rationalize it by giving them names or portraying them in ways which refer to them as NOT belonging to the game, keeping them isolated. For me the label "low performer" or "switched-off employee" is just as bad.

### **6.2.1 Space and double bind**

Now let us explore what we notice with our deep vision at a local level. What we named above as paradoxes, Bateson calls double bind (2000, p. 208). A person is caught in a double bind situation:

*“(1) When the individual is involved in an intense relationship; that is, a relationship in which he feels it is vitally important that he discriminate accurately what sort of message is being communicated so that he may respond appropriately.*

*(2) And, the individual is caught in a situation in which the other person in the relationship is expressing two orders of message and one of these denies the other.*

*(3) And, the individual is unable to comment on the messages being expressed to correct his discrimination of what order of message to respond to, i.e., he cannot make a metacommunicative statement”*

Although the names of those who are going to receive membership to the attractive and powerful communities of the company in the new setup after the turnaround are usually kept hidden, stories about career ladder and rewarding of agency are still told at a local level (between manager and employee). However, this time rules are made evident through, for example, “in order to be promoted, you should live abroad for at least three years”; “there must not be more than two IPE (international position evaluation) levels between a manager and his/her direct reports, so you can only get promoted when your manager is promoted”; “System wise you are considered “green” in the first four years of each position, no matter what you do”; “To every manager vacancy, there must be at least three candidates; two from inside and one from outside the company”; “We encourage diversity among the candidates”.

But it is not the new criteria creating the double bind, Bateson (2000, p. 207) argues, it emerges when it

*“(...) seems that in some cases the escape from the field is made impossible by certain devices which are not purely negative e.g., capricious promises of love, and the like“*

and when the concept of logical type (which Bateson has lent from Russel & Whitehead (1910)) points at confusing messages (Bateson, 2002, p. 109):

*“If we look at any living organism and start to ask about its actions and postures, we meet with such a tangle or network of messages that the theoretical problems outlined in the previous paragraph become confused. In the enormous mass of interlocking observation, it becomes exceedingly difficult to say that this message or position of the ears is, in fact, meta to that other observation of the folding of the front legs or the position of the tail”.*

In other words by sorting the messages into a hierarchy you can explore when messages are contradictory to each other as you discriminate between the different layers of messages. Let us try an example. Imagine you are a middle manager, and your manager’s tells you:



*“You are granted the membership to the leadership community above your current level, but you are not granted the membership right now. There are objective, [epistemological] “things” you should demonstrate awareness of and master first. You show us, as you are the expert. IF you do so, THEN you are selected to the next turn. By the way there are bureaucratic rules you would need to respect, and you should know you are considered a value asset to the company, and you are part of our future.”*



**Figure 38 The double bind**

The appreciative language used by many managers supports the promises – “we need you”; “you are part of the future leaders”; “if you feel something is wrong, you must act – if you only complain, we notice you have not learned this leadership agency skill yet; why don’t you give it a try and learn it?”; “We have great plans for you, and as you know we must wait for the right moment, otherwise others may criticize you too much, and then there will be no promotion at all”.

Not being able to “see” the entry criteria in what is being said, not being able to discuss the inter-relating landmarks with anyone, makes humans disoriented. Their responses are sometimes interpreted by Cartesian viewers as defensive, too impatient, too suspicious when the tone of voice or gesture are not in synch with the context, as odd, as one concentrating fully on personal ambitions, or as one giving the appearance of being a withdrawn, perhaps mute, individual (Bateson, 2000, p. 211).

Judged from within they are rather responding in this moment to a whole, which is there ... is not there ... is there ... is not there ...

## Jeff; + 184 days a.t

Jeff, a successful businessman in his early 30s, sits at home at his computer. It is 11.30 pm. He looks at the templates he is going to fill out before the meeting tomorrow with his manager Sarah. They are going to discuss his future career plans. They meet like this every year, prepared with templates and dreams. This year, Jeff feels more demotivated than he used to be. He had even answered very negatively on the survey's questions, this time.

Jeff and the manager had talked about Jeff's career many times. Well, to be honest they had only talked about it when the templates about career aspirations were to be handed into HR once a year. Each time the manager indicated she would back Jeff up in his aspirations, but others would decide whether the talent pool this year would open a door for Jeff. The manager also, again and again, carefully explained, how it gets harder and harder to fulfil career aspirations as Jeff moves upwards, concluding Jeff might need to think about a lateral move instead.

Jeff was not sure whether he was considered a top performer or not. The manager had not been clear about it. The idea about considering a lateral move made no sense. Would he be forgotten, while he was working in foreign practices? Could he be certain Sarah would be there when he returned so the deal could be fulfilled?

Jeff was bored; he had already asked for expensive training by a famous business school. Jeff knew this would gain CV-factor and open doors into other companies. Of course this had been denied, too, with reference to the "cost freeze" they had right now.

Recently Jeff had talked with another manager inside the company about a job opening, and it all seemed very positive until the manager had to decline because of bad figures in the quarterly review. Jeff had crossed an invisible border by the action, and he could tell because since then Sarah had acted like a teenager because she was disappointed at Jeff's initiative: "You have to direct such initiatives through me", she explained to Jeff. She continued: "Obviously you don't want to work for me, and I do not see any possibilities for you in the company. I am a manager concerning my employee's well-being, I think we should start looking for external possibilities".

Jeff had been in the business long enough to know that "we should start to look for external possibilities" in fact meant Jeff was going to get fired, if he did not leave voluntarily. The method was preferred in the company, so Jeff would search outside the company himself, and the manager avoided a situation of having to lay Jeff off. Not because of ethical reasons, but because it would cost the manager money to lay him off, and the head count would not be available for a new hire, before Jeff's notice had ended. And in fact he was also avoiding losing face by having to dismiss a talent.

Later, Sarah had tried another angle by saying: "But Jeff, life is too short to work in jobs where you are not satisfied. Life is precious and you have so much potential and I am so sad to notice we cannot use all your skills. I cannot as a leader bear that this is happening to one of my employees. I wish them all to have the best out of life".

Then she had – in order to show leadership – invited him to the annual employee development dialogues, three months before the actual deadline. They were going to have it tomorrow.

Jeff has always liked his manager as a person, and he used to forgive her for not being able to promote him. Jeff knew career development is tough inside a big organization with hard competition. Jeff also knew his career was depending on this manager's skills to involve Jeff in strategically important projects and meetings and for his status as high or low performer. If

she, as a punishment for what he had done, changed the label to “low performer”, he would automatically be excluded from meetings, mails, involvement in important projects. In fact the manager has become his only admission card.

Now, he felt like a little schoolboy waiting for the headmaster’s final punishment the following day, and not at all like an employee about to have a meeting with the manager. Was this meeting going to be the ultimate power demonstration from the manager? Jeff felt fragile and worthless – and could not do anything about it. No one would ever believe him, as Sarah was quite good at making others comfortable. She would interact in a way so you would feel you are the only one in the room, and she would have all the attention on you. She was someone able to talk to everybody, looking interested, patting employees affectionately on the shoulder, addressing everybody by their first name, making eye contact, making people feel they are important and worth listening to. She was never angry, never in trouble, and always had a reasonable explanation, and made employees relax, and laugh. Colleagues needing a boost of self-esteem were finding themselves drawn to her, refuelling themselves with her “feel-good” energy.

These were qualities that had convinced Jeff to work for her in the first place, allowing him to believe he was special and eligible to climb the ladder.

According to Bateson (2000, p. 209) a person caught in a double bind situation might respond defensively in a manner similar to a schizophrenic (an area Bateson was researching). I recognize this when I meet managers selected for a talent programme. They are often very frustrated and angry ... in a polite (AI) style of course.

The managers, the in-house practitioners, even the CEO are also affected by double binds. If they are not rated “high” in the Employee Opinion Survey, “excellent” in the happy-smiley sheets after a training, or if they are persecuted by a journalist in articles about the turnaround, they will not get their bonuses (some of them do not get a base salary like the employees), or might even lose their jobs with immediate effect. How do you think this effects their judgement?

### 6.2.2 Lost in space

If you meet the world as an empty room, or you meet double binds, or triple paradoxes and it feels like complexity is slowly strangling you, you might be lost – or have problems orienting yourself. In other words the characteristic of vitality forms may indicate you are responding to disorientation.

Shotter (2010b, p. 4) compares the phenomenon *disorientation* with trying to orient and navigate in a fog, unable to see anything. We cannot overcome the difficulties by simply taking a passive, TV-viewer’s position and think about the difficulties. Instead we need to use other ways of orienting ourselves – for example by starting to move

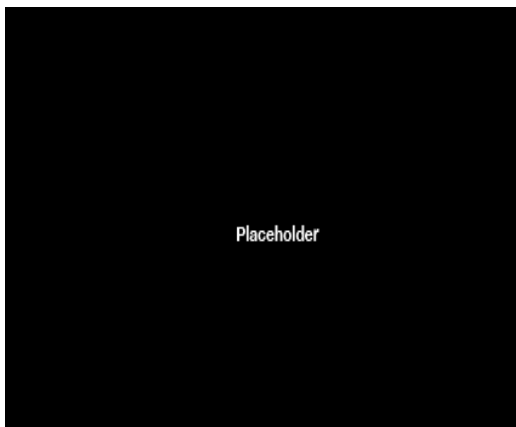
around, listening to the sounds in the fog, touching some of the material we meet. Shotter (2010b, p. 4-5) comments:

*“However, what we have to gain a sense of through our sensings and touching, is not of what actual objects are there before us, but of the possibilities these actualities present to us for our next possible steps, the anticipation aroused in us by our current circumstances”.*

The artist Olafur Eliasson (see background page 42) invites us to explore this point in one of his art works. He and his team created a room with different coloured light from above. In this room they put in what looks like fog. Entering the room you can see nothing but fog and lose your orientation immediately. Even though you know the door where you entered must be only metres away, slowly a sense of not knowing where it is wells up inside. As you move around you notice the vertical bars, which Eliasson has placed in the room and for a moment they help you orient yourself in this local area of the room.

As you continue to move, you notice the colours in Eliasson’s installation art shift according to your movements (at this point you have not noticed the different lights, side by side above your head creating the different colours). When you sense the colours you start searching for patterns as a new method to judge orientation: “okay this is the red area, and if I move in this direction I come into the green area... oh no, this was the blue area... hm... then let’s try this direction to check which colour may appear then”.

Eliasson (2010, time 28.17) describes:



*“I guess that you by some point can navigate by knowing that this is the blue area; this is the green area ... and you start making a map inside your head and then you can walk around with this map. So it is a shift from one orientation principle to another, and I think the shifting is very interesting. I mean this is just a model of orientation, and the other one [you use outside this foggy room] is also a model, so the shift between two models, I think, is very nice here”.*

Figure 39 The audience walks in a room with coloured fog

Studies of humans getting lost in the desert demonstrate how we think we are walking straight but we tend to walk in circles when we cannot orient ourselves (Souman, Frissen, Sreenivasa, Ernst, 2009). In other words, if we keep using the “old” map to solve the situations, we walk in circles or at least not straight towards the target we imagine. There was no conclusion of the study, as the authors of course did not find any single scientific aboutness *explanation* to the phenomenon. However, try it out yourself by blindfolding yourself or another person and walk a distance unfamiliar to you and you will probably have a similar experience, especially if in addition you reduce your sense of the surroundings with earplugs, nose clip, gloves, big boots and so on, and stick to the way you thought about the distance before you were blindfolded. However, without equipment you are able to sense your surroundings and when your body gets used to the situation it gets easier for you to navigate.

Sometimes it is not easy to know whether a person is having difficulties orientating. Middle managers are often very good with words, and judge they would make a bad impression if they *admitted* not being able to orient, as the company only needs future leaders able to navigate and orient themselves and the company.

Therefore I use another method, which is noticing how the different problems occur, and how the person relates to the disorientation narrated. Does the person only relate to own movements, positioning others as obstacles or supporting actors? How does the person name the disorientation? How does the person perform disorientation? As a problem, as stress – or something outside their territory? How are these questions – are they distancing them from the pain, or asked from within the pain? Are they showing a slowdown in decision process, a need to consult others, a focus on how their actions may be interpreted, and not to forget a great engagement on what others would think about this move? These are example of how the pain can be expressed indirectly, so we – if we do not notice this relationship – meet the person differently.

I pay special attention to those with legitimate rights to change the pivotal points shaping the movements in the space. They may be lost, too. It might be the CEO, the HR director, the in-house HR practitioner, the union’s shop steward etc. We can judge this by *listening deeply* to their utterances and especially to their response to other’s utterances. I am inspired by April Flickinger, a Canadian phenomenologist, who had portrayed “Therapeutic Listening”

([www.phenomenologyonline.com/sources/textorium/flickinger-aprile-therapeutic-listening/](http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/sources/textorium/flickinger-aprile-therapeutic-listening/)). I distinguish between three ways of deep listening, when I meet with legitimate rights speaking:

- 1) The person is physically present and understands the content of what is being said. But he is preoccupied with his own concerns and responses. He is not really hearing the other person, but relates to the phenomenon in relation to his own worries, or own agenda. The other and their pain are objects of the listener's fascination – if he notices them at all, because he only relates to own responses.
- 2) The person is doing “psychological” listening when he is seeking to be helpful through his application of expert knowledge. He either does it following his own professional curiosity or has been trained to approach the conversation in a certain way (for example, questioning types, ways to recognize and appreciate). This way of listening is often a response to a dominant aboutness view of the other person explaining own pain with others motives or behaviour (e.g. victim stories) – the dialogue calls out for this kind of listening.
- 3) The person is “therapeutic” listening (this is Flickinger's name – I prefer “phenomenological” listening) when hearing the other's pain, when the hurt behind the words is heard and the way of performing emotions is noticed. Then the listener can respond to the person in a caring way. It requires techniques like number 2, but is not simply a product of training. It is phronesis and the ability to listen to the whole self, and the fragments of the other person (including the relationships, the position in space, the traces of the vitality forms, the performing of emotions etc.). *In a caring way* means different ways, depending on the situation. For example, once a friend of mine was about to fill up her car at the gas station. Another car arrived and the driver was in wheel-chair. He went to the self-service machine, only to realize the hole in the machine for his credit card was too high. My friend, only one meter away at her car, said: “the ones who designed this, obviously don't know what it is like to sit in a wheel chair”. When she had finished, he handed her his credit card, told her the code, approached the car, and started the fuelling. Neither of them said anything more. She made sure he got a receipt, returned the card to him, and they both smiled at each other. The caring for a person who is hurting – or

lost, or stuck – is when we start at a fundamental need for someone to “hear” them. To listen to the pain (or any other emotion) behind their words.

I notice how disorientation (and aboutness view) sometimes creates difficulties in distinguishing the objects in the fog. Is it a dangerous animal, or ... a stone? We walk as if it can be both, until we can compare the response from the object to something familiar. If we have not learned to distinguish between living objects and dead ones our arousal may increase in relation to “objects” and the turnover, which do not have the lethal risk for us (see also habituating and sensitization on page 131).

Now you may argue that everybody can distinguish between living and dead objects, so my argument above seems irrelevant. You may be right, but still we tend to meet some dead objects as if they have living vitality forms. A computer is a dead thing, you can switch it on and off, but sometimes it probably acts in a way you cannot control – therefore it may indicate it has a life of its own. The computer may get *infected* by a virus just like us humans. The computer is *born* in different generations like humans – the earlier ones with expected *childhood diseases* which later *generations* will have *learned* and are *cured* of. Computer software and hardware can be *upgraded*, just like some think you can do with humans for example training the *soft* skills. Your computer switches to *sleeping* mode when you do not use it for a while, just like we sleep and do not perform any activities. It is *dead*, like we eventually will be, if one morning it is not *responding*.

The phenomenon of personifying “things” is by Bateson called the *pathetic fallacy* (2002, p. 94). The pathetic fallacy covers a range of metaphors from different parts of human life or ways of looking at a person, which allows us to make sense of the phenomena so we can understand them in relation to our own motivations, end-in-view, actions etc. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 34). I am not only thinking of metaphors about for example organizations as living (e.g. Gareth Morgan’s book “*Images of organization*”, 2006) or the computer example above. I would also like to draw our attention to how the phenomenon can be used as an enemy to us. Parts in a mechanical system do not have enemies. Living systems have. In this way for example the financial downturn (or *crisis*) makes us suffer substantial economic losses due to complex economic and political factors making it impossible for anyone to gather in one map. By talking about the crisis as an enemy it gives us at least a

coherent account of why we are suffering the losses (example is inspired by Lakoff & Johnson's, 2003, p. 34, example about "inflation").

You might argue the solution is simply just to shift and start picking up living rather than dead metaphors in our conversation. This is tempting, but Morgan (2006, p. 5) warns us:

*"The metaphor invites us to see similarities, but ignores the differences. Metaphor stretches imagination in a way that can create powerful insights, but at the risk of distortion"*

But until now our judgement has been based on the aboutness view. Daniel Stern (2010, p. 3) points at a judgement criterion from within allowing us to distinguish living and dead objects in the space:

*"It [vitality] remains as a real human experience. We live impressions of vitality like we breathe air. We naturally experience people in terms of their vitality. We intuitively evaluate their emotions, states of mind, what they are thinking and what they really mean, their authenticity, what they are likely to do next, as well as their almost constant movements. The time-based arts, namely music, dance, theatre, and cinema (...), move us by the expressions of vitality that resonate in us."*

The computer cannot gauge whether I have a cold one morning, if it is another person switching the computer on, or intuitively evaluate what I would like to do next. Well, computer developers do their best to create very intuitive games and programmes for even a two-year-old to access. Our last actions are saved so that the computer might pre-empt our choices, making suggestions and enquiries on the basis of previous actions, asking, say, "Did you mean Daniel Stern?", when I mistakenly spell the name wrong in a search engine; or when I visit an online bookshop and am greeted with "Hello Birgitte, we have recommendations for you!", based on my most recent shopping choices; or when I am notified that a friend may be in the same city as me due to geo-spotting – or when I receive offers to access communities with similar ends in view as mine.

We end this section with a quote from one of the wayfinders – the group supposedly not getting lost in the space, or indeed able to quickly find (a new) way around. One of the differences distinguishing wayfinders from the Cartesian colleagues is the notion of how concrete space is and whether space is not just outside you and something you are in, but is inside you too:



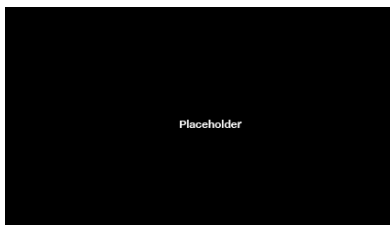
*T: "I haven't found that place yet where I would like to be, because of restlessness ... The restlessness is still there. And it will... well ... yes... in fact one of my friends, she lived in [country's name] ... she got married to an American and lives in USA, and then I remembered she said the same. That constant restlessness, and not satisfied with ... like ... well her current situation" (...)*

*B: "So the place where you find rest, is a place where you .... experience you are doing a difference? ... or what kind of place is it?"*

*T: "I don't know. Well... My husband and I once characterized it like this; if that moment where we find out where we are supposed to be and why we are here [comes], then we die. It is just about the last thing, we get to know in our lives. So this is how ...it can take a long time (...) So it might be we never find it. But gradually, where I am now, I would say; That place, where I am going, it's not laying somewhere, it is just inside me. So it is here no matter where I am located". (My translation)*

### 6.3 Time

One of the premises of the Cartesian Value Competition is that you are able to “see” the change of an object in time. However, is what we believe we see as change, also what is happening? Imagine a raindrop – when do you notice it has started raining?



The Cartesian premise would let us define fixed criteria “See this is a raindrop – so it’s about to rain!” We imagine how raindrops look like, and we define the beginning of rain based on length, weight, height and so on.

Figure 40 A raindrop

Now let us explore what happens if we “look” at these raindrops in a slightly different way – as vitality forms, moving, through a space, and in time. Do moving raindrops look like what we picture? Do we see them?

The visual information we judge from is contained in the light reflected from the raindrops. To perceive the single raindrop we need sensory detectors, which respond to the reflected light. As light passes through the lens of our eye, an image of a raindrop is inverted and projected on the back surface of our eye, the retina (Gazzaniga, Ivry & Mangun, 2002, p. 150). The visual information then is processed into the brain. We are able to process enormous quantities of visual information and our visual sense is superior to other senses (for example our entire auditory pathway is only 10 percent of the size of the optic nerve (Gazzaniga, Ivry & Mangun, 2002, p. 153)). Our Cartesian colleague believes we “see” the integrated wholes (see also page 142). We have a feeling this is what we are doing; searching for clear data, so

we “get it” that it is raining. We judge from these supposed wholes and we believe the data we “see” are all the data available.

Neuropsychologists however, point at another phenomenon (e.g. Gade, 1999). Visual Agnosia is a condition where a person, often suffering the consequences of a stroke, is able to see, but not to recognize, for example. their spouse, the house, and the surroundings. They cannot turn the visual information, which they see perfectly, into wholes. They are able to draw what they see, well you could say copy, but not recognize what they have pictured (Gade, 1999, p. 167-8). This phenomenon taught neuropsychologists that we do not take a picture of the world, this (the whole) is something the brain constructs later.

In the raindrop example above we did not include any aspects of “time”, even though it was there in the background. Now, let us use our deep vision to make the effect of “time” even clearer, using the TV as example. When you turn on your TV, what happens at the screen looks like motion, but it is twenty-four pictures very quickly sequenced. The twenty-four pictures are shown sequentially in one second (in some countries twenty-five or thirty pictures). The pictures appear so quickly that your eye reads them as continuing motion. In a similar way the eye captures snapshots of the movement of the raindrop. We “take” a snapshot every 100 millisecond with an average length of typical fixation at twenty-five to thirty milliseconds (Viviani, 1990, chapter 8). Engel (2011, p. 70) point at twenty to forty milliseconds, as the “moment” we sense as “now”.

We do not see every part of a motion, but only a glimpse of every 100 millisecond. Slow motion can help us notice how we do not see everything. For example the BBC created a documentary about slow motion enabling us to see much more than we are able to in real time (BBC, 2011).

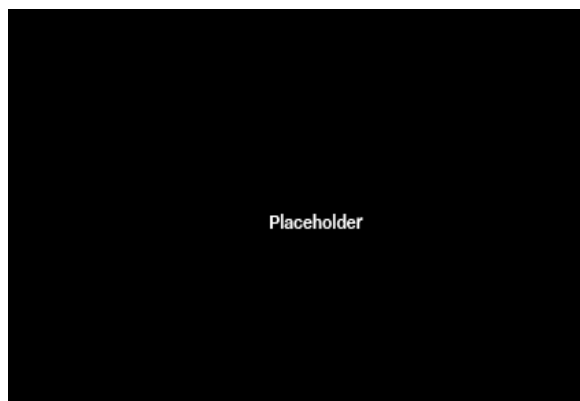


Figure 41 The eye's capability to capture motion

A raindrop in slow motion, on its way down from the sky, starts with a form almost like a bullet. When moving down against the air its form changes. It is no longer a bullet; it is more like a balloon finally turning into a pancake because of the air pressure from below. Finally the thin “pancake” bursts into tiny bullets of rain. Many of these never reach the ground, but dissipate in the air. You might know it as drizzle. We are not able to see it, because it happens so quickly.

So is it the raindrops we pay attention to when we judge “it’s about to rain”? With the reversed logic we notice the rain because of the changes in time, in space around the raindrop. We sense it in our skin directly, or as rise of humidity or it gets darker. We listen to the sound as the raindrops hits the leaves on the trees, the roof on the houses, or the ground, we notice it when our window or our camera lens get wet, and we notice the rain, when



Figure 42 It is raining!

we look with our deep vision into the space, and the rain appears as “stripes” of flow between what we are observing and us.

Other living organisms – for example, the fly – see in higher frequency but not as detailed as our snapshots. If we compare what we see, and what a fly sees, we only

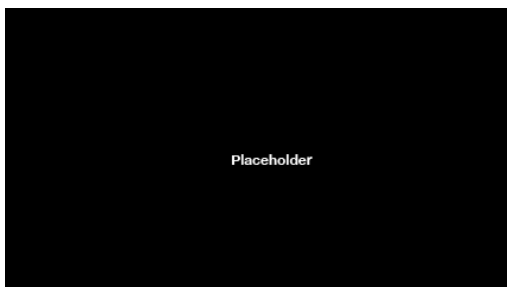


Figure 43 The fly's eye's capability to capture motion

capture part of the happening, whereas the fly captures much more – however not with as clear a lens as ours (e.g. Gallagher et al, 2003, p. 60). From the fly’s perspective we act in slow motion in our world. We do not see everything, even if we believe we do.

We think we can multitask and still attend to and be aware of what happens right now

of responses, movement surrounding us. The fly is able to respond to our movements (such as wanting to kill it) much faster than we would be able to. This (sometimes) saves its life, so it flies away before the flyswatter hits it.

The more quickly an object passes or we pass it, the more difficult it is for us to capture the details in it. You have probably tried this when looking out of the window from inside a train or car in high speed. If you fix your eye movements looking in one direction, then what happens outside the window you see as a thick flow of almost liquid movements, and it is almost impossible to fix your eyes onto something and your eyes constantly try to capture something recognizable outside the window to look at. By this attempt we are not seeing the rest of the landscape. We explore this further in paragraph 6.3.3 “Time & discontinuity”, but first we explore our judgement of time further.

### 6.3.1 Chronos

Looking at the time vitality form, from an aboutness view, people have found it important to separate it so we can know the exact time. We therefore divide time into years, days, hours, minutes and seconds. We do it with clocks and our ancestors did it with sundials, etc. We use a view on time called chronos (from the ancient Greeks according to Stern, 2004, p. 5) to divide a day into hours and seconds. We use it when we decide when to meet next time or in relation to a turnaround we connect it to a timeline with milestones indicating the expected return on investment. It is this view a manager uses when he tells me he has not enough hours in a day even after attempts to sleep less and arrive at work very early. When he thinks and talks *about* time, taking a chronically Archimedean standpoint, his next steps of action are limited to either expanding the time (working more, sleeping less), using it more efficiently (for example, by receive training in time management or the ability to say “no”), using gadgets to time-organize the day or to reduce some of the workload. The last option requires setting up a meeting with his manager, or waiting for the next employee dialogue scheduled to be carried out once a year. Or, if he dares, he mentions it at his performance evaluation, to be carried out quarterly. He most likely chooses none of these because he is in the turnaround space aspiring to a new role.

With the aboutness view our identity is measured in time and number of deliverables achieved, like the efficiency of an assembly line. In Danish culture it is considered a

plus if you are able to deliver before time, or at least exactly on time. And the saying; “in Denmark the bus leaves according to the timetable, in Africa the bus leaves when it is full of passengers” shows us how important chronos time is for us. We construct “lean” workshops to show how driving an empty bus is a waste of time, and time is money (as expressed by Benjamin Franklin, a major figure in the American Enlightenment). Then, we either close down the bus route, or we design a technically better bus (requiring fewer operating costs).

When this aboutness view of time is combined with vitality forms it makes sense to design accelerated training programmes for high performers, and to talk about the ideal age of potential candidates. In one company we sorted our training activities for high performer leaders according to whether they were below or above the age of 40. It also made sense to cluster the managers into batches, according to time of manufacture, linked to how long they had been in a previous role (e.g. whether they are “green”, “yellow” or “red”). In this way we reused the idea of aboutness stages from our school days (e.g. Bloom’s taxonomy, e.g. Husén, 2001 – assuming we occupy different positions in space, predictable with help of a chronos timeline).

One of the non-Danish wayfinders interviewed for this thesis describes how she is not used to the idea of fixed cohorts, which are strong in Scandinavia:

*S: “The school structure in Denmark is when one starts in class zero, and then one is with the same group of children until the age of fifteen or sixteen. It means stability, and it becomes Alfa and Omega how your social relations are to these kids (...)*

*B: “Interesting ... because this is not necessarily how you do it in [country’s name]?”*

*S: “Not at all! I am ... I have good friends from high school, but it was personality which got us together. We were not in the same class (...) In primary school one shifts class every year, and shifts teacher, so already there one has a readiness for change .... eh... compared to the Danish system. (...) What happens with the kid if the class just don’t work for him, I wonder? Or gets a teacher who hates him? You know, there are so many aspects where I am thinking; Uhh, you don’t get another chance to start all over” (My translation)*

The Cartesian idea of stages was used by for example Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727). Blackburn (2008 p. 250) describes Newton as a British physicist, mathematician, and astronomer who pointed at this absolute, true and mathematical point of reference.

His understanding of “real” (or absolute) time (Hawking, 1995, p. 20) made it possible to divide time into “events” (Hawking, 1995, p. 159). Time was understood as something having its own nature, as flowing equably without relation to anything external. Therefore it was natural for Newton to consider gravity as separate from time as well. He thought of gravity as a separate force. He used time and gravity to throw new light on the understanding, at that time, of what happens if you measure a body’s motion as a straight line. The measurement was of course time, and he was interested in the duration it takes for the body to come from A to B. He concluded the time is proportional to the force applied to it on this journey (e.g. Hawking, 1995, 5 and 19). In other words if we drop a rock out of the window from the 9<sup>th</sup> floor, its increasing speed follows a pattern in connection to time. Newton would explain this as gravity, which is the external force applied to the rock (e.g. Hawking, 1995, p. 18).

For many years Newton’s laws were believed to be true for everything, and everywhere, not only on Earth but also in outer space. In this way you could predict time within this frame of stability, while the mass remained unchanged (Fritzsich, 2001, p. 10).

In 1905 Newton’s ideas were challenged by the Swiss physicist, Albert Einstein (Hawking, 1995, p. 23). He acknowledged Newton’s points, zooming quite close to a movement, looking at the particular moment, can be explained with the laws – but also how it depends on the viewers (stand)point in relation to space (Fritzsich, 2001, p. 11). He pointed out problems in the understanding of gravity in Newton’s theory: gravity, he said, was not a force but a characteristic of space (also outer space) shaping every form of energy in movement as a curve (e.g. light) around every form of mass. In other words the planets around the sun are not circling around because of gravity from the sun, they are following the SpaceTime curves because these are expanding from the sun (e.g. Hawking, 1995, p. 27). He pointed at how mass is able to change in the movement, and vice versa (Fritzsich, 2001, p. 11). He documented his findings in the formula:  $E=mc^2$ ; where  $E$  is energy,  $m$  is mass, and  $c$  is the speed of light. The equivalence of energy and mass mean the energy, which an object has due to its motion, is adding to its mass (Fritzsich, 2001, 11). This is only relevant when we look at objects moving close to the speed of light. As the object approaches the speed of light, its mass rises even more quickly, so it takes more and more energy to speed it up further. Einstein used light as it has no mass, and it travels faster than

anything else, so fast that it has practically the same speed in all reference frames. Einstein's formula put an end to the idea of absolute time (Hawking, 1995, p. 23), fixed mass and made it possible for us to perceive time, objects and position differently according to our own movements.

How was Einstein able to come up with this you may wonder? Stein (2010, p. 6) describes:

*"Albert Einstein was once asked whether he thought in words or pictures. It is said that he answered, "Neither, I think in terms of forces and volumes moving in time and space." That is a physicist's language of "dynamics", the process of change or rapid evolution of forces in motion. As used by Einstein, "dynamics" describes the changing happenings of the universe."*

... or as we described it at page 34, language of the third realm.

### **Lars; + 320 days a.t**

Lars had just as much seniority as Sarah and still he found it more and more difficult to understand her rationale. He had been invited to join her monthly team meeting. He was supposed to tell about the new value proposition of his team, and even though his presentation should last no more than twenty minutes, he had been invited to join the whole meeting. The agenda was divided into time slots – some had five minutes, others ten. He was the only one having twenty minutes ... probably because he was from another department ... and a manager.

Sarah was the timekeeper, and took the job seriously, looking at the clock every now and then. Some had difficulties keeping to the time limits, but were assisted by the time-keeper's tone of voice; weak and slowly indicating "you have time left to speak", or forceful and quickly; "you should end off now!" Sometimes she would use her hands "cutting" across her throat to indicate a "time out".

Lars notices how once "on air" the "speaker" has full mandate to use the time slot as s/he pleases regardless what others in line had done. Some saw it as a five minutes of fame opportunity helping them in their Value Competition. Others acted as if they were standing at a Sanctuary. Regardless used as personal showrooms or to conclude placement of guilt, everybody used appreciative and positive language. The audience, too, had the right to evaluate each performance. Most speakers looked full of expectation at the audience all the time, but the time slots did not allow any deep conversation.

"I am wondering whether you ought to use more time on the complaint handling?" Lars saw it was a young employee, Sven, who might actually express a real, felt point of view, as he continued: "Why is it we have to discuss this again and again?" He had not looked at anyone particular, his facial expressions were calm, and his breathing slow as he looked up in the air, with his head slightly tilted. It had been an intense moment, Lars thought. How would the others respond on Sven not-following-the-rules, using precious time from someone else's time slot?

Lars noticed how Sarah, for a micro moment, stopped her previous activities and looked intensely at Sven. Her eyebrows were tense, and it was as if she almost stopped breathing. Lars understood that she had perceived it as a critique and as someone asking for an answer when she replied; "It happens at team meetings, Sven, that we discuss things more than once. It is important everyone gets it, so we can act as a united team. When top management

interfere in the customer complaints in our team, we must take it seriously. Okay, Sven?" Because of her previously arrhythmic breathing, her tone was intense as she answered.

Lars felt a strong urge to interfere in the flow of the meeting and join Sven in his questioning. But it would have been disloyal to Sarah, and to be honest Lars had not participated in any previous meetings, so it would be his word against Sarah.

Lars left the team meeting feeling a bit shaken. Sarah had acted like a "desktop general", doing most of the monological talking as she commented and offered a perspective on each stage performance. Sometimes her comments were rather embarrassing – trying to link to a bigger picture – from practices in her team she had no experience in what so ever. Two thirds of the team had not said anything during the meeting, unless they had won the lottery and been assigned a time slot. Lars assumed they had not listened at all, but just putting the "oh that's interesting" facial expression on, even though it felt like they most of all saw a legitimate opportunity to sit down, enjoy some coffee and a break from a stressed working day. His own contribution had not led into anything, but a "Thank you Lars, we have to follow up on this" statement from Sarah. Most at all he had felt as an entertainer hired to amuse the audience in a completely boring meeting. A complete waste of time!

The Cartesian assumption only "sees" speed (movement and time) according to one measurement. With the reserved logic every vitality form is moving in a scale of slowly-quickly depending on the space's effect on the movement's form (see example with H<sub>2</sub>O page 135).

If you think about yourself sitting in a car moving at high speed and dropping something like a little stone in the space inside the car you see it fall vertically. But if you stand outside the car, and the car is passing you in high speed, and someone drops a little stone out of the window of the car, what you see is a stone falling diagonally into the ground. Then, think about what is happening, is the car moving or are you moving as you watch the car?

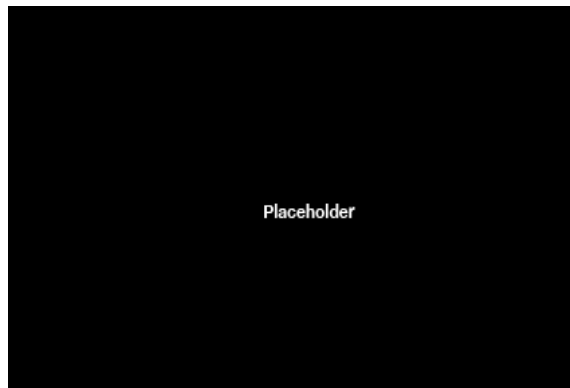
The point is, if we think about time we must also think about space. Referring to our map exploration (see pages 68-69), it means we have to add space to the two dimensions length and width making it possible to detect every point in the universe. By adding on the fourth dimension time, we are able to look at the point at a certain time. This Einstein called the space-time-continuum (Fritsch, 2001, p. 116). With this expression he wanted to make sure we do not think of the space with four dimensions, but as 3+1 dimensions.



Fritzsch (2001, p. 116-120) describes how easy it is to measure a spaceship travelling from A to B into a (Cartesian) coordinate system →



Then, Fritzsch reminds us of Einstein's point, namely the object also has its own speed of movement, not being constant. For example, if I drop a stone at the same time as the spaceship takes off. The stone does not move in the space; so objects may not move with identical speed form or distance form.



If we take a satellite instead of a stone we also notice the difference because the satellite moves around the earth, it looks as if it moves like a spiral. This speed and distance affect the two-dimensional coordinate system, and we have to draw it in another way.

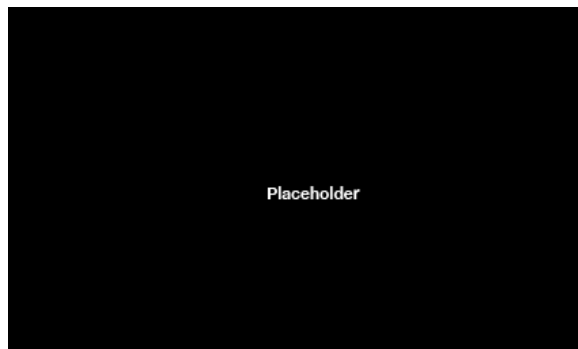


Figure 44 Time, speed and (stand)point

### 6.3.2 Kairos

Now, we zoom into human movements, which are different to how the stone, the spaceship or the satellite moves, because our vitality forms do not follow a

chronometric clock. Plants, animals and our own biological “clock” are shaped in a way that they adapt to the right moment (timing) to move on, grow, hibernate, etc. At any time you are able to measure the timing with a chronometric clock, but living systems respond to something other than a separate time. Flowers begin to develop protein when the days (or sunlight) in the springs are longer (time!), ebb and flow dance together in relation to sun, moon and earth’s positions toward each other. The animals adapt their movement accordingly. Some of these cycles of movement are possible to notice – for example flocks of birds gathering each spring and autumn (see also page 118) – and others we cannot see – for example the cycles in insects’ life.

Also people move in cycles. We sleep, eat and go to the toilet according to our inner biological clock. Our heart beats about 70 times each minute, and we coordinate our cycles in the brain (a little nuclear (suprachiasmatic nuclei – SCN) in hypothalamus) based on impulses mainly from retina (Völker, 2011, p. 60). This means our life follows similar rhythms (day/night) and similar periodicity. Research on people isolated for a long time showed they also coordinated their activities based on an inner clock in chronos time measured as 24 hours and 20 minutes (Gade, 1999, p. 124).

Every movement relates to the rhythm of the earth. The earth uses 365.25 chronos days to turn around the sun. This means night follows days; the moon, from our viewing point at earth, looks different (new moon, full moon etc.); the flow and ebb dances; spring follows winter and also the weather’s movements (phenomena) are part of this whole.

The inner biologic time affects growth in plants, animals and human beings, as it also follows a rhythm. Some insects live for twenty-four hours only, measured in chronos; some plants only blossom every second year, or every 17<sup>th</sup> chronos year and then they die. However, conditions in the surroundings – for example too much heat or too much rain – change the growth as the plant responds to this, ignores the inner clock and adapts (see also page 125).

Judged from within it therefore makes no sense to measure human development in chronos time; to judge whether the employee follows the bell curve and is considered

high or low in relation to value (how fast can s/he achieve the knowledge, and how fast can it be turned into own practice producing value) and in relation to age.

However, at a local level it makes sense to use the Newtonian separate time dimension to create order and in this way compensate for the Cartesian Anxiety. We notice it when life stories are organized on linear principles. We organize our stories according to childhood, decades, turning points or plots, which they are called in narrative practice.

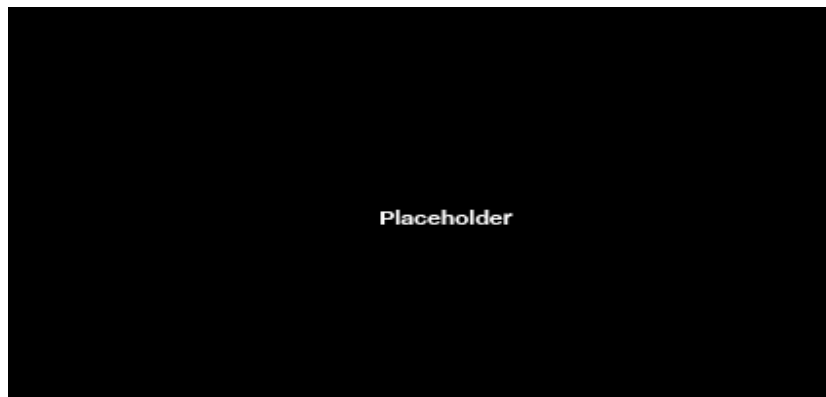


Figure 45 Time organization

As an in-house HR practitioner I participate in many recruitments and I notice how applicants prefer or are expected to put their lived experiences into a chronological curriculum vitae, and to talk about their value in relation to age and “matureness”. The expectation amongst all, including recruiters answering questions about the company’s “life”, is the presentation of a clear lifeline with reasonable explanations for any gaps. No matter how many turning points and changes, we describe our lifeline as a nice, orderly linear line, and we can explain how the orderliness continues in the future. Depending on cultural characteristics, the norms for good applicant citizenship sometimes include not having a completely perfect story, because s/he in this Cartesian way takes a position in the empty room as being aware, clear about, and taking responsibility for, the learning gaps. Recruiters crave the applicant admitting (work) life is a continuous development process.

Also, when the employee has been hired our search for order seems to continue. We use time in meetings on what has happened or we expect to happen. I listen to stories from participants in talent programmes who are concentrating on choices, turning

points, crossroads, possible directions and possible consequences – in other words uncertainty and problems of orientation (see also paragraph 6.5). They believe they judge from an aboutness view – assuming we live along a separate timeline, with changes occurring in front of us, or beside us, or already happened in the past.

Some of us search for exits to allow us to live another kind of life (imagining a new headline of our story – for example, “he chose life over work”). With this “Block view” (Dainton, 2010, p. 9) in the background, we say “time changes” or “it belongs to another paradigm” and we hope the financial crisis/

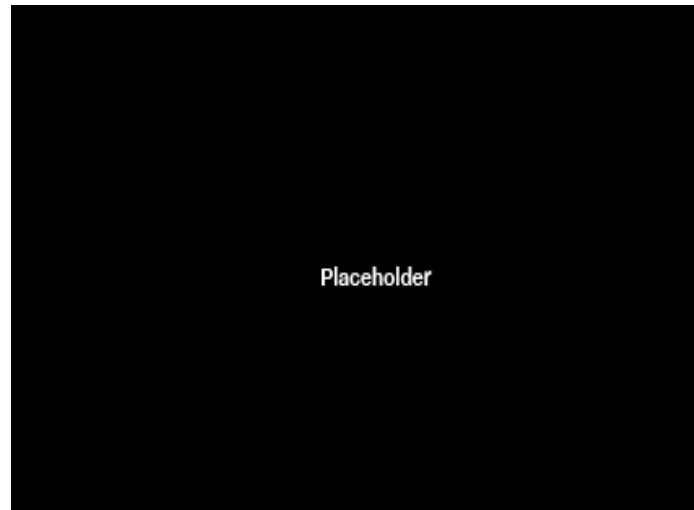


Figure 46 Time is judged as separate to our movements

recession is over soon, so the time line we are connected to can change its form again. When I meet managers preparing for their next role, they often look back on and use the past as an admission card for the future. The future is often looked upon as foggy and with two polarized solutions in relation to how to go on next. For example: 1) step out, 2) keep doing what you are doing, and hope for the best. Of course some are pointing at a positive future (e.g. using AI techniques), but despite the positive approach they are still organizing it in relation to a separate linear chronos time line.

When inviting them into a dialogue from within, it gets complex, because where is the present now (used to be looked at from about)?

Stern (2004, p. 6) comments:

*“In a narrative, the now that is being talked about has already happened. It puts past and future nows into relation. It is not a direct experience. Only the telling is happening now.”*

How can we describe it with the reversed logic? One way is to consider the narrator as the one constructing the narratives of choices and directions, believing s/he is able

to see all, so they fill into the chronos time. Our attention defines our focus (the data we judge from, see also page 57), and uses composition techniques to describe a sequence of events. Had we paid attention to other data we would compose another story, but probably still using chronos time as separate judgement. Now we try to do it reversed:

Try to think of a situation where you break an egg into the hot pan, or when you accidentally push a glass of water from the table onto the floor, or when you sneeze. Think of the sequences, you believe, you see. Then, think about at the same movements in the example you chose, but this time played backwards. Then you probably notice how the eggshells, the splinters of glass, or the micro drops of your sneeze gather into the starting point from all directions. The fragments are not spread out in one linear sequence at all, even if you decide to pay attention to only some of the fragments shaping a straightforward line. Now try to think of an episode from your life and notice how the fragments corresponding to the *eggshells, splinters of glass or micro drops* move in all kind of directions – not in one straight forward line.

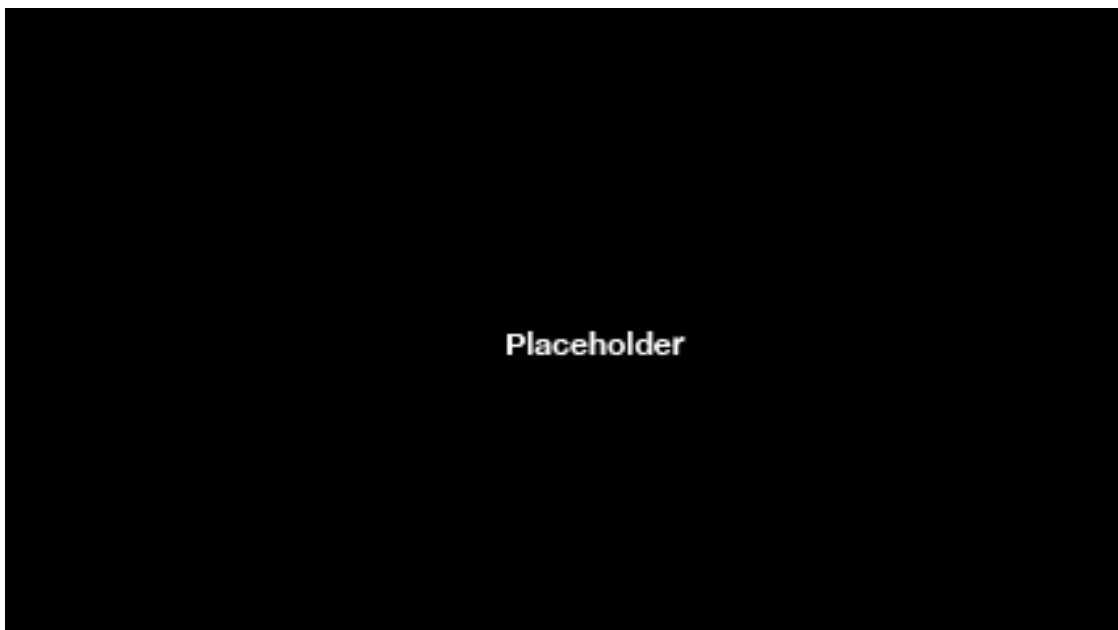
Systemic practitioners I know often refer to a scientific explanation to conclude the premise of being human: Storytelling is what distinguishes us from animals, and that we are able to “see” the difference between past, present and future. Well, let us ask a neuroscientist. Will he describe the construction of past, present and future with similar, mathematical arguments? Ernst Pöppel, professor and CEO at Human Science Centre, Munich University summarizes (Engeln, 2011, p. 68) for us:

- *There is an approximate 3 seconds time window, which we experience as “present”*
- *The time is not continually perceived, but as small packages lasting 20 to 40 milliseconds, like pearls on a chain touching each other, and by this generating the 3 seconds “now”.*
- *Within such a time package there are no before or after, but everything happens simultaneously*
- *Longer time sections than the 3 seconds “now” are overlooked by consciousness with help from our memory. Short-term memory holds onto thoughts and happenings for a few minutes. Long-term memory retains them for hours, days, years.*
- *The experience of time is based in the neural pathways (only partly known); it can be dramatically influenced by drugs or brain damage, and alters with increasing age (My translation)*

In other words what we experience is only the present now – unless you look at something from many light years ago, then it would be a past “now”. In that sense we experience the “now” just as an animal does it.

If we think back to the picture of how we capture the world into moments of 20-40 milliseconds every 100 millisecond (see page 156), and that we experience the “now”

as 3 seconds, and then we imagine we met an alien with a wider span of awareness, our notion of a past, present and future is again challenged. The lived “now” in this alien would include times you regard as past and future (example inspired by Dainton, 2010, p. 30). Because you do this categorization, it makes sense for you to explain movements you notice in the “windows” which you capture as having causation (cause and effect) on each other. In other words, because causation operates over time, not space (Dainton, 2010, p. 39), it makes sense for you to add the mathematical formula: “A” in the past added to “B” in the present, will create “C” in the future. For the alien the selected punctuations and the suggested relationship to mathematics are not meaningful. It would probably point at the change of vitality forms instead.



**Figure 47 An alien's capability to capture motion**

When we add the other vitality forms, we no longer have the one-dimensional Newtonian time causation, but instead a life consisting of moments, which we experience as a whole. We refer to these “now” moments as *when* we “get it” or as “a-ha moments”. This “now” may be less important for others and why they sequence such “nows” as “I am bored” or “time goes by slowly”. A moment we feel we “get it” and we feel alive, or which we might describe as a turning point was called “kairos” by the ancient Greeks. Stern (2004, p. 7) describes:

*“Kairos is the passing moment in which something happens as the time unfolds. It is the coming into being of a new state of things, and it happens in a moment of awareness. It has its own boundaries and escapes or transcends the passage of linear time. Yet it also contains a past. It is a subjective parenthesis set off from chronos. Kairos is a moment of opportunity, when events demand action or are propitious for action. Events have come together in this moment and the meeting enters awareness such that action must be taken, now, to alter one’s destiny – be it for the next minute or a lifetime. If no action is taken, one’s destiny will be changed anyway, but differently, because one did not act. It is a small window of becoming and opportunity.”*

Kairos is the right moment. An opportune moment. If you ask, “When are we going to meet?” you are asking for a chronos answer. However, if you ask, “Is it time to meet?” you search for a point in time with an opportunity to meet. A kairos moment can be short, like in “Is it time to take a break?” or longer, like when the farmer judges, “It is time to harvest”. Sometime kairos is present in very micro-kairos moments (Stern, 2004, p. 40) – for example when you talk with someone, judging when it’s a good time to ask or not ask a particular question.

One of the wayfinders describe kairos like this:

*T: “I have a lot of imaginations ... I guess ... because it maybe just like when you are getting divorced. Now it [the moment to act] is there, now it is not. Again, the idea is there a long time before the right moment arrives ... when it is important” (My translation)*

Some managers are preparing for the next role in such a hurry that keeping them in the “now” seems very difficult. Their future is prioritized and extended, leaving almost no attention to the present “now” – with impatient questions to the in-house HR practitioner as: “So, what is this leading to?” or “What is the next step?” Again, the judgement is based on separate actions, and a separate time dimension. Colleagues for whom the turnaround is a forced change sometimes prefer to expand the past, downplaying the “now”. They meet me with a “Yes, I notice it is getting better, but I also notice he keeps doing what he has always done...”, or “Then we got presents from the company today. Do they really believe they can buy us off with presents after this annus horribilis?”

The creativity to show agency and value in the “now” is big, even though the actual (stand)point still is related to the one of the past: “I have done everything they asked me to, and I told the manager this is not right, and I even wrote an e-mail, so this can be dealt with, because I think we should build upon the practice which is best for the

company. I just don't understand why they did not do so at an earlier state, and why it has to be me to point it out. I am not the manager, am I?"

It may seem paradoxical, but introducing the "now" for past-oriented colleagues seems to have greater effect than on the future-oriented. A participant in a Cartesian *accelerated performance programme* focussed on the future quickly paid less attention to the conversation/moment where he can experience kairos. If I am together with him/her for a week (from Monday to Friday), s/he is usually not very focused on the Monday as home still dominates, and e-mails and phone calls from home "must" be answered right away, despite game rules about other practices. It is not because of a simultaneous focus on what is happening "at home" – no, it is judged to be wise, because of the consequence *when* they return home. On the Friday similar "absence" is manifested in the room. The participants are already living in the weekend and life back home. My partners at INSEAD Business School years ago inspired me to arrange the "closing dinner" on the Thursday evening, as the participants are focusing on getting home or have left already by the Thursday.

Past-oriented colleagues remember the kairos-"now" as a past "now" and therefore it is easier later to verbalize about how attention to similar potential magic moments in the future could be noticed. Below you see an image of how we tried to use a different time approach in a leadership programme, inspired by film editing software, as the participants were to make three-minute films, to be publish on the intranet after the programme.



**Figure 48 Example of a different time approach in a leadership programme**



The programme ran from January to June. The red vertical line was movable according to the actual chronos “now”, but at the same time indicating the multiple layers existing simultaneously. Just like the eggshells from before (see page 167) from different (stand)points lead into a coherent whole, orchestrated as a closing event in June. The icons referred to the different ways we were going to meet the activities (e.g. face-to-face or through web writing). There were even activities after the closing event, to indicate a continuity in the movement we were creating.

For some it made perfect sense. For others it was “too fluffy” in relation to the traditional, measurable real time perspective. The participants were divided into minor groups to prepare and create the three-minutes film portraying what the turnaround was all about – in a dialogical way so the audience *felt* the message, or came across it through an everyday situation, which most would be able to relate to, rather than having it explained. Groups “exploring” a whole, had a collaborative film preparation process, whereas others worked as individualists in the groups, complaining and prioritizing what made sense to them as individuals. The changes were notable in the outcome of the film as well – some told stories with depth portraying kairos moments (stand)points, movements and feelings. Others presented a linear story with strong references to tools and aboutness (epistemé) knowledge.

The interviews I carried out with wayfinders (see description page 36) with lived experience in change, all distinguished from the Cartesian “talents” I work with, when it comes to “the future”. Their judgement and therefore also attention are at very different points. Below you see some of the differences. I took the statements from the “talent monitoring reports” I once used in a talent, high performance programme and from the interviews with wayfinders. The question both groups are answering is: “How do you relate to the future?”

High performer in a talent programme	Wayfinder
<p>“If I show ability to successfully complete agreed activities and in parallel keep successful performance in my current role, it will be noticed by others. There is no guarantee I am offered a new job after competing the programme. However in case I</p>	<p>L: “I don’t like thinking too much about the future ... it makes me think of things, which could happen, like death. The most important thing is that myself and my family are happy (...) and being master in my own house, director in my own little ... universe and</p>

<p>continue with good results, I am prepared for the possibility the following tasks have been agreed" [a list of tasks is mentioned]</p>	<p>saying here it is me who takes the decisions (...) "No, I am not doing long-term planning ... I just get disappointed (...) or maybe I start thinking over things which are not nice ... that we are going to die."</p>
<p>"The orientation discussed is to focus on appearance and experience but also building up tools and knowledge."</p>	<p>U: "I bought this book with exercises (...) and responding to your question about the future, one of the exercises is about imagining you are going to die and then trying to make a basket of all the things you would like to do before you die. That is in fact scary to do (...) also to experience I am getting older ... without having done a lot of these balance sheets, it is a scary feeling (...) very scary I must say."</p>
<p>"I have not changed perspective on this orientation but rather reinforced the ambition to move up and take on the challenge of having management responsibilities. In addition I would say that my future role, objectives and the development path is clearer now following input from my manager. This is still a process for continuous honing in order to be 100%."</p>	<p>E: "How I live or what I buy? No, I was never actually doing that. It was more about, this is what I would feel when I am there...."</p>
<p>"Here is my selection criteria for going for a new position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job must be interesting and challenging - otherwise I get restless and bored.</li> <li>• The package must match the profile and requirements.</li> <li>• The location must be one that my family can live with."</li> </ul>	<p>T: "I am going to live in [country's name]. It is not a dream, but I am 100 percent certain it is going to happen. Ever since I was there the first time, I felt at home. It is quite funny, my husband had never been there and then when we arrived there to get married he said "Now I've come home".</p>
<p>"Head of [department's name]" and being a member of [division's name] management team.</p>	<p>S: "Recently, when my husband and I talked about moving, we also talked about our children (...) I am beginning to think I am</p>

<p>Extended responsibility through strategy and product management. Closer Link to divisional level (strategy), closer link to factories (product management); bigger influence through management team. Larger team (from appr. 15 to 30); Increased complexity!”</p>	<p>actually doing my kid a favour ... by taking him out into the real world, so he learns to be in it, so he does not expect to be in the same place in ten years, with the same kids in ten years. (...) I never understood those who do not think this to be exciting.”</p>
<p>“My manager see’s potential in me due to high performance and outside-in thinking over the last couple of years and he wishes to fast-track me to a higher level in the immediate future to drive the [division’s name] objectives and for this he thinks it is important for me to participate in this program to learn new skills and benefit from others’ experience. He does not believe there is any reason to wait.”</p>	<p>A: “I am so excited (..) I have a million plans and I take the different jobs to learn (...) Besides family focus I would like to change some things. I would like a job where I am recognized for my skills ... but it is difficult for me to say “today I do this, tomorrow I do this”; that’s not how I am thinking.”</p>

After the interviews I asked the wayfinders to write a letter to me, about where the conversation led them – but dated and written as if they were in the year 2020 reflecting back on events. I often ask the participants in programmes to do a similar exercise, and again there are differences. My findings show wayfinders are occupied with feelings and if they felt comfortable in the room (well, only half of them sent me the letter – many found it too difficult an exercise). The feelings are more important than defining a “home” with Cartesian metrics. Cartesian individuals are portraying the future in the first realm, symbols for power and being worthy of the citizenship – not relating to “home” at all.

### 6.3.3 Time & discontinuity

Humans like repetition and the rhythm which unfolds from it. We already explored how the rhythm of sun, moon and earth are also noticed within us. When the time contour does not bring rhythm and repetition, we become aware of it right away. We like music with a recognizable chorus, and we search for similarities with which we are familiar when we explore new arenas. Speakers use it, commercial specialists use it, and journalists use it.

Bateson (2002, p. 90) demonstrated this point to his students by making a heavy dot on the blackboard with a piece of chalk, almost crushing the chalk a little bit in order to create some thickness on the blackboard. If he put his finger directly, vertically onto the dot, he could not feel it. However, if he moved his finger from the blackboard and over the dot and then back to the blackboard, he would be able to identify the edge of the dot, how big it was etc. In other words something from the non-organic world becomes the cause of an event (e.g. a phenomenon), because we are moving. He also used the movement to show students how this was interpreted as a discontinuity (the name of the phenomenon) in terms of time, which we then suddenly are touched by. He demonstrated how our sensory system can only operate with *events*, which we call *changes* (Bateson, 2002, p. 90).

What about dramatic events, crises or other turning points in one's life, you may wonder?

Well, movement and time in relationship create change for you, the other, or the otherness, if you are not in sync with the moving "other". I describe "in sync" as moving within a similar time contour (speed) as, for example, the turnaround. If you could prepare for it you may judge it as suitable rather than "unfair" or "old fashioned", if you moved slower or faster with it.

So, does time stand still, when we experience rapid change?

Neuroscientist David Eagleman (Engeln, 2011, p. 72) researched whether time is actually experienced as slower within dramatic events. He asked a sample of people to jump from thirty meters into a net and showed them a sequence of numbers very quickly so that they were not decipherable. Even though they experienced the falling as taking a long time, they were not able to decipher the numbers. Eagleman concluded the time packages (the time windows surrounding our awareness, see also page 167) store more intensively when we are in life-threatening situations, because in such situations we need all the details we can to inform us in a similar situation in the future. If the launch of a turnaround is experienced as a life or job-threatening episode, it feels as if it lasts a long time and gives more intense memories.



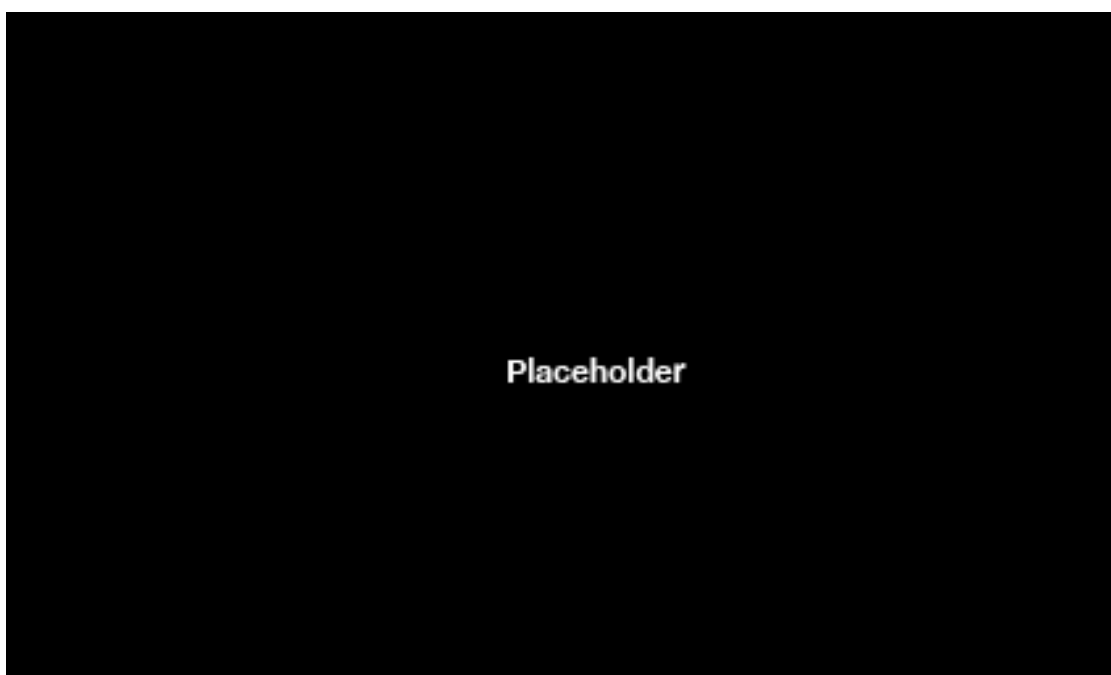
Figure 49 Time & the genre of danger

According to Bateson (2002, p. 92) humans have a high sensitivity to rapid change (as illustrated above with the curves in relation to time), but it is more difficult for us to notice gradual change, because we adapt. It is difficult for us to distinguish between something changing very slowly and not changing at all. It is difficult for us noticing changes if they happen in our social affairs or the near environment around us, as we get used to them before our senses can tell us something has changed. Therefore we use clocks and statistics to point out events or plots, which we can later connect up and conclude whether there is a change or not and whether this is a “difference, which makes a difference” (Bateson, 2000, p. 462 – see also page 140).

Rapid changes like the immediate consequences of a turnaround therefore make a bigger impression on human systems, than the slow changes for example today almost every grown up in Denmark own a mobile phone compared with ten years ago. Bateson (2002, p. 91) uses a rather cruel example of a frog in a saucepan of cold water to illustrate the point. Imagine you put a frog into a saucepan with boiling water ... it immediately jumps out. However, if you put it in a saucepan with cold water, and then let the temperature rise slowly ... the frog does nothing, and eventually it gets boiled.

A turnaround is not about mobile phones or frogs, but for some about losing jobs and identity and for others about getting used to new practices and norms. We have higher sensitivity to a new strategy involving people being laid off from one day to another or when the manager is suddenly “replaced” by someone with another style of performing the vitality forms, than of gradual changes of practice.

In other words the judgement criteria used by the in-house HR practitioner and the employee are very different and are influenced by when they meet, and the occasion they meet. I think of it as the difference between meeting a person in everyday life, and in the emergency room:



**Figure 50 Speed of change (time) & possible responses**

In other words movement, space and time (but also the two last vitality forms) are involved in our judgement criteria, because we feel a discontinuity. We call them change if they happen instantly, during a short time (but without movement into the space) and transformation if they happen gradually, over a long time and with simultaneous movement into the space. Squeezing the events into a short time, the *change* gets more intense and is experienced as more dramatic – like for example when someone is hit by a stroke or by a car and dies. Not only do we mourn the loss, we also reorient more quickly if we get “first aid” from a caring and competent person, who is not “hit” by the accident him/herself or if we ourselves have had first aid

training. If this is not possible, our movement, the space we orient towards, and the timing of our activity are shaped by the “accident” in which we are immersed.

If an event occurs gradually, for example when someone is dying of cancer or dementia, we do mourn, especially each time we notice a *change* in the condition, but we are adapting and the relationship is gradually transforming (or we struggle to keep both ourselves and the other in the same position in space as we were). Please see these examples as pointers to show the difference. I am aware that living with a terminally ill patient (I have tried it) may just as well be experienced with similarly dramatic effects of change as an instantaneous change. I am not suggesting that rapid change is worse than transformation, especially when we look at forced change/transformation.

The phenomenon of discontinuity is often demonstrated with examples from music. Stern (2010, p. 82) refers to well-known codes or dynamic markers of trained musicians (intensity, flow, tempo, rhythm). Non-musicians are not aware of the importance of these markers in writing and playing music. The music has an intensity, flow, tempo and rhythm in which we instantly notice any discontinuities, by immediately shifting the orbit of arousal. By listening for only a few seconds you are able to hear which genre (rock, country, or reggae, say) a group plays and if they are playing the same song. Nigel Osborne, professor of Music at Edinburgh University (2009, p. 551) invites us to try it out:

*“Let us imagine we are listening to a drum playing a simple pulse. We hear a beat, it catches our attention, we hear it again and already we know its cycle. By the third beat we have entered a frame where we have no need to remember what has gone before and we anticipate exactly what is going to come – and we may well be impelled to move our body. In one sense we are locked physically and mentally into an illusory “timeless” unchanging present. In another we are scrupulously marking the passage of time, and engaged in, paying attention to, its dynamic processes. If this is the case, then the presence of pulse offers a kind of “homeostasis” or self-stabilizing and ordering to consciousness, a place where it can “play”, and “hang out” with others. We, individually and collectively, are synchronized, activated and reconciled with our personal and sympathetic human chronobiology.”*

If we think back to the wayfinder describing the uncomfortableness when someone looks at you (aboutness view), it is the rhythm of the dialogue, which is interrupted, that she is noticing. One person in the conversation is suddenly not following the turn-taking rhythm of the dialogue.

If you have been to a rock concert you probably noticed the tricks the band uses to draw the attention of the audience, encouraging the audience clap and dance to the rhythm of the drum, and making them feel the pulse of another body moving. Just imagine the possibilities this would give us if a turnaround were linked to the vitality forms from music (the harmonic tunes, of course!).

So is it the same turnaround the new employee is introduced to? Judged from about (absolute time) the answer is “yes”, allowing us to reuse the story and the slides from the meeting which intends to inform, so new employees can get up to speed. However, judged from within we expect the phenomenon would have transformed since the first meeting, including people’s responses as they have moved on. So they would answer “no” to this question. On an employees first working day when introduced to the turnaround, the “turnaround” has most likely changed form to “new strategy”. So it is his/her first acquaintance with it and a new relationship begins. A newer one than the colleagues making their acquaintances a year ago. However, Shotter advises us not to forget the fragments of the turnaround, which he describes as a carry-over (2011a, p. 73):

*“There are no separate “befores” and “afters” in a flow of activity; each moment has within it a “carry over” from the past and a quite specific anticipation of the future, just as the recipient of a question feels (...) a compellent need to reply with an answer to it.”*

And so we return to the pivotal points (see also page 117), which shape the movement, which again shape the pivotal points – keeping our attention on the flow, instead of the chronos slots, making us judge quite differently.

## 6.4 Force

Different disciplines talk *about* different forces influencing our movements: Psychology of “motives” and “intentions; cognitive psychology and neuroscience of “values that attract”; psychoanalysis of “desires”, “wishes” or “drives”; biology of “triggering activation” or “releasing fixed action patterns”; and philosophy of “the will”, Stern (2010, p. 22).

Stern, however, would like to focus on the movement and its relation to our *imagining* the force(s) “within” or “behind” the movement (Stern, 2010, p. 4) which may or may not resonate with our intentions and the directionality of the movement. He reminds us that the forms of vitality are subjective phenomena, and arise from how we receive



the dynamic expressions from any source, “real” or “imagined” – and therefore also the “force” we believe is behind it all. He continues (Stern, 2010, p. 22):

*“Although we know that movement, as a purely physical phenomenon, is explicable in terms of anatomy, biochemistry, and physiology, we nonetheless have a tendency to attach the feeling-perception of force, energy, power, and vigor to human movement. We read these attributes into the actions of others, and experience them emanating from our own actions”*

In other words the entire three seconds (see page 167) captured by the dominant visual sense and supported by the other senses is a whole we experience as a corporeal (bodily) “image” which we do nothing more to, or try to confirm or disconfirm by searching for suitable data. We not only see the image, we feel it, we are in it.

We are not always aware of this – especially if we have an aboutness approach to life, which enables us to explain and analyse using social constructionist models like CMM in a search for forces. The why. Where to look in the context: is it the culture? Is it the childhood of the other person or oneself? Is it the company’s financial situation? Is it the relationship with the manager? Is it something in this meeting, in this speech act? These analyses and explanations give certainty to the aboutness viewer who is then able to act, maybe even believing they can control the force, by getting rid of the triggers.

To show us that we are living right in the middle of forces related to our movements, Stern (2010, p. 82) makes an analogy to the loudness in music. A pianist uses more weight in his/her hands to achieve a louder sound (*fortissimo*), which is instantly felt by the audience. Together with time, the force turns into changes in intensity; growing intensity (*crescendo*) and decreasing intensity (*decrescendo*). Also the physiotherapist (we met at page 111) noticed how someone’s handshake, eye contact and their movement were intense and resourceful, or vague and with less resources. She was not (only) adapting her practice singularly to what the other person’s was telling her, but judging by a whole corporeal impression of the other person.

If we compare the examples of shifts in intensity from above with the shifts in a conversation, we notice how it may affect the rules of turn taking (see more about turn taking in for example Clayman, 2013, 150). It is through your corporeal imagination you judge in order to tune into the turn taking (the rhythm). Suddenly, the other person raises his voice, speaks quickly, and shows you facial expressions, which indicate he

does not share your imagination. You may not reflect on what happened or include a question about it into the conversation, but your body has noticed the difference, and this difference shapes how you will later consider the episode – if you are going to think about it at all. In other words, the movement and imagination are interlaced, and it is impossible to separate out where movement begins and imagination ends. The one informs the other – inextricably (Sheets-Johnstone, 2009, p. 39).

When the rhythm is interrupted because the intensity changes the phenomenon of *poise* can be noticed. Todes (2001, p. 66) describes:

*“To be poised is to be self-possessed by being in touch with one’s circumstances. To lose touch is immediately to lose one’s poise. One can, in considerable ignorance of one’s circumstances, pretend and even appear to others to have poise in the given circumstances. But one can never actually be poised, and one can never appear to oneself to have poise, in circumstances with which one is presently out of touch.”*

When I am poised I “know” corporeally what I am doing, in my surroundings, with others and otherness. Our Cartesian friend would probably name it as “being in control” or “being grounded” in relation to something separate from me, and it being only my movements or the other’s movement we analogically focus on.

Judged from within, the bodily coordination is emphasized and felt and it is not possible to distinguish between yourself, the objects revealing themselves to you directly, and the surroundings. If you bicycle you might remember how it felt like the first time you kept balance, and were momentarily thrown off-balance. You had to consider your own movements, the bike and the ground! These days you probably quickly recover the balance and the poise so that you, the bike and the ground are like one dynamic flow of movement. Maybe you notice professional racing cyclists and how they are sitting on the bike in tight curves. Their poise is the way they move according to circumstantial objects, without being on alert (see also habituating page 131). When we are thrown off-balance we try to compensate so that poise is regained, like a thermostat. Within neurology this bodily phenomenon is called homeostasis (e.g. Gade, 1999, p. 42). However we will not go further into this.

The intensity of the vitality form is related to the corporeal judgement of distance (Merleau-Ponty, 1970, p. 4) from the five vitality forms, and we can use it to guide us like a compass (Shotter (2011b)).

Inspired by Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009 and 1970) we can distinguish between corporal imagination and reflective imagination. The sensing and the emotion are related, but very different activities.



**Figure 51 Our body as central**

The corporeal imagination is related to our spatiotemporal being in the world. We respond instantly when we are thrown off-balance. Sometimes we reflect on what happened, other times we do not. Some are tuned in, for example with music, and they instantly sense the shifts in intensity. Others unfamiliar with music may not notice the nuances. However, if we are operating at a higher level of arousal, for example because we are thrown off-balance in the world, it shapes the thoughts and stories we tell about the situation. Not the other way around. It happens “before you know it”, unless you really know what you are doing; then you know what you are doing (Todes, 2001, p. 64).

I often compare the intensity with someone struggling for survival. Just think about a child in the swimming pool for the first time – accidentally and unexpectedly getting water in the mouth and eyes, immediately performing as if about to drown. Johnson (2008, p. 57) describes:

*“In short, whatever else a living organism does, it must at all costs continually monitor its own internal bodily states. If it fails to do so, it can risk losing the homeostasis necessary for life or, less dramatically, for smooth functioning. It is especially important to know when there are changes in internal bodily states and then to develop ways of modulating the internal milieu so as to either preserve or re-establish a relative homeostasis for the whole system. Otherwise, the organism will fall out of harmony with its environment and cease to function adequately within its current situation, and in extreme cases it may even die.”*

In a company the rhythm is interrupted all the time: Phones, mail, colleagues popping by. We get used to it, or at least we try to adapt. However, when the intensity is changed we immediately notice it as a different force from the movement we anticipated as our next step. If we do not know the other person very well – and we sometimes do not because of frequent job shifts – we do not know his style (for example the sediments, which are the layers of many years of movement with a preferred style of intensity), and we may judge he is speaking more intensively because of something we said, or indeed that this is not a dialogue but a quarrel. In a company experiencing a turnaround the responses of different intensity are floating around in the room constantly.

The hierarchical splitting of the corporate space into territories where we are included in some, and excluded from others, forces our movement into actions trying to solve the dilemmas of power: Should I confront the person with his style, or should I explore why he feels this way? Should I take the raising of his voice into account, or should I ignore it, as he seems to do? Should I act now, or wait till later, when he has cooled down? For an aboutness viewer addressing the change of intensity may have the opposite effect if the person is searching for recognition. The one who is bringing attention to the shift in intensity may be considered averse to emotions, or not able to recognize the different styles of performing emotions or too sensitive.

I notice how this vitality form gives participants, in the training programmes I ran, the most challenges, and the most common reason for doubting their own worth and value. A senior executive once described to me how he tried to maintain the same level on his “sinus-emotion-intensity-curve”. Never getting too happy, never too sad. His judgement was based on his lived experience of how the shifts affected the system too much. Do I need to add his employees found him boring and robotic?

#### **Karen; + 250 days a.t**

Karen has worked a long time for the company. Her reputation among colleagues suggests she is very well organized, is someone you can approach for advice and who is very helpful and dedicated to her job. Like many of her colleagues, Karen’s job changed recently. Karen had several managers and she moved her workstation three times during the last year.

One day a colleague from another department calls Karen on the phone. He asks for support on an assignment in which Karen’s department specialized. Karen carefully explains the rules, the responsibilities, and the processes. It takes a while to explain, because the required actions both include insights to legal matters and technology and to forms, which have to be filled out.

The colleague does not respond as Karen assumed he would do. He starts to interrupt, and repeats his needs, this time with a slightly different tone of the voice – more direct, more intense. He describes how he thinks Karen should provide him the service and a way to find a solution. Karen repeats the standard operational procedures (SOP), but agrees when the colleague suggests they meet face-to-face to talk things over.

Waiting for the meeting to come, Karen checks the SOP again, asks her colleagues about the procedures, and tries to get hold of her manager, Sarah. She wants to find out why the rules are constructed as they are. Karen was never involved in any conversations about new rules, and she starts to get nervous that her manager may have missed something in the SOP design, the day at the meeting room where she sat with other managers and designed the SOPs. She had missed important details before.

The manager is not in her office, and does not return any of Karen's phone messages.

Now, Karen sits in the meeting room with the complaining colleague from before. A second colleague accompanies him and they open the meeting by saying: "Are you really suggesting we should use time to fill out these forms, just because your stupid rule is saying so? Do you know what that means for lost profit, because we use time on this and not the customers?" The tone is unfriendly and loud.

Karen makes a gesture towards the coffee she has prepared for them, placed at the table. The other colleague shakes his head, meaning "no", without moving his eyes from Karen to the coffee pot. Karen replies that they all three have to think towards what is best for the company, and that she should report to her manager if rules are not followed. The colleague, now getting up from his chair almost shouts at Karen: "Is this the best you can come up with? I am going to send this up the system".

The two colleagues leave the room.

Karen walks back to her desk. She is thinking about the episode. She is almost certain what will happen now. Her manager, Sarah, will approach her with the famous "do you have two minutes?" as soon as she has read the complaining e-mail which is being written about Karen in this moment. Sarah would react immediately, by asking her to describe the episode, and then asking a few questions. Then, she would tell her that Karen was wrong or the rule was wrong, or that she, Sarah, has suddenly decided on an exception to this rule for the angry colleague. Sarah would most likely use the expression: "We are measured on customer loyalty index, and we have to close the case, or this would escalate".

Karen's inner dialogue is interrupted by the phone ringing. It is a colleague asking for advise, but before he can move on, Karen interrupts, her voice rather sharp: "I want to draw your attention on the procedures. It is not I who made the rules, but I will be happy to assist you on the extra work that this rule requires of you, if you think the rules are taking up too much of your time?"

#### **6.4.1 Upbringing – and the getting use to changes in intensity**

When we explore a turnaround it is tempting to relate to employees as homogeneous without any experience with change. If we change this premise we soon notice that everybody has lived experience, and especially with changes of intensity, feeling off-balance or just overwhelmed. It can be death in the family, or it can be an accident with the bike.

As Gergen concluded earlier (see page 100) it takes enormous cultural education to perform an emotion as well as the degree of intensity we judge as suitable. We are socially educated early. Stern (2010, p. 106) describes that when he looks at the development of social play between a baby of roughly 2.5 months to about six months and the parents, they become richer, and the baby becomes a real partner. He continues how he use it in his work (Stern, 2010, p. 106):

*“Social play (face to face) then becomes one of the best windows for quickly obtaining a privileged view of the clinical situation. It reveals when parenting is easy or hard, natural or forced, intrusive, controlling, disorganized, passive, aggressive, rejecting, etc. This can guide treatment.”*

Stern describes how the parents are the “sound-light show” (Stern, 2010, p. 107) in which the baby can play different states of arousals and intensity. The child grows up and what it learned in the first 18 months of its life is used and fine-tuned every day.

The movements within the environment in which the child is brought up are like sediments from the river, where the movement of water has been/is (Ingold, 2011b, p. 47 is referring to the creation of forms in the landscape, where the movement of water has been/is. The idea of sediments and river is inspired by Fischer, 2012, p. 113). The adult is a product of sedimentation, and for children with lived experiences of a world with many changes in intensity, many situations with risks of easily being thrown off-balance, sometimes without a grown-up to teach and show calmness, they may not learn to distinguish between sensing and emotion. For others attention on these shifts is sharpened and they get used to quickly judging whether to get into a state of alarm or not. One of the wayfinders describes:

A: *“I remember when I moved from home in [year], then all of a sudden I experienced ...you know I suddenly had the freedom and a quietness in a way, right, because there were no one behind the door lurking, or listening to my phone conversations, or something like that ... When I think back on it now ... Well ... no one never helped me or anything, or told me or prepared me on anything, right. (...)*

B: *“Why do you think this apartment was important for you – you know, what drew you to own apartment?”*

A: *“The peace and quietness – to get some peace (...) in a way it was not safe to be at home (...) I never knew what was going to happen”*

B: *“What could make you uncertain?”*

A: *“Coming home after school and then ... you'd never know if any drunk persons would sit at the kitchen table, or whether mum was sleeping on the couch, or laying unconscious ... unconscious in the sense she was sleeping very deep. When I visited*

*my dad, I could get nervous that she would forget to come and pick me up at the train station. I happened once (...) I remember she smoked and she was drunk, and she was blaming us kids ...” (My translation)*

These children grow up and get jobs in companies where they might experience turnaround – the wayfinder above is one of the dandelion children who managed to break the mould and create a new life because she had important role models who believed in her, cared for her and guided and showed her other possible ways of living. Thus the anxiety elicited resources within her. However, what also seems to distinguish her from other grown-ups in a turnaround situation is how she and the other wayfinders related to the events. Those I have met, corporeally sensed the phenomena instantly, by constant paying attention and noticing changes in what other people said and the way they said it. They distinguish between sensing and emotion. They are seldom thrown off-balance as others are, even though they do not like it and use a lot of time to think about it.

#### **6.4.2 Illness**

Not only do we all have lived experience of change, we also meet, or are related to someone, or hear about someone whose life is affected in other ways. Some people face the world with a high intensity, restlessness and ready boredom, by trying to keep focussed on many objects simultaneously, by always being alert, interrupting others in conversations, having difficulty paying full attention when others are talking, forgetting appointments or where important papers have been placed, do not consider other’s frustrations, get frustrated themselves very easily, or act impulsively. Our Cartesian colleague would perhaps diagnose them as ADHD or PTSD. Our aboutness systemic colleague would relate to a discourse and linguistics about a problem occurring because of relational issues. From within we would be interested in exploring the lived experiences of this way of meeting the world, therefore connecting the corporeal consciousness with the reflective consciousness – relating these sensations to feelings of loneliness, living through grief, feeling sad, shy, or anxious, for example – as healthy responses to an unhealthy situation, which in the long term can take hold of the person, diverting him/her away from us, from themselves or result in our distancing from the image we used to relate to. If we try to see the person like we once did, s/he does not really seem to be there. We notice the phenomena instead in the foreground, almost like sitting in front of the person, pushing him/her in the background, so we really have to struggle to see through. If a person is getting ill,

s/he is no longer “in” the world as s/he used to be, in a state of alarm, lacking the wisdom of how to get back on balance again (the point is inspired by Finlay, 2011, p. 236). The wisdom is related to judgement criteria such as whether you believe the state of alarm will fade away again, and you will return back to homeostasis, or whether you believe this is a state which is going to be permanent. Van den Berg describes (1972, p.45):

*“To be ill means above all, to experience things in a different way, to be different yonder, to live in another, maybe hardly different, maybe completely different world”*

The state of alarm is carried over to other environments (for example, family, a shopping situation), and is no longer only related to the space in which they originally related. The phenomenon gets a grip inside and usually relaxation techniques are no longer enough to regain poise. The phenomenon now inhabits your body and the sediments and traces your movements leave behind witness this transformation. Now, you learn the hard way that mind and body are related because you can no longer decide separately on your next actions while your body’s corporeal imaginations shape your thoughts. Thoughts of orientation are probably not your first priority, but to survive and protect yourself. It is no longer something which will fade away soon.

In my practice I may rarely get to fully understand the other person’s lived experience and the links to the shifts in intensity. To live in a world with continuous uncomfortable feelings can be difficult to work with – especially in the midst of a turnaround situation. Because of legislation I have to be careful what I ask about and can only aim at intensifying the preparation for turnaround, so others anticipate a certain period with high-stress level, where an intensive focus on regaining balance is involved, so the state of alarm does not become permanent. Often norms for how to do this are non-existent and it becomes a battle situation. However, even in real war, there are established norms and rules for how the action and mission are executed, including breaks so the trained soldiers can bodily “calm down” again.

#### **6.4.3 The power of the novice**

One of the wayfinders says it is cultural differences which determine what is included as important social phenomena to pay attention to:



*S: "Well, I am not an expert in Danish culture, or the like, but maybe it is because of the intensive focus on the social aspects that everybody needs to be included, and everybody has to be together, and everybody is supposed to ... which has many positive aspects. There can also be a ... negative side to it, which is that you may not be different, and you may not think you are different, and you are not allowed to act as if you are better ... this I experience." (My translation)*

Others would refer to the Scandinavian phenomenon "Jante" which allows us to criticize individual's success as inappropriate (from the Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose's story "A fugitive crosses his tracks" (1933/1994)). Others would point at ethical, democratic reasons.

I would like to introduce "reason" from "about". A newly appointed HR director who was proud not to know anything about HR described the assumption from the CEO's office that initiatives from the HR director's office would be met more positively by the managers and employees if she was more like them. The novice position was "judged" as the most innocent and agenda-less, and therefore judged as good citizenship, as it would demand analysis into "all" opportunities before a solution would be chosen.

Now, let us explore from "within", with the reversed logic.

As shown earlier we get used to the new circumstances and we regain balance. The poise is related to how experienced we are in the field. Employees used to turnarounds and dramatic changes enter the new situation in quite different ways from employees experiencing the phenomenon for the first time.

In a turnaround situation everything shifts and even the tiny changes in intensity, which were allowed in the past may suddenly be forbidden (or vice versa).

We need much information from the joint actions with others before we are able to recognize how someone moves, how they get angry etc. When we are touched by the turnaround we have to learn all of this all over again, as we no longer embrace the world from the same (stand)point as our now outsourced colleague, our degraded friend, our new boss, our new roommates, or the different kind of service we are expected to deliver to the customer. What used to be in the background suddenly appears in the foreground, which complicates what we are trying to focus on.



Figure 52 "*Sky and Water I*"

My point is that both views exist. It is just like walking inside a rainbow full of all possible colours – and if you ever have been inside a rainbow you have experienced how this may make you feel uncomfortable; for example, if you shift between the colours too fast, or if you are not able to discriminate between them. The person entering later than you into the rainbow experiences a different after-image because her retina has not been capturing the light for as long a time as you have, still adjusting and co-producing.

Have I ever been inside a rainbow you may wonder? No, of course not, but almost; the artist Olafur Eliasson created a rainbow on top of the art museum in Aarhus, Denmark. He builds upon the theory of colours as suggested from Goethe (1840/2006).



Figure 53 "*Your rainbow panorama*"

Eliasson wishes to show us how the objects throw different colours back to us in relation to which colour (or lens of experience) we explore them through.

Sometimes, paradoxically, the person with the least experience is appointed to lead large turnaround processes, determining thousands of humans' professional destinies, because s/he is asking the right aboutness questions regarding certainty and presenting a perspective which shows us the one world at its best. I call it "the power of the novice". Because everything in the situation changes we act as if we are all novices, setting aside our own judgement criteria and accepting new and inverted power relationships – the experienced have to follow the inexperienced. Novices become wayfinders and mapmakers expecting others to follow, although they barely know their way around themselves and have little experience to draw from.

Flyvbjerg (2009, p. 20) refers to an experiment in USA some years ago. Videos recorded six lifeguards individually carrying out CPR; five were novices, and the sixth was an experienced lifeguard. The videos were shown to three different audiences who were asked to select the lifeguard they would prefer to be saved by, should the accident happen. The majority of the first group, who were all experienced lifeguards, pointed out the experienced lifeguard. Half of the second group, the novices attending training programmes, chose the experienced lifeguard. About 30 percent of the third group of the lifeguard trainers were able to point out the experienced lifeguard.

Flyvbjerg concludes the trainers look for the lifeguard trainee who most strictly follows the rules they had been taught in the programme – the good lifeguard citizen was closely related to following the rules (Flyvbjerg, 2009, p. 35). However, the paradox is that only novices follow the rules (techné), experts adapt the rules and use their phronetic wisdom.

In a company I once worked for within a very hierarchical structure (territorial division of space) and where there was no appreciation of the phenomenon of communities of practice, the CEO thought that when senior management was thrown off-balance, everybody would be thrown off-balance. Therefore external consultants were called in to organize the design of new practices and so on. However, referring to Flyvbjerg's example, the novice cannot recognize the expert, but the expert can easily recognize the novice. When a novice is appointed to lead processes based on no lived experience, the consequences are often dramatic. Experienced practitioners are

asked to describe their practice in detail, indirectly training the new manager in the field. I witnessed many episodes where experienced practitioners were not even invited to join conversations about new standards for the praxis. In some cases it happened deliberately, in others it happened because the novice simply did not recognize the expertise. If you risk losing your job you are likely to follow the new set of “rules” set up by your new manager, or the trainer who is hired to determine new best practices.

### Herbert; + 364 days a.t

Herbert was lying on the couch. He tried to take a power nap but the thoughts about work kept him awake. His body was like a tight bow, not allowing him to relax. It was Sunday afternoon and his wife of forty-five years was cleaning the house. “You ought to give me a hand”, she shouted from upstairs. “I have a headache”, he replied, while getting up from the couch. He took some aspirins, returned to the couch and turned on the TV. “Why don’t you quit that stupid job?” his wife replied, the vacuum cleaner still going. “Why can’t you relax like everyone else at your age? It would do you good if you started dusting the living room!”

Herbert didn’t answer but browsed monotonically through the 60 TV channels available. He ought to take retirement. He was the right age, and he had always said how he would leave at a certain age and focus on his garden and family. He and his wife would visit the children and grandchildren living around the world. What a stupid, romantic, naïve dream, Herbert sighed. Now such a life did not seem attractive at all. Would he be bored, and what about all the competencies he achieved over the last 40 years? Would he now be labelled as *old*, only able to talk about garden and family? No longer someone who had value in society, but someone dependent on other’s contribution?

He enjoyed his working life. He was a salesman and he liked working with the customers. Of course he sensed the age in his body, but technology made it possible to demonstrate some of the physical heavy products he used to carry himself. And he did not suffer from Alzheimer’s or was not any slower to adapt to changes than the next person. He even still got up for others on the bus, and did not take the seat when someone politely offered him one.

No, what bothered Herbert, were the younger colleagues. “They are slower than I, and take several more breaks than I do.... They take less responsibility ... But no one seems to notice ... My boss is incompetent, and needs to call for meetings every time I or others raise a topic, and he always takes the credit for my work ... I always have to clean up his mess. No one really seems to care about the customer – and then I am told I have either to consider my retirement or a retreat job ... Why? ... Can’t they see the customer come to me again and again? I make a difference!?! What has my age to do with anything? What about my experience? I, too, am able to use the Internet .... I have a Facebook profile and I am top tuned and updated into customer trends and tendencies as I update myself via newsletters and conferences ... My daughter says it is all about my belief system... I think and construct all of this. I should think differently, and value I am allowed to be unvalued, because I deserve a rest.”

Of course Herbert knew the daughter worried because of Herbert’s too high blood pressure forcing him to take three pills for the rest of his life, but Herbert knew she also would use him as babysitter – and he really didn’t want to turn his home into a kindergarten.

“Maybe I should ask for help in HR ... no they are too inexperienced too, and they would probably not do anything but tell my manager ... and they would together diagnose me as an

angry old man ... and then I will be asked to go on retirement immediately. I will not get the choice”.

The doorbell interrupted Herbert. It was Karen his niece. She had been crying and Herbert knew the visit had something to do with what happened at work. He bloomed, felt alive, energized, invaluable and needed. “Hi Karen, nice to see you, please come in.”

Expertise has nothing to do with age, although in an aboutness, chronos view we may measure this. A child practicing soccer all his childhood may very well be selected to be the best player in the world at a very young age. A young person who had many coordination responsibilities in the family may take this expertise into the job market and turn out to be selected as leader of the year at a very young age. But who has the legitimate right to recognize the expertise?

One approach which portrays from within is five different mastering levels of practice based on the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (1980); “novice”, “advanced beginner”, “competent”, “proficient”, and “expert”.



Figure 54 The Novice–Expert continuum

An experienced fireman once told me how the novice, on a long shift, often lays awake in the night filled with arousal and readiness to act. The experienced sleeps whenever it is possible, because s/he does not know how long it will be before

another opportunity to sleep on this shift will appear. If this ability is not trained and integrated into the practice, the novice fireman will not last very long in the praxis. He also told me how he told and retold unpleasant experiences to the community of firemen, instead of taking them home to his spouse. This gave him a sense of belonging and feeling of inclusion in the community, unlike many employees touched by the “value completion” who prefer not to share their experiences with colleagues, but rather with the partner at home.

Novices ask aboutness questions relating to the foreground only – decontextualized questions like “What, why, how, when, whom?” which are centred from the one asking, assuming this view is “seen” by everybody. Sometimes the novice is focusing on not appearing to be a novice so the conversation sometimes turns into an examination; for example, the examiner might analyse whether the answers are consistent, or whether the speaker has to claim his answers and so on. I notice how friendly experts – those who are proficient – sometimes use too much time in describing, showing and relating, not taking into consideration how the novice will never be able to remember it. Sometimes the novice keeps on asking questions to remove focus from him/herself, and in this way keep a position in the territory. The ambition is to show-off how “I am controlling this - not the expert”. The type of questions and comments from the novice like “the other is talking too much” and the answers from the other gives me a sense of how distant from each other the two are.

Experts ask “within-questions” relating to the background, the relationships between the phenomenon (e.g. the turnaround) and the paradoxes/dilemmas, which they wish to explore. They ask for previous outcomes, future scenarios, the present conditions, states of phenomena and persons caught by the phenomena in order to judge the direction and pivotal points of the vitality form. They do not ask for a snapshot, like the novice, but for different landmarks, which are embodied and connected into a whole. They are not blaming anyone, but often have detailed questions, which are purposeful and centred on the phenomenon and people’s relationships with it – or vice versa. Even if they are in a hurry, it does not feel like it when you talk with an expert speaking from within and dialogically. On the contrary you sense we will find another solution if the one we are describing right now will not succeed. In fact it feels more like a conversation where we explore a phenomenon together, we both get something

out of it. Of course some experts get into monologues forcing both of you to position yourself in aboutness thinking.

One of the wayfinders describes a novice recruitment consultant who tends to exert his power:

*B: "You mentioned that if [colleague's name] was the recruitment consultant hiring you, you would never have gotten the job. What would disqualify you?"*

*A: "That I was too insecure."*

*B: "And how would he judge that?"*

*A: "He can read it from the recruitment test ... (...) you know he thinks he is very clever and knowledgeable about humans, but if the test says a person has no self-esteem or too much "inner anxiety" then you do not fit the job. And it makes me very nervous ... and this is why I feel second best. I am not as clever as the rest, because I am far too labile."*

*B: "So you think nobody else ever feels anxious?"*

*A: "eh... well... I think the test says nothing, and it is only as good as the recruitment consultant, right ... but I also think ... well the test made me very sad, because it says I am nothing, and empty inside, and the only thing I am good at is chatting. Of course I know the test is based on average calculations of the population, but anyway..." (My translation)*

Patricia Benner, professor emerita, portrays her work with nurses based on the Dreyfuss Model of Skill Acquisition in her book *From Novice to Expert*. She turns the Cartesian judgement of talent upside down (Benner, 2001, p. x):

*"[The model] is based on studying a practice situation by situation, and determining the level of practice evident in the situation. It elucidates strengths rather than deficits, and describes practice capacities rather than traits or talents. At each stage of experiential learning, clinicians can perform at their best. For example, one can be the best novice (typically a first-year nursing student) ever. One can be the most responsible and engaged clinical inquirer and experiential learner whatever the stage of skill acquisition. What one cannot do is be beyond experience, or be responsible for what has not yet been encountered in practice. Professionals can be held responsible for safe practice, and for knowing current science and technology. Memorizing characteristics and features of a diagnostic category from a textbook, however, is not the same as recognizing when and how these characteristics manifest themselves in particular patients, with a range of variation. This clinical discernment must be learned in practice."*

Benner based her book on conversations with nurses and the descriptions the nurses gave of situations which stood out for them. The topics of conversation included the nurses' awareness of what good nursing practice was, or, in other words, their judgement of whether the nursing practice was good or not. Benner describes how it

begins with vague hunches by the novices, whereas experienced nurses describe it with a bodily feeling – “a gut feeling” or “a feeling that things are not quite right” (2001, p. xxii). Benner concludes this is very different from how we are trained in the educational system; where we go from vague hunches to clear, conclusive evidence as experts.

Ingold (2011a, p. 330) also joins this part of our conversation as he comments on how we have been talking about competences as oriented towards tasks only. “Feeling at home” is his way of understanding expertise relates to tasks as well as space. It is a zone of familiarity, which humans know intimately, and in which they, too, are intimately known. It could take place in all settings of everyday life; whether the house, street, neighbourhood or the place of work. Ingold (2011a, p. 335) reminds us of the previous described kairos (see page 163) and uses a quote from Vernant (Ingold, 2011a p. 335) to show it for us:

*“In intervening with his tools, the artisan must recognize and wait for the moment when the time is ripe and be able to adapt himself entirely to circumstances. He must never desert his post ... for if he does the kairos might pass and the work be spoiled.”*

The novice labels working after hours “as bad project management” but for the expert it is a way to use the kairos moment to create something.

Benner brings a number of examples showing how the novice and the expert relate, recognizing signs of changes, discriminating needs, their use of language, and how they develop new capabilities differently. Their judgements are different and so are their norms of good citizenship. See her book (Benner, 2001), if you wish to explore her examples in detail.

When the criteria from inside the communities are put out of kilter, other, more visual criteria emerge for everybody. In a turnaround situation, I notice how expertise now is something you show in your title. In this way it is more prestigious to go for a title than actually perform and refine the expertise. You may wonder how this is possible in companies today but having had many conversations with managers and employees preparing for their next role, it strikes me how often these conversations show most attention being given to vertical movement, and the titles and job grade the next role will bring. The people may not be more ambitious than others, rather they are



responding to an environment where expertise in what you do is not enough – because it might not be noticed.

One of the wayfinders describes:

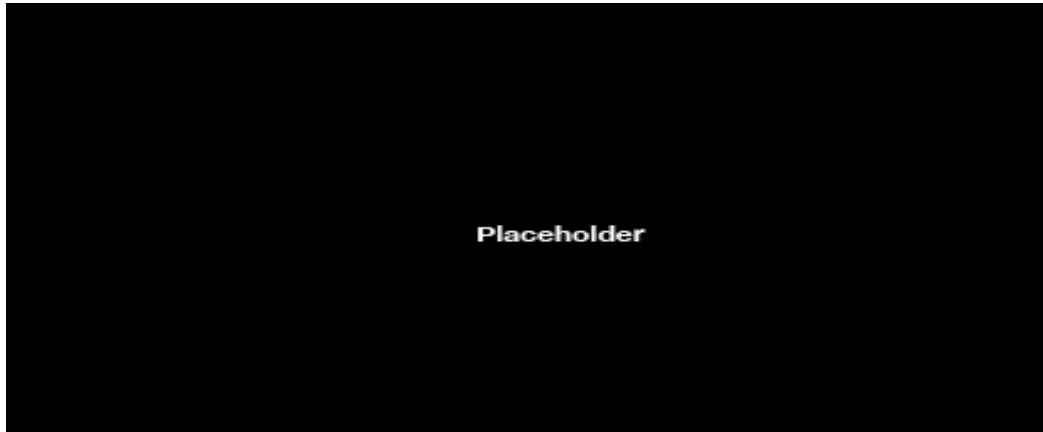
*T: "I wish what I am good at was a recognized competence. Otherwise I feel: Am I good enough? Plus, if one changes so much, then there is always this feeling left, that you are never something 100 percent, because you change so many times, and then just say: But I am good at changing, this is what I am really good at. (...) If one feels this is how we've always done it, or "are you now coming with your strange ideas, but we do like we use to do" ... well, then at some point in time one says: You know what, I tried to help you ... I can't help you. So you will have to solve it yourself" (...) if it only was recognized as a measurable competence (...)" (My translation)*

Often in a turnaround situation membership criteria are based on how the novice meets the world and when the communities are based on novice's criteria. Phronetic knowledge may be lost or becomes tacit, so novices cannot learn from it. Experienced employees may change their way of practicing so it is in synch with the new guidelines, procedures, and in this way whole communities are not stretched, new competencies are not developed and these companies then have to put innovation into recipes or arrange innovation competitions to compensate for communities no longer providing the innovation themselves. As we explored on page 125 sometimes a shadow organization emerges to compensate.

All the wayfinders I interviewed mention how they deliberately look for the differences between the formal organization and the shadow organization. One describes how quickly they judge the positions:

*E: "I think we are talking about just hours to actually figure out: okay this person has this kind of role here, and they respect him or her like that, and their attitude to him is like this ... I think I just observe ... and listen to what is going on around (...) you can ask some questions, yeah, yeah ... (...) I would do that ... but it is also because I am just curious about people (laughing). I like to know ..."*

For this individual who was formerly an expert, it is also about being positioned in the periphery rather than in the centre of the practice development. It affects the relationships, and your decision to follow the new guidelines may be more related to the fact that you have to meet your colleagues daily. Meeting colleagues may be difficult if they have judged the new guidelines differently from you.



**Figure 55 Memberships before and after the turnaround**

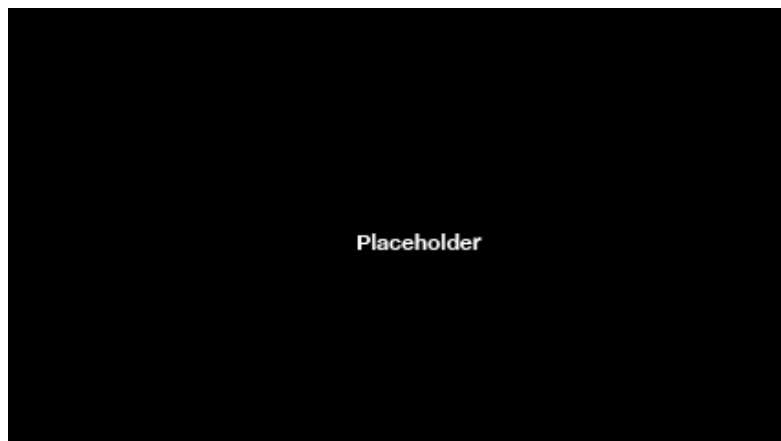
*Image inspired by the thoughts of Lave & Wenger, 1991 and Wenger 2004*

One of the wayfinders describes how she is consciously taking time to notice when she enters a new “space”. Even though she is hired as an expert she can never be sure of her position:

*S: “At what time do they lunch? Is there codes of practice of answering each other’s phone, or talking privately on the phone? You know, all the different things ... is something I notice (...) because there are other codes here, and some of the codes actually annoy me, but again I feel: I am the new one, I am the one who must adapt. (...) I think I need to find out relatively quickly (...)  
B: “What is the risk... why does it have to be quickly?  
S: “Then you are not “in”. Then you are an outsider, and even though I like change, I also like to be part of something. I am always an outsider (...) I am always she who is about to move” (My translation)*

The judgement can be, according to Wenger (2004), clustered into different types of belonging into the community of practice.

**Figure 56 Different types of belonging to a community of practice**  
(Wenger, 2004, p. 201) →



However, we only highlight Wenger’s point here, that the judgement criteria are based on the resonance from the surroundings; we will not explore this further in this thesis.

## 6.5 Intention/directionality

Our movements are always directed towards “something” (Stern, 2010, p. 4). Your lived experience is based on your corporeal experience of the world, and the worlds’ meeting with you. The idea of a bodily experience is based on the premise that our experiences always relate to something. There will always be a meaning in how you are relating. You might not pay specific attention to something, but you can still have a relationship with it – for example, the new employee who did not experience the turnaround but whose practice is formed by it. The lived experience is therefore always related to something/s, which may not be immediately obvious, but are implicit. Intention/directionality in this way blurs the Cartesian split between the person and the world. We are our world, and your world is different from mine, because we do not relate to similar “things”. If we start to reflect on our bodily utterances, our reflections are a judgement of whether there is coherence between what we meet in the world (how the world meets us), and what our intentions are.

Our body is already and always in movement, intent on a certain direction, making us feel comfortable or not. We do not have to reflect on the meeting with the world, in order to judge if we are thrown off-balance (see also pages 180-181); our “body-in-the-world” notices it right away. One of the wayfinders describes:

*T: “(...) I have often had this feeling of being different. Eh... if others were enjoying and socializing, then I could be there too, feeling very lonely, and thinking: I do not belong here, because this is not my life. But I could not point at anything being the reason for it. Just the feeling; this is not me. This ... is not my life, it's not me” (My translation)*

Now, our Cartesian friend might disagree with us. Our friend provides us with an example: Kristian is a trained chef who is supposed to cook at a dinner party. As the kitchen’s electric cooker is an old one Kristian cannot prepare what he intended, having been ask to cook by the dinner hosts. He will be annoyed because the electric cooker obstructs his intentions and he is on a “burning platform” needing to act quickly so the guests notice nothing. It will be an intense situation and it is no wonder many chefs, at least when shown on television, shout at each other while they are working! Our Cartesian friend is not curious about links to bodily responses and suggests we ought to have tested Kristian’s personality and potential competence gaps before even hiring him!

Nevertheless with the reversed logic we are inspired by the example above to imagine Kristian as an experienced chef within a whole series of other movements than those our Cartesian friend would notice. The phenomenon Kristian is relating to could be “creating gastronomic enjoyment through cooking”. The electric cooker is in the room and Kristian is now integrating it into his movements, like the blind man and his stick on page 109. Having had many years to master the principles of his practice he now has a bodily, intuitive approach to his profession. He does not shout or yell at people, neither does he sit down to reflect on his options or cry as a passive victim. His corporeal judgement is in the flow already, slightly moving around in the space, with intentionality, which, by the end of the day, is met. Thus he will just use other methods or the electric cooker in another way to still reach the target. If he is reflecting, he constructs the meaning in the moment of acting. Not before, not after. He puts the pot of water on expecting it to boil soon. Glancing at the pot frequently, after some minutes he concludes, “This is going to take too much time, so I will have to have the electric kettle on to support the process”.

If Kristian were hit by the social phenomenon of Cartesian anxiety, or was instructed by his manager to change the practice – if he acknowledged his manager had the right to tell him so – his judgement would no longer be related to the phenomenon his doing is relating to; that is, the cooking. Instead, his responses would be directed to the responses of the others, to conclude how safe he is in the space; how much right he has to be in the space; etc. If I, as an inexperienced chef, took over, I would more easily be affected by Cartesian anxiety, because I have an entirely different relationship to the space and the practice compared to the experienced Kristian. He has lived experience. I have not. If we were in the kitchen together, the intentions of our movements would still be very different, and I would probably force him to talk aboutness with me, refer back to characteristics of the novice on page 191, for example, because I cannot relate to Kristian’s vitality form, his direction/intentionality. The (empty) space, for me only consists of him and me, and the cooker. I do not notice the different phenomena.

Kristian’s judgement criteria are flowing with the practice within which he has been trained. If he had been trained in a kitchen where the movements are accompanied by shouting and yelling these phenomenon will be part of his repertoire so either he would do the same, or distance from it. Even by distancing from the shouting and

yelling, the shouting and yelling will still be part of his options – or else he could not distance him from them. I, on the other hand, only have a limited practice (of cooking for my family) to relate to, so my movements will be linked to the concepts of good family cooking, or I might try to copy what I have seen on TV.

The relationship to the judgement criteria is prior to the actual experience in the kitchen, and we are a product of the social practices we have lived experience from. The practices have norms, which take form in explicit rules, or implicit rules which, being less directly linked, take longer to learn. The norms provide us with principles – rules of thumb – of how to judge for example, whether something is good, true, beautiful or just.

Our Cartesian friend would probably call the principles “values”, suggesting we are born with values, or we have inner core values, that we can discover through the peeling-an-onion-technique. How would we describe this with the reversed logic?

Today there are many communities of practice to which we can belong compared to our options fifty years ago. We can choose according to those which resonate with us. In the past we were members of practices where we shared values, interests or beliefs (e.g. religion) with the other members. From aboutness thinking it made sense to conclude that these values became so integrated that we had them within us too. Today thanks to social media, mobility and the changes in the world (see description on page 26) we can find ourselves drawn to practices with *vitality forms*, which resonate, which move in similar style – it’s swinging! From within we experience the practices as having underpinning principles, which we tune into (just like tango, salsa, waltz or polka), despite religion, nationality, age and gender.

Many of the employees I meet in my praxis describe how they do not know what to do next. They ask for guidance in relation to which career job to pursue and how to deal with the conflicts they face along the journey. Their ambitions are portrayed as separate to their movements today, and sometimes they tell me what they are doing today is temporary, until the perfect job comes along. It is a waiting room, and they are waiting to be discovered and noticed by someone or by themselves.

With the reversed logic they are not passive in a waiting room, they are already in a movement. Like music they are playing tunes suggesting a shape of a melody. What

they pay attention to is only part of their direction. They compare what they face in the world with the norms, formed by the social practice in which they are steeped, and will keep moving within this social practice until they experiment with other principles. If they cannot experiment, the “aha” moment of our conversation will stay in the room and they will go out and continue moving as before, trying to reason why nothing seems to change anyway. Should they learn to reflect on the corporeal, lived experience, they could develop or change the direction so it coheres more to what resonates with them, to something they recognize and are familiar with as in balance, making their interactions with the world meaningful.

Resonance is well-known within music. It is when a vibration of a tune (the length of the sound wave) fits the vibrations in the space. In music it sounds as if the tones are in harmony. However, it can take time to find resonance in music and you might want to listen for some time before you judge. Time is something colleagues today have less of, or are not trained to take. One of the wayfinders describes:

*L: “Neither me or the other people [in the relationships] are one of the quickest animals in the forest in relation to relationship building (...) you know, the close relationship. The superficial [snaps the fingers] is easy. But the deeper relationship (...) Things take time (...) because you just need some time to figure out which kind of values the other person has, and the only way to explore this is through showing, rather than telling. You might tell me a lot of things, but if you don't show them to me, well then... it takes time to reveal or find out the deeper things”. (My translation)*

### 6.5.1 Sleepwalking

In a turnaround situation the norms seem no longer valid for some employees, whereas others keep following the old ones. No musical tones are in harmony as they once used to be.

The longer we are in a space with more or less resonance, the more our movements, the sediments related to our movements and the resonance in space will shape each other. At a local level we call *it* “identity”, and when we reflect on the temporality of the identity (the *it* over time), we construct narratives which contain plots explaining the dissonance/resonance, the continuity/discontinuity, etc. Or, if we do not reflect – Hansen (2008, p. 79) compares it with sleepwalking – we just let our movements follow whatever voice vibration, other than our own, we find dominant in the room. He recommends we systemize the reflection process, and he is inspired by Socrates and his midwife analogy (the Socrates method) who rather than telling his student what

“good”, “beautiful”, “just” and “right” is, asked them to wander through his guiding questions.

In my practice I am very inspired by the Danish professor in philosophy at Copenhagen Business School, Ole Fogh Kirkeby, for having introduced Socratic dialogues into leadership development in Denmark. He is particularly interested in “protreptic” (Kirkeby et al, 2008), which was taught in the Greek executive academies at the time of Socrates. Protreptic is the art of turning, of letting a person focus on what is important for them, and is about assuming we have not necessarily reflected upon the question we believe we have certain answers to. Therefore the focus in a protreptic conversation, is on “who am I?” in order to find out where your (stand)point in the territory is. The method entails discussion of a word: How you use it, how you understand it and so on. In such a conversation you show who you are. Kirkeby gives an example (2009, time: 6:04):

*“So if you feel challenged by it [for example the questions from the protreptic], you obviously need to be challenged. And if you don't feel challenged but offended by it, it might point to the fact that you already have a sort of firm identity.”*

Kirkeby asks questions in the conversations like “how would you know this?”, “How could you be certain?”, “What would it mean to create a better world?” etc., linking the questions to the other person's utterances. He shows us how the answers portray the person's movement in a spatial, temporal life (2009, time: 8:40):

*“If you tell me or try to tell me what you understand by happiness, I would come to know quite a lot about you. Even more than if you told me how tall you were, your weight, your sexual habits and so on, because your ideal of happiness tells me how you have actually managed your life and how you have wanted to live it. It tells me about your style, your techniques, your technologies of self – as Foucault said. It tells me how you work on yourself as a human being.”*

In my practice I sometimes establish reflecting groups where participants are allowed to “wonder”. Sometimes participants find the questions too academic or too “intellectual”, favouring those who are good with language, articulation and vocabulary. If I sense the questions will make some feel included and others excluded I tell a story about (un)fairness instead, and ask questions about what is fair, so the participants share stories of fairness. In this way we are also touching the protreptic questions from another direction, that is, from within. Occasionally I ask participants to select the dilemmas they meet during a day, to describe the situation – preferably in writing – so the dilemma is in the foreground and in a way that no one is losing face

through the description. Then I ask them to work in pairs or in groups similar to how a reflecting team is working. If it is possible, I also ask the participants to digitally upload their story and so share it in the bigger group, so others can learn from the reflections. At other times I ask one of the senior executives to share a dilemma which I interview him/her about in a recorded session – just like on a talk show on TV. The video is later distributed to a number of participants, who – jointly – reflect on the dilemma in a “reflecting blog”, because writing is a way of remembering how you are travelling (Ingold, 2008, p. 91). The content of the blog is shared with the talk show guest, who reflects upon it, and perhaps wish to ask additional questions.

If we do not reflect – or when we are sleepwalking – the stories from within a turnaround can be filled with a sense of rejection of some envisioned future, and the embracing of other futures. We act as if we can choose from fixed block views of temporalities (see also page 166) rather than use the reversed logic, by attempting to ask “what can be created or shaped from within the speed of movement, the relationships, the space and the force our vitality form expresses right now?” The intentionality form of my movements is closely related to the way I reflect on my world and on how stable my vitality form is, and whether I can identify characteristics over time. The characteristics do not have to be stable (this can be a characteristic as well). Time is required for noticing the characteristics of the form.

This contrasts with Cartesian change management methodologies forcing employees into large “identity processes” or “value campaigns”.

A sleepwalker has a direction, but often does not know where he/she is when you wake him up and needs time to re-orientate him/herself and his relationship with the world and the person standing here waking him/her. When he/she wakes up a clear path to follow does not necessarily open, as many believe it will when they order an expensive coaching session, as they have to relate to the environment first.

Ingold (2011a, p. 237) describes the phenomenon for us using two scenarios:

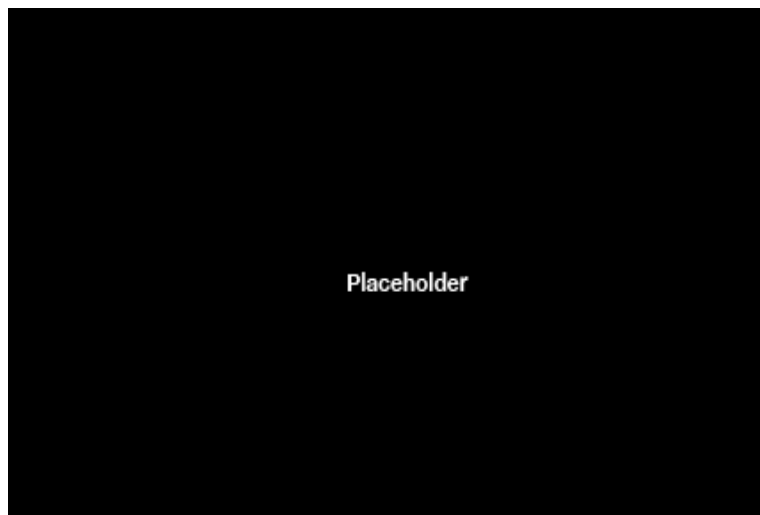
*“In the first [scenario] you are walking with a friend through unfamiliar terrain, equipped with a topographic map. Arriving at a place that affords a good panoramic view, your friend stops to ask, “Where are we?” You look around, pointing to various landmarks, which you proceed to correlate with markings on the map. Finally, indicating with a finger a particular spot on the map’s paper surface, you declare, “We are here”. In the second scenario, you are walking in familiar country around your home, with a companion who is a stranger to the area. Once again, on arrival at a certain place, your*



*companion puts the same question, “Where are we?” You may respond in the first instance with a place-name. But then, realizing that the name alone leaves him none the wiser, you might go on to tell a story about the place – about your own association with it, about other people who have lived and visited there, and about the things that happened to them. Now in the second you have no need to consult an artefactual map, nor would it be of any avail to you, not because you have resort instead to a map inside your head, but because knowing your present whereabouts has nothing to do with fixing your location in space.”*

In the second scenario you rely on previous journeys you have made – temporality of the identity articulated into narratives – and in the first scenario you have no such phronetic knowledge, and your movements are lead by the objects in your surroundings (space) and your responses towards them, which you are not yet able to put into a narrative which tells *about* it. We do not orient ourselves according to a map, but to the vortices in a current of movement. We are not meeting the objects from multiple points of view existing in the same moment, but along a path of observations. As we move, the objects or phenomena transform (Ingold 2011a, p. 238) – just like the city hall is no longer “present” when you pass it and turn off by the next corner. What we remember, however, is how the city hall looked, and the transformation of it, until it was out of sight. Try to take a moment and remember the path of observations over the time you have had with a person. How you approach him/her, how you notice him/her from very close, and how you again noticed him/her from a distance. It is quite different from Cartesian thinking of the person, zooming in and out from various positions, while the person stands absolutely still; with this Archimedean view you might begin to calculate (pros and cons) which of the sides you believe the person has most of, or which of the side you find most true.

Figure 57 "Your sun machine"



It is an empty room (space) into which he has cut a hole, letting the sunlight float in. You experience the sun moving throughout the day, even if it is actually the room and you moving around the sun.

In other words instead of us being fixated in our viewing – “from my point of view” or assuming sequenced point-indexical images – we move around the fixed object, allowing us to describe it from different angles. However, we never do it simultaneously, “but as the coming-into-sight and passing-out-of-sight of variously contoured and textured surfaces” (Ingold, 2011a, p. 238).

As we move around responding to what we meet, we also judge whether the vortices match our expectations as our internal feeling states, according to Stern (2010, p. 42). These expectations are based on previous bodily experience. We cannot conclude where we are going before the actual journey, as we only know the direction as we go. We only know *the* way when we have completed the journey, and the path is manifested into the grass as a trace of our movements. However, the direction of our movements always point towards “such-and-such a place” (Ingold, 2011a, p. 240), just as the single sequence in the melody does.

In order to learn more about this melody we can explore our moving and responding, getting to know ourselves to be able to relate to the objects and otherness with a suitable distance (for example, close or distant) so we enjoy the relationship. Maurice Merleau-Ponty illustrates this by reminding us what we do when we visit an art gallery. We can approach the art closely and explore the details, or we can stand back and see how this position makes a difference for us, and the norms/principles we are shaped by. After a while we find a suitable distance from the object so we can live with its “view”. Merleau-Ponty describes (1962/2009, p. 352):

*“For each object, as for each picture in an art gallery, there is an optimum distance from which it requires to be seen, a direction viewed from which it vouchsafes most of itself: at a shorter or greater distance we have merely a perception blurred through excess or deficiency. We therefore tend towards the maximum of visibility, and seek a better focus as with a microscope. (...) The distance from me to the object is not a size which increases or decreases, but a tension which fluctuates round a norm. An oblique position of the object in relation to me is not measured by the angle which it forms with the plane of my face, but felt as a lack of balance, as an unequal distribution of its influences upon me. The variations in appearance are not so many increases or decreases in size, or real distortions. It is simply that sometimes the parts mingle and become confused, at others they link up into a clearly articulated whole, and reveal their wealth of detail.”*

Once, I had a conversation about this point with an in-house HR practitioner. She reflected:

*C: "It is not about talking with the art, in order to change it. I guess I would be thrown out of the gallery by the guards if I tried to change the piece of art. Nevertheless, this is what I have been trying to do for many years. Changing the ideas, modifying, adding, commenting, and judging – in an ongoing search for when my actions were acknowledged by others looking at the same art piece. Now, I prefer to talk with others about my experiences with the art piece, as I in this way feel I get wiser about my own values and how to move into a position where the view is better." (My translation)*

### 6.5.2 Crossroads

So, what does direct the movements of people if the direction is decided in the moment, despite the intentions of a roadmap to follow? How can we understand the many different melodies as products of different responses, when the people responding are doing similar jobs, or have received similar information about the intended meaning?

With the reversed logic we must give up the idea that we have to search and find meaningfulness – that we move and search, move and search, move and search, and finally we find it. Meaningfulness will come to us *when* we move. Tom Andersen (Anderson & Jensen, 2007, p. 159) calls the phenomenon crossroads.

Even though it could be associated with a chronos, block time view, where you have to choose left or right at the end of a road (see page 166), Andersen uses *crossroads* as a metaphor of his not being able to continue any longer on the same road, because if he did, he would at the same time continue doing something which he believes is ethically wrong.

Figure 58 Cartesian view of a crossroad



It would not resonate with his inner principles anymore. The crossroad does not exist in front of him but appears as soon as he changes direction, as a turning point when he looked in a rear-view mirror. However, while we are in it we explore it differently than our Cartesian friend. We need to use several snapshots to show the phenomenon:



**Figure 59 Crossroad from within**

In a conversation with Per Jensen, Tom Andersen gives an example of crossroads (Anderson & Jensen, 2007, p. 159):

*“We stopped saying what people should do and think, and then alternatives popped up almost by themselves. It might be, for example, that instead we said “In addition to how you are thinking, we have thought ...” and “In addition to doing what you’ve been doing you could also consider this ...” – in addition to, that is. It became a great relief. And it was a big transition – from “either-or” to “this and this”. Without really realizing it then, I would now say that “either-or” belongs in a world one can describe as immovable and to what one can also call “the non-living”. So that is to say we worked with living people as though they belonged to “the non-living”. It felt uncomfortable, and it was a relief to move over to the “this and” perspective. But we were also made to leave the closed room – where it was unpleasant to be.*

(...)

*A crossroads, I call it – because I am very uncertain as to what extent this was choice. It was more having to give something up, really give it up; we couldn’t continue any longer in the same way, it wasn’t possible. We had to give up.”*

Also the wayfinders use the phenomenon crossroads in a way I have never come across in conversations with my Cartesian colleagues. One describes it like this:

*L: "It is terrible when you stand there thinking: this is just ... I have tried all these different things. They used to work, and this has worked, and this has worked ... but no, nothing seems to work. And I use enormous amount of energy and thoughts on figuring it out: "okay what seems to work?" But still nothing seems to work, and then suddenly it strikes me [makes a sound] out of the blue: "But, do I actually want to make it work, at all?" (My translation)*

And another like this:

*E: I was never running away from something that I did not like. Usually I had to take a decision to do something else..."*

And a third:

*U: "I think the expectation my family had, and I had ... well, I had been far too ambitious (...) and right in the middle I had some scary personal experiences... which... well, I think I was almost getting a depression – so I chose to visit a psychologist (...) to hear whether I was normal at all, and he interpreted it as like a war after-reaction, and we draw some guidelines for me; what to continue doing, and what to stop doing for a while. This was it. We really did not have enough time to investigate why all of this has happened, because I only had two hours with him, and ... so the guidelines was defined in those two hours and I have in fact followed them, and this was also the first time ... where I decided to trust another person's evaluation. Instead of being very independent I decided to let rely on another person, because I thought, he is professional, so if he says so, then I should do it."*

*B: "Did you know him from before?"*

*U: "I did not know him well, but I noticed he could identify what has happened to me." (My translation)*

### 6.5.3 Calibration

What Tom Andersen calls "crossroads", Bateson refers to as "calibration" (Shotter, 2010c). Where the aboutness viewer moves, stops, and reflects on the *feedback* from the "system", the witness mover is calibrating, making small adjustments as s/he moves. In other words it is not just one crossroad we meet, but several crossroads, where we pause the continuing movements and calibrate instead. Bateson (Shotter, 2010c) describes the phenomenon of calibration by showing us how a marksman who is firing a rifle at a static target does not move but shoots when he believes he has a clear view of the target, and when the huntsman fires a shotgun at a flying bird he is moving the shotgun while aiming on the spot where he assumes the bird and the bullet will meet. He never stands still. The act of self-correction is done, not before,

but in the act of shooting and is only possible because he has practiced adjustment in many similar situations.

You may also recognize calibration in certain sports. The tennis player never stands still on the tennis courts, but moves the body, and is calibrating in relation to the tennis ball, and the dancer is always calibrating in relation to space, the partner and the music.

Doubt, anxiety, etc. become important navigating indicators (a signal of a crossroad/calibration), and being alive is much more about learning how to live in the world, instead of an endless search for the perfect place. It is a shift from a focus on curing and preventing the diseases, the dangers and the instant changes in situations, to aiming at a life focusing on wellbeing in a range of possible situations; getting the best out of it.

I usually introduce a compass, like the one below, when the conversation in my practice touches the phenomenon crossroads/calibration:



Figure 60 The compass

We do not know what to do, because we do not know where we are in the territory. The compass allows us to talk about direction, ambitions around mastering a “level” (novice/expert), coherence to the direction of the company, metrics from different practices, methods of experimenting and showcasing the skills, who is recognized to assess whether the performance is good enough, and which criteria and artefacts are included in the judgement. It allows us to discuss the judgement criteria in different situations (space) and how they would look if we embraced the world differently. For Cartesian employees the compass becomes almost a map, allowing them to feel in control – but nevertheless, it opens up curiosity to explore principles of living other than being part of a Value Competition, to notice how our actions are part of others’ lives in the eco-system, opening a room in which we can embrace relational ethics, and to notice the other’s movements and how they resonate with ours. Sometimes it even links a greater coherence to the rest of the participant’s life – a relationship to a greater story emerges.

Shotter (2010a, p. v) closes this chapter underlining the point above:

*“Being a good organizer, a good listener, a careful reader, a good speaker, etc., are all to do more with our learning how to be in the world (ontology) than with our gaining knowledge of it (epistemology). The overall approach, to the extent that it is to do with our self-authoring, can be seen as relevant to what in recent times has come to be called “the narrative approach” (...) to psychological inquiry; but is especially close to Tom Andersen’s (...) explicitly embodied, responsive orientation to psychotherapeutic events. For these are approaches which (...) are much closer to our ordinary ways of inquiring into the affairs that matter to us in our everyday lives together, than those that we often still try to implement in copying the theory-driven practices of inquiry exemplified in the experimental methods of the physical science”.*

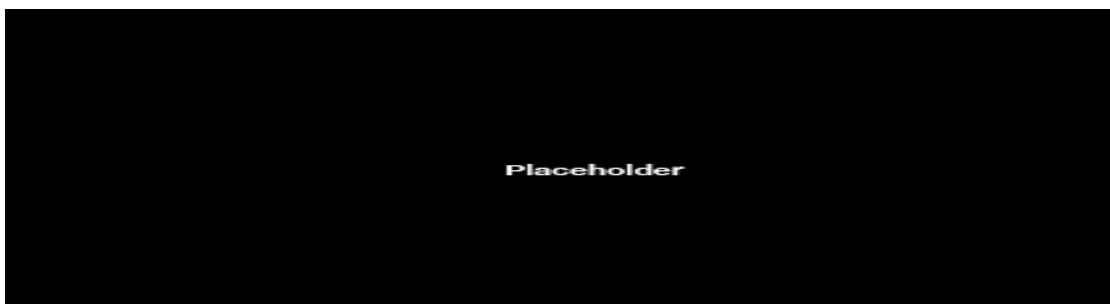
## 7. Epilogue

My father's first stroke touched him and my family fourteen years ago. Today he lives a very different life from that which he did at fifty-two when he had three jobs, ambitions, and expectations he wanted to pursue. He no longer has a job, which can define his identity, or targets, against which he judges the value of his self-image. He takes one day at a time and orients himself towards very different norms. For the family, however, it took some time to arrive at a similar place. We did not quite get it, and were sad or angry and this distanced us. My father had to experience quite a few management tools: for example, "to do lists", "motivation talks", "post-its serving as memory help", and measurements of many kinds to achieve a suggested dream or to return to as close to "normal" as possible. Luckily we had the tradition of conversations at the dinner table and, after a while, when we could dare to have dreams again, we found the courage to use the trial and error method once more, to find out what the good life was all about within the territory each of us was in right now. As we were no longer in similar territory we learned how to relate differently to the concept of *family*. It also taught us how the whole system we felt we belonged to had changed. It was not the same system! Some of our friends moved in other directions and we met new friends with situations which resonated with ours. Today we have greater focus on the vitality forms such as which criteria should be taken into consideration, for example, for "the good holiday" for everybody.

During one of the walks in the garden with my father I suddenly had a sense of "now I am getting it". Until then my practice was about having a job description and completing the tasks in the best and most efficient way and solving human consequences of companies' turnarounds. Every time I changed job, country, relationships, I felt I also changed practice. Being a practitioner was all about a praxis within a certain context, in which clear norms were described, and where I was looking at myself from the eyes of the audience. When I was walking in the garden, I was telling my father about the work with the thesis and my job. While we walked I would, like a bodyguard, pay attention to our movements and potential obstacles, like a little stone, likely to affect his direction and style of walking. I was doing so, and he was allowing me, because we both had experience of the walk in the garden suddenly ending if we did not constantly pay attention to the landscape in which we were and respond accordingly. Our lived experience meant we had changed our style of



walking and talking in relation to our movements, the dialogue, the space, the speed (time), the intensity and the intention based on our judgement of a good walk. Being aware of the criteria for the good walk during the walk would enable us to change direction right away. This includes considerations such as “does my father feel tired right now?” because he stayed up too late last night; “how is the weather and what do we assume it will be next?” because the rain makes the garden slippery; “what is he supposed to do next?” and thus being prepared for the weekly physiotherapy, which requires extra energy from him. This means we are not alone in the garden as we take the environment seriously. It increases our sense of coping, resilience, strength and opportunities; we are now living the relational practice. The principles I describe in this thesis I felt much more in tune with because they had become bodily integrated – and I was doing it outside the professional role!



Wow! I was no longer a person doing, but a person being alive. Maybe the bodily link had been there all the time but connecting this into a whole was an important moment for me. It shifted my attention in my inner landscape. In the outer landscape where I used to aim at shaping spaces and pivotal points, preparing for or re-directing aboutness utterances with the danger of pushing relationships into a formula, this person, actively alive, could emerge. However, how I perform my role is shaped by Cartesian HR principles, and sometimes I (still) hear these principles making demands of me. It will probably take years before the Cartesian detox is complete. If ever. Just like the stroke will always be part of my family, I guess the Cartesian legacy will also be in my practice.

Retrospectively, the research question and how I embraced the world 4.5 years ago brought limitations, so this thesis is a portrayal of my changed and changing (stand)point. Reflecting back I wish I had focused more on the social phenomena from the start, and explored how the different shapes of social phenomena could be

portrayed. This would have allowed me to have a broader perspective than “turnaround” companies. I used too much time striving to prove invisible phenomena to a Cartesian audience and could have paid attention to territories where there is resonance. In particular I would have liked to explore social phenomena such as “power” and “corporate religion”, because sometimes the CEO is experienced as if s/he is head of a religion, and the manager is expected to possess almost supernatural powers.

I spent much time and energy portraying the job I had in HR and the quest to find allies in this landscape. You will find traces of this work in the appendix (Chapter 9.5). I wish I had started much earlier looking for friends across job disciplines, landscapes and citizenships, with less focus on job categories and more on the vitality forms. I take the first step in this thesis by including the wayfinders, but I wish I had narrowed it even more.

The way I embraced the research question drained much of my energy innovating HR tools so Cartesian readers would notice, instead of noticing the space I was in. For a long time my relationship to the thesis was like a salesperson with her pamphlets, and therefore it has been tempting to include all of this in the thesis, so that Cartesian friends would pay attention. However, I was concerned that the innovative concepts, tools and techniques would simply guide the audience into finding simplistic solutions to difficulties, and then my ambition with the thesis would not be met.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the ethical considerations of being a practitioner doing a doctorate within a changing company. The research has taught me that an important arena calls out for attention: the working conditions for the researching in-house practitioner. How to create spaces for reflecting thinking, when your company, your job, your team, your job location are changing, and you are required to create wayfinding and mapmaking activities for others? Where are the ethical guidelines, spaces for conversations about good in-house practice, etc.? Maybe I will respond to this in the future?

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2	<a href="http://www.mghs.sa.edu.au/Internet/Curriculum/Science/Year10/ecosystemEarth.htm">http://www.mghs.sa.edu.au/Internet/Curriculum/Science/Year10/ecosystemEarth.htm</a>	10-09-12
4	<a href="http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/b/b9/MagrittePipe.jpg">http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/b/b9/MagrittePipe.jpg</a>	30-10-11
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6	<a href="http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=dandelion+asphalt&amp;view=detail&amp;id=DF176CF60706A2909F41AE6A941DDCC16B9FF277&amp;first=121&amp;FORM=IDFRIR">http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=dandelion+asphalt&amp;view=detail&amp;id=DF176CF60706A2909F41AE6A941DDCC16B9FF277&amp;first=121&amp;FORM=IDFRIR</a>	29-03-11
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10	<a href="http://qldtv.com/http://qldtv.com/digital-tv-how-often-do-you-watch/">http://qldtv.com/http://qldtv.com/digital-tv-how-often-do-you-watch/</a>	18-02-12
16	<a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_Realm">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_Realm</a>	10-09-12
19	At the left: <a href="http://www.google.dk/imgres?hl=da&amp;sa=X&amp;biw=942&amp;bih=538&amp;tbs=itp:clipart&amp;tbnid=9es4bvUUs9GKQM:&amp;imgrefurl=http://www.haukeveien.blogspot.com/2011/01/find-waldo.html&amp;docid=6KP4zJSKLweq4M&amp;imgurl=http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_IKFX_Oo66Fs/TSCjg75DrrI/AAAAAAAAAALk/b6Vx0y0lmwg/s1600/waldo.jpg&amp;w=307&amp;h=541&amp;ei=cFRXT9mkBNDcsgb_3tGSDA&amp;zoom=1&amp;iact=hc&amp;vpx=96&amp;vpy=129&amp;dur=49&amp;hovh=298&amp;hovw=169&amp;tx=94&amp;ty=227&amp;sig=112951982196438169812&amp;page=1&amp;tbnh=147&amp;tbnw=85&amp;star t=0&amp;ndsp=10&amp;ved=1t:429,r:5,s:0">http://www.google.dk/imgres?hl=da&amp;sa=X&amp;biw=942&amp;bih=538&amp;tbs=itp:clipart&amp;tbnid=9es4bvUUs9GKQM:&amp;imgrefurl=http://www.haukeveien.blogspot.com/2011/01/find-waldo.html&amp;docid=6KP4zJSKLweq4M&amp;imgurl=http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_IKFX_Oo66Fs/TSCjg75DrrI/AAAAAAAAAALk/b6Vx0y0lmwg/s1600/waldo.jpg&amp;w=307&amp;h=541&amp;ei=cFRXT9mkBNDcsgb_3tGSDA&amp;zoom=1&amp;iact=hc&amp;vpx=96&amp;vpy=129&amp;dur=49&amp;hovh=298&amp;hovw=169&amp;tx=94&amp;ty=227&amp;sig=112951982196438169812&amp;page=1&amp;tbnh=147&amp;tbnw=85&amp;star t=0&amp;ndsp=10&amp;ved=1t:429,r:5,s:0</a>  At the right: <a href="http://www.google.dk/imgres?hl=da&amp;sa=X&amp;biw=1024&amp;bih=544&amp;tbnid=9es4bvUUs9GKQM:&amp;imgrefurl=http://www.9-men.co.uk/ramblings/wheres-willy/&amp;docid=1xuJi2Vgq7KRQM&amp;imgurl=http://www.9-men.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/wheres_willy.jpg&amp;w=1024&amp;h=768&amp;ei=9RxXT6HuBo6WswaL9JikDA&amp;zoom=1&amp;iact=hc&amp;vpx=567&amp;vpy=158&amp;dur=8300&amp;hovh=194&amp;hovw=259&amp;tx=137&amp;ty=140&amp;sig=112951982196438169812&amp;page=1&amp;tbnh=155&amp;tbnw=207&amp;start=0&amp;ndsp=8&amp;ved=1t:429,r:2,s:0">http://www.google.dk/imgres?hl=da&amp;sa=X&amp;biw=1024&amp;bih=544&amp;tbnid=9es4bvUUs9GKQM:&amp;imgrefurl=http://www.9-men.co.uk/ramblings/wheres-willy/&amp;docid=1xuJi2Vgq7KRQM&amp;imgurl=http://www.9-men.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/wheres_willy.jpg&amp;w=1024&amp;h=768&amp;ei=9RxXT6HuBo6WswaL9JikDA&amp;zoom=1&amp;iact=hc&amp;vpx=567&amp;vpy=158&amp;dur=8300&amp;hovh=194&amp;hovw=259&amp;tx=137&amp;ty=140&amp;sig=112951982196438169812&amp;page=1&amp;tbnh=155&amp;tbnw=207&amp;start=0&amp;ndsp=8&amp;ved=1t:429,r:2,s:0</a>	07-03-12
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<b>Video</b>	Thomas Kluge: <a href="http://www.dr.dk/K/Kunst/Programmer/Lag_paa_lag_Thomas_Kluge_maler_Anders_Fogh.htm">http://www.dr.dk/K/Kunst/Programmer/Lag_paa_lag_Thomas_Kluge_maler_Anders_Fogh.htm</a>	30-10-11
<b>Video</b>	Slow motion: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0KLzG6jLMs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0KLzG6jLMs</a>	04-11-11
<b>Video</b>	An Ecology of Mind (trailer): <a href="http://www.anecologyofmind.com/">http://www.anecologyofmind.com/</a> Interview with Nora Bateson: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTsGtTeVEAI">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTsGtTeVEAI</a>	07-06-12
<b>Video</b>	Philosophical conversations, Ole Fogh Kirkeby: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phn6ZNcN4-Q">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phn6ZNcN4-Q</a>	18-11-11
<b>Video</b>	Still Face Experiment: Dr. Edward Tronick: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0</a>	05-06-12
<b>Video</b>	Test Your Awareness : Whodunnit?: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNF9QNEQLA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNF9QNEQLA</a>	05-06-12

## 9. Appendix

### 9.1 Vignette overview

#### 9.1.1 Organizational relationships



#### 9.1.2 Social relationships





### 9.1.3 Relationships with the world



### 9.1.4 Relationships with chronos time



## 9.2 Interview guide used to interviews with “wayfinders”

### 9.2.1 Invitation and preparation

Dear [name],

Thank you for participating in my doctorate research.

The interview is scheduled to take 1–1½ hours, and I would like to record it, if that is all right with you. In that way I have the option to listen to our conversation again. You will of course get a copy of the recording as well.

In order to get the most out of the interview, I hope it would be possible for you to prepare two things before the interview:

#### **Turning points**

Please think about 3 important turning points in your life; a turning point, which has been a contributory factor in deciding to move on. Example: to move geographically, to search for a new job, to apply for an educational course, to enter a relationship, to end a relationship, etc.

A turning point is an episode where you actively make a decision that will have significance for the rest of your life. Example: A man proposes marriage to a woman. Regardless whether she accepts or declines, her answer will have an impact on the continuation of the relationship. That is, they will get married, break up, or live as if they were almost married. The relationship will never be the same as before he proposed.

A turning point is also when you do something that others in the same context wouldn't do – and therefore they would wonder why you do it, and how you dare to do it.

If it is helpful you may consider looking at the 3 turning points in relation to your age:

- one turning point from the age 0-9
- one turning point from the age 10-19
- one turning point from the age 20 year and beyond

But of course it is also all right if you pick all 3 turning points from only one particular age.

#### **Important relations in your life**

Who have been important people for you in relation to the 3 turning points? For example: An aunt, a teacher, a parent, a grand parent, a colleague, a manager; or perhaps people that you are not in direct contact with, for example, politicians, business people, actors, pop stars; or maybe communities that you once were (or still are) part of, for example, religion, sport, studies, NGOs (like Greenpeace, Red Cross) etc.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have questions before the interview.

I am looking very much forward to the interview!

See you soon ;-)

Warm wishes,  
Birgitte

## 9.2.2 Interview frame

The questions below are framework or foundation questions, which I adapted to each “space” (language, relationship, movement of the dialogue etc.). I used the frame to ensure I could later compare the interviews. Therefore I kindly ask you not to read these questions at face value, as if they occurred exactly in this sequence in each interview; they were used more as POI/directions, determined by the direction each conversation went.

### Opening

- Family background
- Age
- What do you do today?
- Are you doing the same in 2 years?

### Past

- Please draw the 3 turning points on a map
- Tell me about them (naming)
- When did you decide to move?
- How did it feel like?
- Why do you think this was important for you? What was important to create? What did you want to change?
- Which important relations – if any – made this possible for you?
- Please describe the relations you have marked as important?
- Do you have any contact with the person(s) today? How will you describe the relationship today?
- When you decided to move, when/how did you notice that the choice also meant a moving away from the group?
- How does this affect you?
- Did it have any consequences for your membership of the group? How?
- How does a relationship emerge?
- Which relations do you deselect? What do you use as criteria?
- Do you judge the “deselecting” as deprivations or as you moving yourself?
- Do you take any initiatives regarding re-unions? Why?
- What about season greetings (Christmas cards)?
- Do you need confirmation/approval/encouragement from others, when you move?
- Do you feel lonely? Or do you externalize it to something else (freedom, relief), focus on the context, and the possibilities calling at you (you’re catching)
- Are there any similarities from your own story to your family’s? Is the primary caregiver also the wayfinder/on the move? Do you recognize any similarities at your children?

### Present

- What do you think about the 3 turning points today (with the experience you have today)?
- How do the 3 turning points relate to how you movements are?
- What are you able to do today, which you could not do, had you not moved on? Would it have affected the relationships you have today?

- Where do you feel at home?
- How does it make you feel? (How does it sound like, look like etc.)
- Which relations are connected to it? Are these similar to the relations you search for acknowledgement?
- Is “at home” important?
- What should a company do, in order to shape a room, in which you will have a similar “at home” feeling?
- How do you judge that you have a sense of belonging to a place/group/?
- When you join a new relationship (e.g. a meeting with new people, a new group, etc.) do you notice admission criteria? Do you take on a special role (to fit in etc.)?
- [If they mention tone of voice, style, gesture, pauses, bodily utterances] How do you explain that it is important to notice this?
- Where did you learn this?
- When did you learn this?
- After a while, which role does you then take/are given by the group (helper, leader, innovator etc.)?
- On a scale from 1-10 (1=not my responsibility, 10 it is only my responsibility) how do you feel responsible that the relationships, in which you are part, work?
- Why is this important for you?
- What should happen for you to change to another level of responsibility?
- What do you think about “trust” and building new relationships?
- If the other person disappoints you, how do you react?
- How do you find out what is important to master in the new context?
- How do you make sure that the criteria you have setup, are also the right ones?
- How do you practice, what is important to master in the new context?
- Does “speed” play any importance when you learn new stuff? (Do you need to be faster than others?)
- Does your “speed” make you feel asynchrony with others? In which way? (How much does it affect your life style)?
- Is there anything of this, you need to master, which make you forget time and place (flow)?
- Who helps you?
- Who hinders you?
- What inhibits learning?
- What encourages learning?
- If you do not succeed, what is the consequence? Are the disqualification criteria clear and visible?
- What is your relationship with rules? Do you break them sometimes? Why/why not?
- When you look at the other members of the group, are there any who “only” imitate? How would you know?
- How do you get the extra energy which your adaptation requires (if it requires extra energy)?
- When you are thinking about your experiences, do you do it right away, or do you wait and do it later?

## Future

- How do you relate to the future?
- Do you dream of a different life than you have today?
- What are your earliest experiences of imagining that things could be different?
- Do you move towards the future, or are you moving away from the present/past?
- What leads you (a dream, a focus, a goal, a picture, a feeling, a movement, a volume, title, career, salary)?
- What is it you wish to change?

- Do you share your imagination with someone in the present? (Who is witnessing?)
- Do you think we would have been able to have this interview, had we not known each other beforehand?
- I was wondering, if, when you look at the video of this interview, you could write a letter to me? Today we have the [date] May 2010, but because of the technology of the future, I would like to invite you to imagine that you are in 2020 and are going to write a letter to yourself which you are able to send back to the past, so you can read it today. I would like you to give yourself three good pieces of advice about what you need to know about the future, today. I have a template here you may want to use. (Each question to be described).

Thank you!

### 9.2.3 Letter from the future (template)



### 9.3 Cartesian-Systemic dictionary

	Aboutness	Withness
<b>Think/wonder</b>	Analyze (rationalizing)	Wonder (reflective thinking)
<b>Flow</b>	A linear sequence of connected outputs (for example movement of goods or services along the value stream which create no value)	The phenomenon's movement (for example knowledge flow)
<b>Process</b>	Sequence of procedures to convert input to output	The way or style of doing something. The form which is shaped by the surroundings
<b>Dream</b>	Target, goal I can control with my agency	The end-in-view I judge my current actions against. The whole, which my actions correspond to, is there already.
<b>Track</b>	For example a career path ready for you to enter, or a track record of your past results	The sediments the movement shapes
<b>Function</b>	A department or an employee's value proposition enabling the machine to work efficiently	The contribution made by a social activity or structure to the maintenance of a social system
<b>Character</b>	Permanent traits of the personality (the real you)	The features of the first, second or third realm which allow us to recognize and distinguish the vitality forms
<b>Robust</b>	Resistant against something from the outside (turbulence, virus, changes etc.)	A stable vitality form where it takes a lot to change the movement. Often the "something" lies in the surrounding space or the pivotal points of the movement.
<b>Critical thinking</b>	It is positive to doubt everything (Cartesian Doubt) as this will make the result better, but it is negative to be critical of the purpose, the person or the whole process	Critique (reflecting thinking) shows you the other person's judgement criteria. Critical thinking or awareness of own judgement criteria is, the ability to wonder rather than always reasoning, to meet the world in 3D (or multidimensional) etc.
<b>Construct</b>	Plan, design, implement	Joint action, a (human) artefact as a result of a social activity
<b>Monitoring</b>	Control, documenting, time registration	Data about our movement are logged, and linked with other data to identify pivotal essential for our movements.
<b>Mastering</b>	Control the situation	The skill is integrated in the body (calibration).

### 9.4 The HR practitioner

When Dave Ulrich (1997) suggested that HR ought to be a value adding function, it affected the qualifications of the in-house practitioner – as the previous qualifications,

like “being good at talking with other people”, or having worked as a manager, or completed an education within the military were no longer good enough to get a job in HR. Ulrich introduced four roles, where the “change agent” was appointed to be responsible for social change:

- Strategic business partner
- Change agent
- Employee champion
- Administrative Expert

He described the role of the change agent like this:

*“Successful HR change agents replace resistance with resolve, planning with results, and fear of change with excitement about its possibilities” (1997, p. 152)*

*“HR professionals as change agents, helping their businesses both to meet new objectives and to do so quickly, should consider talking the following steps: (1) identify key success factors for building capacity for change; (2) provide the extent to which these key success factors are being managed; (3) identify the improvement activities for each success factor; and (4) see review of the seven key factors as an iterative process, not an event” (1997, p. 158)*

Dave Ulrich pointed out what he described as the paradox of change and suggested the solution to it (1997, p. 159):

*“If so much is known about it – the key success factors of change can quickly be identified – why do “we” do so poorly at making change happen? HR professionals who act as change agents must resolve this paradox. They must turn knowledge about change into know how for accomplishing change. They must turn key success factors for change into action plans for accomplishing change. The first step for resolving this paradox (making what is known improved what is experienced) is to have a clearly defined change model”*

The responsibility was placed on the change agent, and in the decades that followed other authors suggested other change models which would guarantee the success for the company by showing the way from A to B, from past to future, from good to great. A new industry was born, targeting HR change processes by offering educational courses, workshops and conferences. An industry which in the beginning was covered with former managers, athletes, elite soldiers or consultants in search of their own orientation in life based on the premise that some win and some lose – in some cases after a few weeks of training or less.

The interdependent relationship of the in-house practitioner and the external, independent practitioner was born.

Often there are only little differences between how the two work. In some companies the in-house practitioner is met as if s/he was external (e.g. selling, budgeting, measuring, and where the order is given to an external if he is cheaper, and where both are expected to act “on stage”). But there are differences, and let me describe a few.

Sometimes I hear easy, tool-based solutions mentioned by the external, because this is how he would solve “it” (e.g. by a workshop), if he were commissioned to work for the company ... for a limited period that is. He comes in, and walks out again. However, this workshop is linked to other activities, delivered by other internal or external consultants, which is organized by the in-house practitioner. It is never a “one off”, or a sequence of activities helping the company for a shorter or longer period. For the internal practitioner it is about coordinating all the activities so a flow is created, moving the company forward, and it is about having your closest working relationships with the colleagues you also work with/for.



**Figure 61** The relationships of the company, the internal practitioner and the external practitioner

Instead of being brothers and sisters of the same family tree, the in-house and external practitioners are more like cousins. The sense of belonging is different; knowing what is at stake in a family can be shared by brother and sister, but can never be similar with the cousins, generally speaking.



Another example is how we are able to use the systemic tools. Karl Tomm (2003, for example) is well-known by the systemic community for his clustering of questions and this helps him to navigate in the conversation with a client. He uses lineal, circular, strategic or reflexive questions – and the relationship is stable.

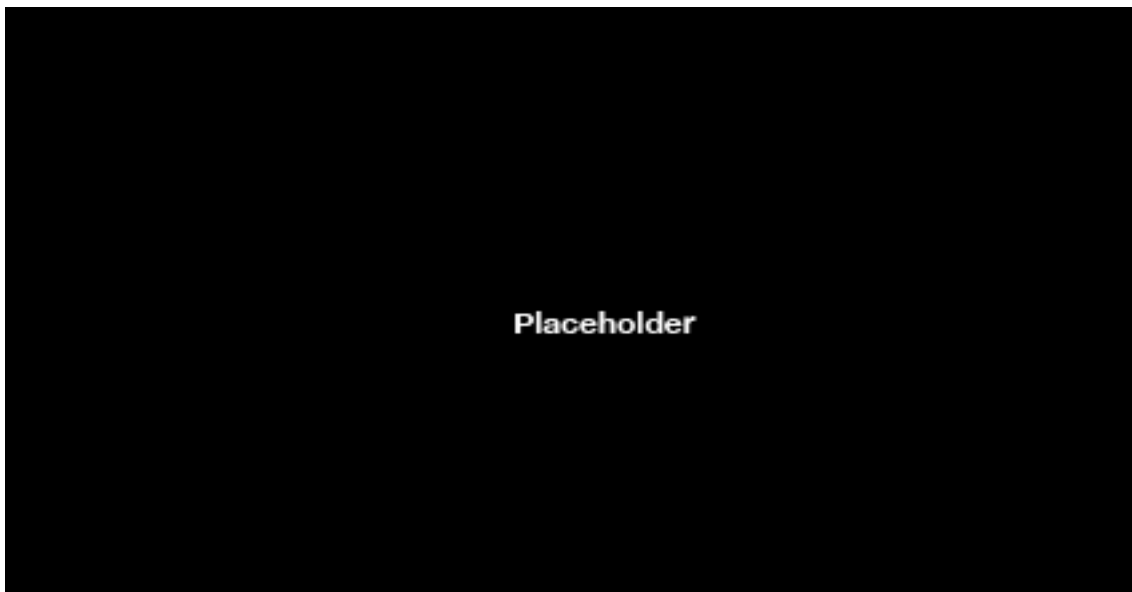
In a turnaround situation it is most likely that the relationships will have to be reshaped because the environment changes, and it effects the questions asked (even possible to ask). A trainer may suddenly tomorrow be a direct report to the one, yesterday being trained, and this also apply for the in-house practitioner.



**Figure 62 The changing relationships within a turnaround situation**

## 9.5 The HR arena – an overview

The in-house practitioner has very different possibilities to act on, depending on the company's stance on "people" activities. In Scandinavia it was very common to have "personnel departments", or a secretary responsible for the so-called transactional work (for example payroll and legal requirements) until Human Resources (Human Resources Management or Human Capital) was introduced in the 1980s, and was later replaced by business or talent partner structures (in Scandinavia this was very common in the 2000s). Hatum (2010, s. 21-22) has created the image below, suggesting how the relationship between a company's people activities and chosen ownership of the process, emerges as an evolutionary stage:



**Figure 63 Relationship between a company's people activities and ownership of the processes**

When we explore "good citizenship", the voice of HR is important. In some companies it may be in the hands of the HR department, in others (+30,000 employees) a business and talent partner governance model often suggests a setup where "subject matter experts" or "specialists" from HR support the senior management (sometimes only the CEO) in the judgement. Here, yearly (or even quarterly) people reviews (carried out at organizational level) are important feeders into a company's workforce planning. The purpose is an overview of the current competence's level, current and predicted gaps of the future. Competence level and how well the employee is performing, and whether any potential is predicted, are transferred into a forced distribution diagram.



Figure 64 The people grid

Managers are encouraged to deliver a critical assessment, and too many low performers may indicate bad leadership as well as individuals not in the right role. Also, the distribution of the employees should follow a Bell normal distribution curve:



Figure 65 The people Bell curve

Some companies are still inspired by the thoughts of Jack Welch, a successful CEO of GE (from 1981-2001), who used forced distribution (or forced ranking) very actively, so low performers were quickly made redundant (e.g.: Welch, 2005). Other companies use the grid and the bell curve as a “frame of orientation” (e.g.: Danfoss). The diagrams

guide the in-house HR practitioners and the senior management in the prioritization of training investments among the high and low performers. Business cases are created and signed off by senior management, attached with development plans. Yearly or quarterly employee perception studies (EPS) measure the average satisfaction among the employees, including a rating of the management. Focus is often on what should be improved, how high motivation is, and if the employees are looking for new job opportunities externally. The position of the in-house HR practitioner is to act as an extended arm of the senior management, implementing whatever policy or action plan decided from above in order to reach the targets set by the turnaround.

However, HR praxis differs in relation to Hartum’s three evolutionary stages. Below I have listed some of the characteristics (expressions) of each arena, which I have met in the companies I have worked in:

### 9.5.1 Personnel department

Relationship with the company	Primary relationship: The employees. In-house practitioner is a medicine man; an expert diagnosing the problems and finding the cure to heal. Organization; support function
Ownership and legitimate rights to set the norms of good citizenship	Management, high-seniority employees
Symbols indicating that you are a success (Value Competition)	Results, academic titles, certificates, expatriation/cultural insight, foreign languages
Attention towards	“Happy sheets” (surveys documenting it was a success). E-mail/letters with “thank you” or praise. Recommendations
End in view	Avoidance of dysfunctionality, repetitive (negative) patterns, loops and spirals
Criteria/premises (decisions)	Metamorphosis (“from seed to beautiful flower”). Rewarding. Celebration (“Sink-or-swim”)
Criteria/premises (learning philosophy)	“At home – out in the world – return back home” → Fight; go through the struggle and receive the results and appreciation. Feedback loops.
Transformation/change means...	Changes in the role (change of responsibility; new technology, new procedures). Transfer into a new role (promotion, demotion). Change in relationships (organizational changes)
Titles used by the in-house practitioner	Personnel consultant, stress consultant, health & welfare consultants
In-house practitioner’s tools	E-learning. Self-describing type test like; Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI, e.g.: Myers et al, 1998), DISC (acronym for Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Compliance) (e.g.: Straw, 2002)

### 9.5.2 HR department

Relationship with the company	Primary relationship: First line managers and employees. The in-house practitioner is a therapist and mediator, a neutral, trustworthy facilitator focusing on the relationships between manager and employees, or among employees. Not acting as a judge. Organization: Corporate function
Ownership and legitimate rights to set the norms of good citizenship	HR, Management and employees (unions)
Symbols indicating that you are a success (Value Competition)	Execution track record. People skills (good reputation among others). Participation in expensive training, conferences
Attention towards	Employee development dialogues. Workforce planning (competence mapping → where are the gaps?) Employee surveys. HR year wheel. Conflicts and dissatisfaction
End in view	Clarity in roles, tasks and cooperation. Design and implementation of one-size-fits all solutions
Criteria/premises (decisions)	“Find the gap, and you will solve the problem”
Criteria/premises (learning philosophy)	2+2=5 (synergy). Linearity (norming, storming, forming ... and the group is mature). Coaching. Change management
Transformation/change means...	Changes in the role (change of responsibility; new technology, new procedures). Transfer into a new role (promotion, demotion). Change in relationships (organizational changes)
Titles used by the in-house practitioner	Mediator, internal coach, HR consultants
In-house practitioner's tools	Workshops, leadership programmes, senior executives to “tell” and catalyse change. Team compass (arisen from MBTI), Situational leadership II (e.g.: Blanchard, 2005), Decision Dynamics Career model ( <a href="http://www.decisiondynamics.us/global/career_model.asp">http://www.decisiondynamics.us/global/career_model.asp</a> ), Personal profiles test (e.g.: SHL ability test, personal questionnaires, simulation exercises – <a href="http://www.shldirect.com/selection_assessment_methods.html">http://www.shldirect.com/selection_assessment_methods.html</a> ), 360 degree analysis/interviews (e.g.: Edwards & Ewen, 1996), Intelligences identification (e.g.: Gardner, 2006), Learning styles (e.g.: Dunn & Griggs, 2000)

### 9.5.3 Business and talent partner

As described on page 83 there is a continuum of approaches after the Millennium. I have chosen to describe two approaches: the talent management arena, and AI, positive psychology.

#### 9.5.3.1 Talent management

Relationship with the company	Primary relationship: The CEO. The in-house HR practitioner is an extended arm of the senior management and is a subject matter expert in disciplines like; attraction and retention, career profession and promotions, succession, compensation, recruitment, training, selection, administration, return on
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	investment. Organization: HR governance model in 3 parts. 1) Subject matter experts organized in a corporate function. 2) HR partners works at and by divisional management teams. 3) HR services (transactional) are situated locally in each country/business unit.
Ownership and legitimate rights to set the norms of good citizenship	CEO and senior management
Symbols indicating that you are a success (Value Competition)	Achievement of targets, living the values. Track record of innovative solutions achieving the people KPI's (e.g. retention, internal fill rate, sick days, number of training days, organizational health index, share of "switched off" or "fairy advocates" employees, people Bell curve, ROI)
Attention towards	Performance agreements, business reviews, data from HR information systems, employee surveys. Low performance. Individual's and business' promises not fulfilled
End in view	Measurement and improvement of human capital, financial end in view. Names: Performance culture. Must-win-battles, Handshakes, Customer focus
Criteria/premises (decisions)	The organization's resilience is directly linked to whether the right person is selected to the (static) role. Only business critical needs and core activities must be prioritised.
Criteria/premises (learning philosophy)	Scouting (discover your hidden potential ... on time). Rotation programmes. Networks (in-house and externally). Adaptation of corporate values into personal values. Assessment centres. Focus group interviews. References. Benchmarking
Transformation/ change means...	Changes in the role and relationships, in the team, in the function, in the division, in the market, in the customers, in the models, in the criteria for good performance and to be considered a good citizen, change in identity, language, stories, positioning status in-house etc.
Titles used by the in-house practitioner	Lean consultants, business process consultants, performance management consultants, navigators, management consultants, HR business partners
In-house practitioner's tools	Workforce planning, forced distribution, ROI, employee surveys, people and performance reviews. Leadership pipeline. Kaizen workshops, coaching with focus on how to speed up execution, detailed self-help guides and FAQs.

### 9.5.3.2 AI, positive psychology

Relationship with the company	Primary relationship: Senior and middle management. The in-house practitioner is a game master always including the individual, the team, and the company in the solution. Organization: Corporate function
Ownership and legitimate rights to set the norms of good citizenship	Involving, including process where every voice has a right to join in.
Symbols indicating that you are a success (Value Competition)	Well-being. Positive language. Telling, showing, pointing at positive future scenarios. Showing examples of "the good life"

Attention towards	Interviews, conversations, AI-workshop (4 or 5 D approach). Showcases, Stories (LUUUUUT). Little steps of transformation
End in view	Focus on sustainable solutions. Behaviour adjustment to the strategy, the organizational needs, and the personal needs. Identification of the hidden resources (talents) and development potentials.
Criteria/premises (decisions)	Focus on what works, instead of using energy on what doesn't. Positive emotions. Stories and identities are shaped by the relationships we live in. Butterfly effect. Ripple-effect
Criteria/premises (learning philosophy)	"I do what I do best, and link to the rest". "If I can dream it, I can do it". Everyone is good at something; we just have to discover it.
Transformation/change means...	Changes in the role and relationships, in the team, in the function, in the division, in the market, in the customers, in the models, in the criteria for good performance and to be considered a good citizen, change in identity, language, stories, positioning status in-house etc. The dream is possible to make real.
Titles used by the in-house practitioner	Learning consultants, process consultants, positive psychology consultants, leadership consultants, AI consultants, solution focused coaches (in Scandinavia sometimes named LØFT), systemic/narrative consultants, mindfulness coaches or HR consultants ... with a (e.g.) narrative approach, HR business partners
In-house practitioner's tools	Learning wheel (learning phases "before", "during" and "after" the practitioner's intervention). Narrative coaching (e.g.: Michael White 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007), lineal, circular, reflexive or strategic questioning techniques (e.g.: Karl Tomm, 2003), reflecting teams (e.g.: Tom Andersen, 2006), outsider witness teams (e.g.: White, 1995), 4 D/5 D AI models (e.g.: Cooperider & Whitney, 2002 and 2005), theory of the domains (e.g.: Lang, Little & Cronen, 1990), CMM (e.g.: Cronen, 1994), LUUUTT model (e.g.: Pearce, 2007), images and metaphors (e.g.: Morgan 2006, Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) meditation and mindfulness (e.g.: Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2000 and 2005), "What-Went-Well Exercise" or "Gratitude visit" (Seligman, 2011). Retreats. Yoga

#### 9.5.4 Practicing from within

This is a suggestion of the in-house practitioner's praxis from within (the reversed logic). I have only met traces of this movement, as the idea of HR or an in-house practitioner with attention focussed on the "people processes" is a Cartesian premise. Praxis from within is therefore connected with a different way of organizing the life in the organization, and the summary below is only to guide our attention:

Relationship with the company	There is no fixed relationship to the phenomenon "company", but a number of relationships with individuals, phenomena, and "spaces". Some relationships are close, others more distant.
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	The in-house practitioner helps others to acquire a more fully articulated sensibility, a capacity to notice others and otherness they meet, and an ability to express what they notice and its relational role in their practices. The sensitivity allows them to make and to notice similarities/differences in their activities, so they move into places with opportunities to coordinate their activities with others in an intelligible way.
Ownership and legitimate rights to set the norms of good citizenship	At the end of the day it is the individual who judges and moves accordingly. Judgement may link to experts in communities of practice, past experiences, dreams etc.
Symbols indicating that you are a success	Actions in the outer world enabling the flow to move in the direction resonating with your inner world
Attention towards	The focus is on sustainable solutions oriented simultaneously towards multiple audiences. How can an individual live at the different local levels? Which possibilities of living are feasible on the different local levels, and how do the responses show us the phenomena, leaving traces of which varieties of futures are possible.
End in view	Mastering the new life and the phenomena surrounding it as they appear (explicit or implicit) in different rooms and therefore relationships. Phenomena are, for example, the good conversation, a learning journey, but also anxiety, uncertainty. Overall flow of movement in the part of the eco-system, which relates to the company
Criteria/premises (decisions)	Complexity is life. By reducing complexity, you are reducing life, and so also hope, and new possibilities
Criteria/premises (learning philosophy)	Reflective thinking shapes different dialogues. Different dialogues shape different practices. Different practices shape different indicators on, for example, when good citizenship is achieved.
Transformation/change means...	Dialogical changes occur as a result of new articulated notions. A tiny little pivotal point, like a stone in a stream, can cause the water to change its direction. New phenomena may suddenly appear in turnarounds, if for example, contrasts, paradoxes or unclear criteria are not paid attention to. The phenomena manifest through responses in the relationship(s). All inhabitants are searching for insight on where their new (stand)point is now, when the system they live in is refurbished. What is it they are able to see, and not see? This affects the relationships, the elements in the background of our thoughts (judgement), the inner and outer dialogues, the dominant and preferred stories – notable in different kinds of performances, and practices, inside and outside the company. Again, pivots keep the movement of the phenomenon in its usually form, until the conditions are changed.
Titles used by the in-house practitioner	Phenomenology architect, relational architect, eco-system advisor, relational practitioner (my suggestion). If the in-house practitioner works in a Cartesian landscape, Cartesian titles may probably be preferred, otherwise others will be uncertain on how to meet the in-house practitioner, and a permanent struggle of legitimate rights may begin.
In-house practitioner's tools	The in-house practitioner does not access an "inner world", but an individual's relationship to the world, and how the meaning



constructed is meaningful. The premise is that it is not possible to access, for example, a group's world, it is always a meeting between individuals, by letting them describe their unique lived experience, allowing them and their situation to come alive. Instead of monological one-way inquiries, dialogically structured mutual inquiry is preferred. The "tools" and "recipes" are therefore less important compared with the other approaches, and if you prefer tools, it would probably be identical to the ones from a positive way of meeting the world (see pages 87 and 240) or learning portfolio, or compass and other navigating-like images, for example.

Relational ethics guides the practitioner in timing, forcing, moving and in which space to invite or to avoid, etc. An approach might feel appropriate in one relationship, but not in another – depending on what is important for the other person – and the relationship that the in-house practitioner and the person judge, that the company requires from the person. The approach also includes exploring how both the in-house practitioner and the individual meet the world. Besides the intense focus on judgement criteria, the in-house practitioner also takes the responsibility to set up the frame for and activities in the "spaces", so aboutness view/thinking/talking are avoided, or at least do not prevent life from emerging. This requires phronesis about dialogically approach, where the use of metaphors or everyday examples portrait the bodily feelings and actions centred on the conversation. Conversations can be oral, written, art – well, any form – which slow down time, so that those sharing can dwell and explore the lived experience. It requires not only paying attention to the other person and the otherness surrounding him/her, but a constant focus on their own ontological capabilities. Like a seismograph you cannot predict the earthquakes, but you can learn to notice them in good time, so escape plans can be initiated.

## 9.6 Research activities

My research activities is a reflection of the many uncoordinated coherences which appears in an eco-system experiencing instant change such as a turnaround.

The response to the turnaround, which all inhabitants are relating to, is called *strategy*. However, the inhabitants' relationship to strategy is varied, as some think about the strategy as a tool, some as process (a journey) and some as a process requiring a mindset change.

In the HR communities I have worked within, the uncoordinated coherence created uncoordinated actions – often with the inhabitant who could demonstrate the most tangible next step being seen as the winner. The more direct and visible this proposed

next step, the more it might be considered of value, and so also be an indicator of that individual's right to still belong to the company. The faster the better.

The high frequency of changing managers heading HR (especially new in this kind of position) also called out for a visibility, which was most easy to show, if you present a tool or a process to your audience. Visibility was suddenly the criteria to judge *followership*, which again was considered a value and therefore a right to belong.

To dare ask questions about which coherent whole the followership was following, and if this indent would meet the ambitions of the strategy was not very popular.

This created a paradox for my practice – a practice that had begun to take form through my dialogue with this thesis. On the one hand I found myself working consultatively – trying to ask enquiring questions and moving the conversations into a search for expressions from the second and third realm (e.g. co-creating images, metaphors). The more easy my performance looked to others, the more the assumption grew that I used less time and energy in my preparations. On the other hand, I was also an inhabitant of the system and so a manufacturer of processes and tools while also expected to show followership.

The thesis was not only part of my inner dialogue – it eventually also became part of the external dialogue. Managers and colleagues wondering why I did not produce (visible artifacts), why I seemed to be a slow starter, why I seemed to change the focus in the conversations, going off on a tangent away from the solution of the concrete problem which needed to be fixed.

In the beginning I was met with curiosity, but as a deadline (set by one with territorial rights to do so) approached, the pressure of (visible) delivery increased.

Often colleagues are part of an informal system of “friends” with whom they can share their worries and find resonance. My experience of being transformed from a *subject* to an *object* in these conversations made me realize I had to structure my research activities differently, and so this “model” emerged. The hermeneutical inspired “model” allowed me to go back and forth and to “see” the connections of the “aha!” moments I felt, the choices I took and led to the experiences I eventually used to portrait the phenomena and lived experiences in the thesis, through the use of the 5 layers:

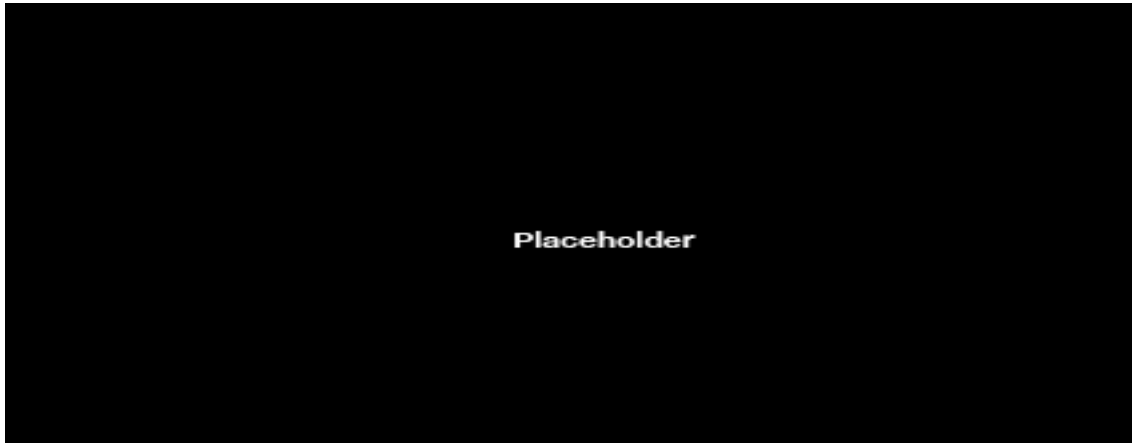


Figure 66 Relationship between my lived experience and the thesis

In the next chapter I will highlight some of the snapshots forming my research activities, based on the “model” above. Please notice that the description aims at chronological “order” so, for example, the layers in the thesis, as presented in the following chapter, appear in the order I met them in my practice (some appear in 9.6.1, some later).

### 9.6.1 Relationship with the thesis

For a long time I was like a detective searching for answers in the “world of appearance”. I would visit conferences, read books, join systemic workshops to solve the big riddles which I thought the feelings I experienced and met in others, were linked to. I was oriented towards how to implement a strategy, how to ensure engagement and empowerment, how get motivated employees, how to solve conflicts ... of course in the fastest, cheapest and most efficient way.

Therefore it is not surprise that the research experience began with readings of **published work by other practitioners** (layer 1). However, this time I was interested in reading the voices critical to Cartesian methods, tools and judgement criteria. These writers are, among others, Wittgenstein (1998), Todes (2001), Stern (2010), Shotter (2005b, 2011a, 2010a), Sheets-Johnstone (2009), Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009), Kirkeby (2004), Johnson (2008), Gergen (2009b), Flyvbjerg (2009), Dewey (1910), Bernstein (1983), Bateson (2000, 2002).

The practitioners all use other research methods than those I know from the territory I

came from. I was acquainted with research principles based on methodology where the researcher enters a context, conducts the inquiry, leaves the context, writes transcripts and gather it all together into a discourse analysis. Indicators like “written consent” and that the “informant” can read and edit in what has been captured were the end-in-view I had been orienting me towards. I decided to explore the principles.

Soon, I understood the search for “answers” of the third realm was oriented towards other kinds of research activities. However, I did not know that at first, but found out when “informants” supposed to be part of **interviews** (layer 4) withdrew in the last minutes, or offered to “give input” without dictaphone, video camera or notebooks in the room. Some suggested these criteria directly to me; others kept on postponing the interview, offering various reasons for doing so. For a while I continued to practice research activities as if I had been an external, independent practitioner and I compensated for the responses I met by trying to anonymize the interviews. However, I learnt that often some of the senior managers chose to tell colleagues that they were part of the research – some of them using it as almost a personal showroom, consulting spin doctors as ghost writers/speakers to suggest stories they could tell, which were very, very, very far away from the stories the senior managers would actually live and tell in daily practice. They knew, the spin-doctor knew, I knew. It was as if the research interview became the missing channel to a larger audience for them, both internally and externally.

Non-managers seemed not to have such an agenda and requested anonymity, and so I conducted a number of interviews, video taped them, transcribed them, and let them see/read them, inviting them to comment. However, just like the pendulum swinging (see page 85) the inclusive “we”, collaborating and being part of the research became an exclusive “we” in tough times, where the Value Competition (see description page 12) forced my colleagues to prioritize according to what would showcase the most value for the company. Taking part in research interviews was not on the top of the prioritization list. Those taking part in the research, kindly asked me to set-up the interviews after office hours, in rooms without windows, or outside the company.

I understood I again needed to relate to the research activities differently, as I found myself increasingly acting like the parents in Daniel Stern’s description of the “sound-light show”, trying to develop the responses of the infant (see descriptions page 184). I

offered sweets, snacks and cakes in the room, and near my desk. I would go on “road shows”, campaigning, and I would innovate, innovate and innovate showing new tools, models, movies, colourful PowerPoint presentations and playful exercises while trying to adapt to the different narratives and judgement criteria. The purpose, I thought, was to solve the discomfort which prevented people from delivering a response according to my targets regarding the turnaround. It required tremendous preparation and my working hours became longer and longer.

Despite my efforts, I felt the initial “welcome” I received change to a “you do not belong here” from the senior management and those from the HR community aspiring to a senior management position. At that time I did not distinguish between the first, second or third realm, and thought it was the research activities causing all of this “mess”. I noticed I became sensitive to the voices, suggesting I was difficult to understand, that I used too many words before making my point, that I had a hidden agenda and just wanted to take over the job of my manager.

One day Peter Lang (Co-founder of the KCC International and heading the PDSP at that time) said to me: “The research should be a joyful journey, and I wonder how you can tell a story about what you are experiencing right now?”

The conversation became a turning point for the research journey and ended my sleepwalking (see description of the phenomenon at page 200). I had to understand the territory I was in, and I began to relate to a bigger picture of the relationship between my research and my practice. At that time I was working as an HR in-house practitioner in my 5<sup>th</sup> turnaround (and 5<sup>th</sup> company) within the last 10 years. I had not chosen to be part of the turnarounds deliberately ... or had I? I had lived outside Denmark for more than 14 years, and in fact I lived in 3 different countries during the research. So, I began to wonder about **my own lived experience** (layer 2) with turnarounds, the similarities and differences I noticed, the relationships I kept despite job and country change and those I lost. I began to wonder about the explanations I told myself, or heard others tell. I began to wonder why the research was so important to me that I seemed to be willing to risk my job (and practice).

I understood that my practice was related to the space, the interface, between different systems, language systems, practice systems, belief systems, etc. I was translating,

pointing at the bigger picture uniting the many systems into a coherent whole. I was a kind of architect offering the monologues rooms for conversations in order to explore connections related to the other habitants of the house, to the neighbours next door, to the neighbourhood and to the community. I was setting up space for others to become architects as well, inventing the missing connections. I was doing this all the time; at work and off work. I began to distinguish between job and practice.

An architect listens to the habitants, but also sets up the design so that it coheres with movements the single habitant may not pay attention to. The purpose is to create a space shaping sustainable movement of life.

I understood that the architect in my case was building a house on rather different criteria. Good practices were suspended and nice people seemed never to exist in the top of the hierarchy. It seemed like the toughest ones, the most dangerous and powerful ones, who took over the power – it felt like being nice, helpful and appreciative was equal to working against the course of existence.

I understood that I had almost forgotten to listen to what I thought would be good design for my research, job and practice. I was listening to everybody but myself, and so I began a process of listening to my own voice. I started in the two-hour car journey I drove every day. I used my dictaphone, and just talked and talked without any agenda. Just constructing and responding to the events of the day. Once a week I transcribed the “talking”. It had a nice, appreciative effect on me. It felt like someone was listening attentively.

I understood, I was responding (because I was disagreeing) with some of the principles of the systemic practice I came from, so I made a list of these principles, which I noticed others and I would share as rule of thumbs with new HR in-house practitioners:



**Figure 67** List of principles from my practice I wanted to change,  
*produced in year 2009*

s

Putting the principles into writing suddenly made me realize how the research was the bridge I needed to navigate away a focus on tools, models and quick interventions supporting the *individual* in the value completion – into a territory with activities supporting *relationships* leading to sustainable practice in the “house”, in the neighbourhood, in the city, in the world.

I began to question the practice and its followers. I began to question my own practice.

I understood the phronetic wisdom was tacit to me, so I began to write down every episode, which struck me, like traces left behind of my meeting with the phenomena – and I carried these snapshots into new relationships and spaces oriented toward good practice based on different principles. I talked to the senior managers who also “showed” the vitality forms oriented toward sustainable relationships and who also “saw” it as the key to sustainable practice.

I had protreptic conversations (see description at page 201) with Ole Fogh Kirkeby, I went to a conference in Nürnberg, Germany, I joined PhD seminars in Denmark and in Holland lead by relational oriented scholars (e.g. Sheila McNamee, Dion Hoskings). I became part of a “reference group” to a European Union funded research carried out by University of Southern Denmark called “From Talent to Expert”. I talked with several HR practitioners inside and outside my company.

During the many conversations I often experienced how some, later, would use what we had been talking about into their own practice. It made me feel appreciated, until one day when one threatened me with a lawsuit arguing that I would be stealing his ideas if I was to use any of what we talked about in the thesis. His ideas! I chose to leave any links to the conversation with him out of the thesis, and the episode taught me that I was challenging boundaries. Despite my efforts to work collaboratively, I am sometimes still considered a visitor in others’ territories. In the case of the lawsuit threat, we were looking *at* him and his ideas. It taught me to be extra careful in moments of collaboration not to write or speak from a position where I seem to claim the right to belong to the territory. Later this was a principle which emerged generally in relationships with colleagues (see description 9.6.2).

I noticed how almost all of the (new) conversations included **images, art, video** (layer 5) as a way of communicating. During business trips to China and Russia I included



visits to universities there and had conversations with professors within educational psychology. Also there, we met in spaces other than the ones I knew from Western Culture, filled with academic terminology. They would show me spaces where art was used to “tell” stories of relationships. In Poland a business colleague showed me an example of belonging when she took me to the street in Warsaw where only months before they’d used candlelight as a way of mourning the loss of their president killed in an airplane crash in Russia. She showed me other examples as well of belonging to a community through a history as part of other countries. I wrote down the experience, and when it was possible I even took photos. The future conversations of belonging were much “deeper” than I ever had with any other colleague. I understood that I, until then, only had explored the citizenship from the first and second realm (e.g. rights, duties, orientation and achievements of the citizen).

However, at the same time I remembered how I have always turned into making images when it has been difficult for me to express tacit knowledge or when I wanted to portrait something of the third realm. And so, I continued to do so – and the layer of art suddenly appeared as belonging to the thesis as well.

The thesis is very much also a description of my own journey into becoming a researcher. The need for orientation, feeling lost, responding to double binds, etc. In a visit to Olafur Eliasson’s rainbow (see description at page 188) I felt the relational connection between what you experience and what you sense and think. I therefore visited more of his installations in Denmark, studied his published work (on dvd and in books) as well as material uploaded on his website, and lectures uploaded on youtube.com. I heard him refer to Maurice-Ponty and a coherent whole of the thesis began to emerge.

When Thomas Kluge published his painting of the Queen (see page 95) the debate about this caught my interest. I did not know why at first, but during the research activities I noticed the connection to the layer technique.

I began to work with the thesis as a kind of artwork, based on impressions (captured in photos, writings, video, dictaphone) and inspiration from art (from exhibitions, books, music, movies and practitioners performing), and slowly the thesis started to express itself via an inner image. I began to see the thesis as both the one with whom I played

the reflections, conversations, afterthought etc., and at the same time the expression I was trying to portray, shape, and refine through several works on it. I wanted to invite the reader of the thesis to relate to it as a piece of art, as it is manifesting itself right now, while I keep on working on it. If we meet in a couple of years the art will have matured even more, leaving traces of a first, second and third realm behind.

Now, I was ready to go into the space of research activity again.

I divided the research activities into 3 categories: formal and informal spaces, and continuation of the work of listening to my own inner dialogue – now named “judgement criteria, attention toward, inner dialogue”. I set up new play rules for the 3 categories, so they were more in sync with the findings of the research.

#### 9.6.1.1 Formal spaces

- Setup of “1:1” (one-to-one) with local heads and direct reports in my organization, surrounding and continuously exploring relationships to and with the concepts, processes, procedures and systems we would use.
- Change of position in conversations with managers to whom I reported (who changed frequently) – from the receiver of instructions, to relating to the meetings as an intervention as well. I allowed myself new positions to speak and act from.
- Taking relational responsibility in spaces where I was not the leader (e.g. meetings) if people were exposed or put in a position from which they could not move. I would do that by asking questions about the judgement criteria.
- Setup of new collaborative, virtual communities for young graduates and for senior managers – with focus on relational being, reflection rooms, connections, dialogues etc. – including an introduction of the compass (see page 208)
- Setup of virtual learning portfolio for a person preparing for the next position/role, including reflecting tasks and monitoring activities, farewell letters, allowing people to share and get inspiration from artefacts.
- Introduction of a new role; the learning coach – a kind of mentor for a person preparing for the next position/role. The learning coach is in a learning position him/herself as well, and the couple would get shared tasks, to underline the collaboration dimension.
- Introduction of a new role; a global trainer with the purpose of working in the interface between the many systems, creating space for new conversations
- Conversations with external coaches – inviting them into a community of shared practice
- Web conferences about relational being
- Talk shows – building upon the idea of reflecting teamwork (Andersen, 2006), broadcasted only through the company TV network, and based on questions from the (internal) audience around the globe. The aim was to talk about the notion of uncertainty and how to live with it, rather than aiming for conversations portraying beautifully organized stories without paradoxes, dilemmas and uncertainty

- Setup of online, collaborative, reflective blogs – as a response to the often boring blogs of monologues. Topics included paradoxes, dilemmas, contrasts etc.
- Surveys with different questions to what does not work
- The use of videos to capture events – as a response to the many PowerPoints
- Production of movies showing examples of lived life
- New ways of introducing new employees – focusing on good hosting and how to make connections and a sense of belonging as a shared responsibility

From the formal spaces above I collected notes, emails, process papers, comments, meeting minutes, pictures and "print screens" of websites.

### 9.6.1.2 Informal spaces

I noticed how most stories shared with me were often done so in corridors, at lunch etc. However, working as an international (global) in-house practitioner it is almost impossible to duplicate this practice at each site and I had to figure out how I could include a wider population of my colleagues in the informal spaces. Therefore I created:

- Voluntary wondering groups with the purpose of speaking out loud about what strikes us in the moment, and to what the stories we tell and live are a response to
- Voluntary reflecting teams
- Voluntary conversations (named "coaching")
- Voluntary workshops about reflection and relational being
- Setup of posters (pictures with less words) in my office. Showcasing some of the points referred to in this thesis
- Setup of installations in order to give voice to the untold stories. Some found the installations quite annoying, but the basic idea was to give an opportunity to together relate and talk. So, I would invite contributors to "outlets" or "closing down sales" like shops would do, displaying the abandoned office equipment when offices were emptied, or I would move the furniture around so it looked like a living room, inviting people to come and eat their lunch there, instead of in the canteen.

From the informal spaces above I captured responses and the questions asked in notes. Were the responses uttered directly in the room, or elsewhere? Did someone try to claim legitimate rights of the informal spaces?

For both the formal and informal spaces I would also be oriented toward the traces the "conversations" left behind. How were their next steps? Would concerns change over time, etc?

### 9.6.1.3 Judgement criteria, attention toward, inner dialogue (my voice)

I understood that much of my inner dialogue was linked to a sense of not belonging. I suddenly saw the connection to the space I use to setup. So, I gave up the principles of being a “neutral” researcher, and shifted to acting as an inclusive “we”. It enriched the quality of the collaboratively descriptions – in a way so others in the company, though not being part of the conversation, were still able to relate to the portrait, and so they also felt relaxed as they felt included

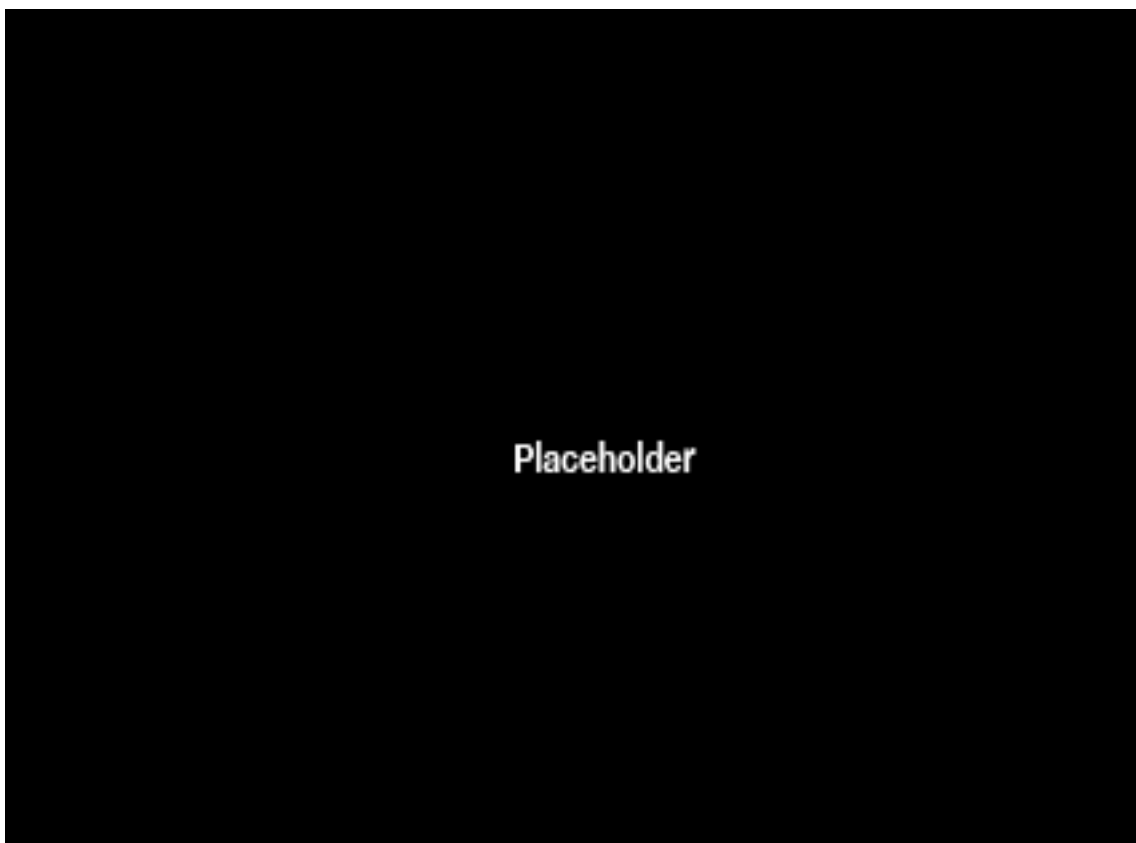


Figure 68 New and old methods of interaction

### 9.6.1.4 The emergency room

Through the many conversations, notes and other documentation from the 3 spaces the connection to the emergency unit at a hospital suddenly appeared. I understood that I had to adjust principles of my practice and my focus in the research once again.

The phenomena I met was too serious as I began to notice how people responded as though it was about life-or-death. The dimension of time seemed to be the difference, which made the difference.

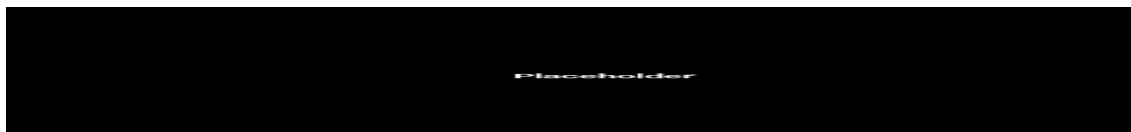


Figure 69 Losing one's practice & time

I understood that I sometimes was acting in spaces of sustainable practice. Other times I was acting in spaces with practitioners having lost their practice. Sometime they tried to lose the practice several times, or they had been without practice for a long time. I understood that this was similar to the responses I have met in other companies I have worked for. It no longer made sense for me to continue the principle of judging everyone with the same yardstick believing it had to do with the will of the other, or my ability to show patience.

It allowed me to reconnect to the lived experience I had from hospitals as a relative, and so the prologue and epilogue found its way to the thesis.

My questions changed, and my note technique did too. I was no longer only interested in the coherence between judgement criteria, attention and responses. Now, I was also interested in time and the duration of the response (e.g. the pain). The note taking while deep listening turned into portraits. I was no longer doing separated, detailed and exact reproduction of what was said and done. And so the idea of the **vignettes** (the third layer) was born. I used the many portraits as inspiration to the final vignettes. I would read the vignettes again and again with different judgement criteria and relationship with the phenomena. I would change something in the vignette, if I sensed someone would think, "oh, this is me, isn't it?" However the response "I recognize it", would be okay and the purpose of it all. I was very aware that I could not anonymized as external research could, because my audience would know the context I am portraying – the audience of the external researcher seldom knows about which context the researcher is referring to, because it is anonymized as well. The process also helped me to get out of the "us–them" inner dialogue I have brought with me as I was

aiming at creating the vignettes as sympathetically as possible when the first-person voice was speaking.

The vignettes have been very helpful for my own process of exploring. I started writing only vignettes *about* the persons, and later I shifted to a more witness description, with more sympathy and caring for each voice, even the challenging ones at the top at the hierarchy. I had to consult the physiotherapist several times to learn about respiration and other bodily expressions, not necessarily to include this in the vignettes, but to learn how to listen in a very different way than I used to, to distinguish different responses, and to look at all of them as a whole bodily response. This was in contrast to my previous practice, where I would judge that a person crying would be sad, and actually sadder than a person able to articulate and show me the *competence* to act. I would ask for the reason behind bodily expressions, and try to figure this out, as though it were a mechanical process and the tears a by-product or an alarm signal that something in the process is wrong. The physiotherapist's premise is that the human is always moving. The physiotherapist would therefore orient the attention to the movements and both describe the connections between joints, muscles, the intended direction in the space surrounding the person as well as the ability to manage the person's position in the room maintaining stability and orientation.

For a long time I had the idea that I would add a commentary layer to the vignettes, with in-house HR practitioners' voices commenting on the vignettes, just as is done in social media, with "comments" and "likes" or dvd/blue rays with commentary tracks. However, because of word limitations of the thesis I skipped the idea and the voices already collected to showcase this.

At a time I lost contact with my inner dialogue again, and with the new connection to the emergency room, I began to take my own responses seriously and I chose to take sabbatical leave from my job. It had a tremendous effect on my research. The body and mind was united into one embodied writing experience. It suddenly made me see the connection to the **interviews with the wayfinders** (the fourth layer), I had made but later removed from the layers of interviews, but suddenly their voices and vitality forms had to be in the thesis to give the final touch to it. They had been absent, but implicit. I was not alone. Finally I understood the relationship between finding home and not having to pretend or act according to alien norms, was the wisdom I needed to judge

what would be the next step for me.

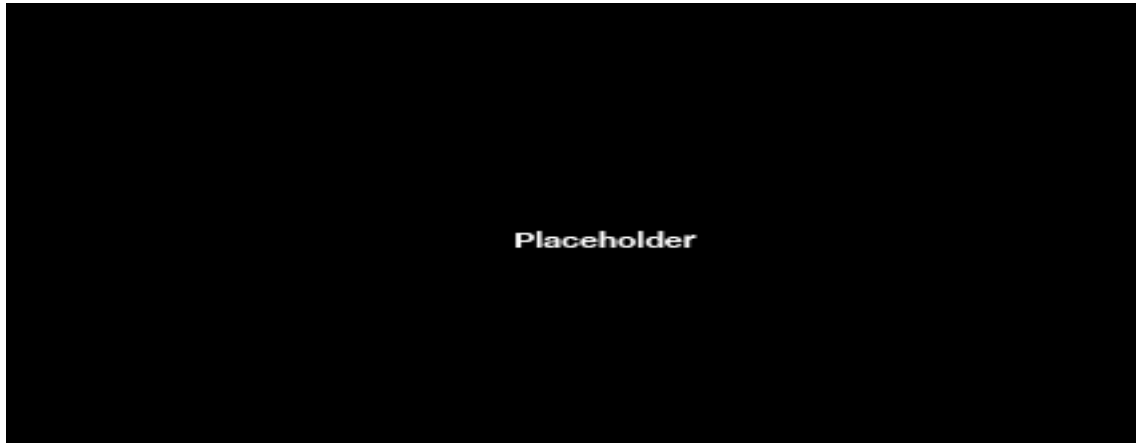


Figure 70 Two birds looking for food in the area between sea and beach

### *9.6.2 Relationships with colleagues*

Working in-house means that this particular part of the eco-system becomes a big part of my life. Some of the team members become dear friends, and because I was invited into so many stories I even become an important voice in other's personal narratives.

Often the in-house HR practitioner is met as equal to the independent, external consultant who is supposed to do what you, as customer, buy from him/her. Your attention is not on what position s/he has in the community s/he belongs to, besides that s/he of course should have sufficient experience for the task. Therefore it is sometimes interpreted negatively if the in-house practitioner has ambitions, and wants to be rewarded in similar ways to other employees. The number of managers or subject matter experts' resources is often kept at a minimum in HR as well as bonuses or salary reviews, because it otherwise might provoke the rest of the organization. Therefore the vertical career "paths" are limited. The in-house HR practitioner is sometimes compared with the teacher from one's childhood with their only purpose being to be there for the students (at least this is how it looks like from a child's aboutness viewing). The introduction of customer loyalty index and similar ratings from colleagues makes the relationships between them and us even more distant.

The research activities (which today are part of my doing practice) were considered by many as the reason why it sometimes got complicated. As a practitioner I designed and interacted in learning processes by creating room for conversations about coherence

between meaning and meaningfulness. As a manager (for example for a change management process, a talent programme, a HR development department) I had to deliver value into a value chain, and take hard decisions on letting important employees off or cutting the budget, as every other manager does in the crisis situation. I sometimes disagreed with senior management's priorities, and I became, intended or unintended, part of alliances. As a manager I was criticized, sympathized with, involved or not involved just like other managers experience it. As a practitioner the stories about managers are a great part of and sometimes tools of the job.

I spend a lot of time wondering about the questions below:

- What about the participants who loyally had engaged in joint wonderings, making them ask wondering questions to their managers? It was the intention and a way to transform the practice, but what about the consequences for them, if the system was not changed, or if I left and could no longer legitimize this approach to change?
- How to deal with managers thinking of me as being negative, when I thought I was helping by asking probing questions inviting us to think-out-of-the-box and comparing the intentions to the actions and of the future socially accepted or unaccepted consequence of our decisions?
- How to deal with colleagues who would take the credit to position him/herself in the Value Competition – not noticing the preparations, contribution and collaboration of the second and third realm of others?
- How to make a sustainable practice when one's own manager is telling one what to do, and the one in charge of one's "development" was replaced frequently, not present or without phronetic knowledge from the sustainable practice?
- How was I to live up to the norms of being a good manager, staying loyal by only telling positive stories about the companies I worked for?
- What about the voice as researcher? It seemed as if I had no legitimate rights using it, as my voice was met with "Birgitte, we hear your point, and your side of the story. Now, there are also other perspectives", after which a senior manager would judge who had won the case, and therefore the legitimate right to know and own the Truth.



- How to meet the assumption that I was only interesting in “talking” and that the value of my practice was limited. It seemed like it was the people who eventually came up with the answer themselves anyway.

In 2011 I came across some of the work of Carolyn Ellis, Professor, Department of Communication, University of South Florida. She has a Ph.D in sociology and much of her research focuses on the writing and revisioning auto ethnographic stories as a way to understand and live a meaningful life. Even though she is not a permanent resident of the system she is researching, as I used to be, I paid particular interest in some of her advice to her own Ph.D students (2007, p. 5, 24, 25, 26):

*“The bad news is that there are no definitive rules or universal principles that can tell you precisely what to do in every situation or relationship you may encounter, other than the vague and generic “do no harm.” The good news is that we are accumulating more and more stories of research experiences that can help us think through our options [...] In my own research, I have struggled with ethical choices time after time [...] The conflicts I have experienced have taught me a great deal. By repeatedly questioning and reflecting on my ethical decisions, I have gained a greater understanding of the range of my choices and the kind of researcher I want to be with my participants.” (p. 5)*

[...]

*“I tell them to think of the greater good of their research—does it justify the potential risk to others? Then I warn that they should be cautious that their definition of greater good isn’t one created for their own good. I tell them to think about ethical considerations before writing, but not to censure anything in the first draft to get the story as nuanced and truthful as possible. Then, I warn,*

*Now you must deal with the ethics of what to tell. Don’t worry. We’ll figure out how to write this ethically. There are strategies to try. You might omit things, use pseudonyms or composite characters, alter the plot or scene, position your story within the stories of others, occasionally decide to write fiction. Sometimes it may be appropriate to write and not publish.” (p. 24)*

[...]

*“Sometimes you may decide not to take your work back to those you write about. In those cases, you should be able to defend your reasons for not seeking their responses.” To this particular student, I say,*

*People never get over being called dirty. Rewrite the offending passages—try to show the dust and clutter without saying THEY’re dirty. Concentrate on what in your life makes you so bothered by her living conditions and leads you to construct her as dirty. That will take away a little of the sting if she ever reads your dissertation. Assume everyone in your story will read it” (p. 25)*

[...]

*“I tell them our studies should lead to positive change and make the world a better place.*

*“Strive to leave the communities, participants, and yourselves better off at the end of the research than they were at the beginning,” I say. “In the best of all worlds, all of those involved in our studies will feel better. But sometimes they won’t; you won’t.” I tell them that most important to me is that they not negatively affect their lives and relationships, hurt themselves, or others in their world. I tell them to hold relational concerns as high as research. I tell them when possible to research from an ethic of care. That’s the best we can do” (p. 25)*

[...]

*“I tell them I believe that most people want to do the right thing, the sensible thing. As human beings, we long to live meaningful lives that seek the good. As friends, we long to have trusting relationships that care for others. As researchers, we long to do ethical research that makes a difference. To come close to these goals, we constantly have to consider which questions to ask, which secrets to keep, and which truths are worth telling. That’s what I tell them. Then I listen closely to what they say back.” (p. 26)*

I understood that it was important that I did not simply run away as soon it became uncomfortable, but stayed long enough to be uncomfortable, for then be able to notice, experience and then describe the phenomena ... for the sake of the unspoken voices, and in this way make a contribution to future good sustainable HR practice.

### 9.6.3 Safety on the journey

When you are about to take off in an airplane, the crew instruct you on how to fasten seat belts, where to find lifejackets, oxygen masks and the nearest exit, and tell you to switch off all electric devices. Most captains will also warn you when bad weather (and therefore turbulence) is expected. Even though the way for the flight is drawn on the map, the pilots and the crew still use time ahead of the flight to prepare according to weather forecasts, and during the flight they pay attention to changes all the time and keep close contact to the control tower. Not doing so may be fatal.

Therefore I set up safety criteria for the research experience. I noticed how I – as the relationship with the thesis grew – transformed my own way of being an in-house HR practitioner, manager and researcher. Some of the complexity I found interesting, some made me so uncomfortable that I had to reorient myself. I had to accept and make peace with myself, that leaving the Cartesian inner talk behind, also would – from the outside – have the effect that I changed position from the core of the practitioners “best practices” and collegial community, to be acting from the periphery. It happened gradually, and I was sad about it for a long time.

Even though the situation in Ellis’s world was different, I again found support through her reflections from her research (2007, p. 16):

*“To write an effective autoethnography demands showing perceived warts and bruises as well as the accolades and successes; thus risking this kind of criticism comes with the territory. My way of dealing with what has appeared to be personal criticism has been to turn my attention back on the critics and to ask: What can I learn from your responses about your identity, socialization, moral community, and alternate constructions of a relational world? Most of the time, that strategy protects me from taking criticism personally, it moves me away from any absorption with self, and toward a sociological understanding of what is going on.”*

I had noticed from deep listening to conversations with my team members that we shared the bruises, though we responded very differently to the phenomena. The themes were intertwining with the themes in my own inner dialogue and you can see the traces of this by the use of subtitles and themes in chapter 6.2-6.5. I was very lucky to work with team members who were just as interested in the vitality forms as I am,

and I am grateful for the many fruitful conversations we had. It helped me to articulate the tacit knowledge and trained my storytelling skills.

I decided on 5 safety instructions for us. These are questions we are to ask ourselves whenever we meet tension, anxiety, disquiet, etc.:

1. What response from the other did I just notice, milliseconds ago, which make me feel in this way?
2. What kind of action am I capable of at this moment, to respond to this and to this relationship?
3. Is the action chosen, relationally responsible?
4. What could be a bailout – if the actions suggested otherwise would lead to a “crash”?
5. How can I do a debriefing later on, so I do not feel tempted to go back and re-evaluate based on an “aboutness view” only (“Oh, had I only said so and so, then I could have ...”)

The more I have practiced these questions, the more I am able to act from within, and pay attention to a bailout – just like bodyguards do it, when they enter a new room, or prepare for an episode (they not only save their own life, but the purpose is the many lives of others) – the more I am able to leave behind the systemic toolbox in which I had been trained.