A Grammar of Interactional Wellbeing in Organizational Settings

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Abstract

In contemporary wellbeing research, the theoretical focus is traditionally on the decontextualized and timeless agent, or on the interactions between a universal agent and a generic environment. However, to understand wellbeing in organizations, agents’ actions and situational particulars can be of pivotal importance. This study argues that wellbeing can and should be studied with a host of mutually complementary theoretical vocabularies. In this study, qualitative empirical investigations into the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing are fortified with a wide range of theoretical arguments, including metatheoretical investigations about the character of wellbeing.

This study begins by suggesting that Kenneth Burke’s dramatistic pentad – consisting of agent, agency, act, scene, and purpose – can be used as a metatheoretical lens to distinguish complementary "linguistic forms" in wellbeing research. This study argues that different linguistic forms can be seen as alternative paradigms of wellbeing, which offer complementary forms of "serviceability." In this study, wellbeing is approached from an interactional and relational perspective. Interactional wellbeing is subsequently studied as a paradigm that focuses on especially the act-scene ratio in the pentad. This study suggests a novel definition of wellbeing, which fits with an interactional and relational approach and the use of qualitative research methods – it is argued that harmony between the five coordinates of the pentad can be taken as an inclusive metatheoretical definition of wellbeing.

There are two interconnected empirical investigations in this study. For this study, 42 interviews were conducted in a knowledge-intensive organization, using a combination of grounded theory and case study methods. The first investigation highlights the significance of the interaction setup for interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. The results show how a generic relational structure and its relational dynamics are connected to relational coordination that is wellbeing generative and degenerative in organizations. The second investigation presents five empirically grounded relational frames. The investigation culminates in an integrative model of interactional wellbeing in organizations, which builds on neo-Aristotelian moral theory. The model depicts how relational frames are used to assess accomplished relational balance in encounters.

This study contributes to wellbeing scholarship, relational research, and to the study of performed phronesis in organizations. By bringing forth often-neglected vulnerabilities and embedded man-made structures involved in relationally enacted wellbeing, the in-depth case descriptions prompt practical insights about how to act and live well in the demanding context of knowledge work. In addition, this study seeks to illuminate history-making, serviceability, and relationality in organizations.

Keywords interactional wellbeing, relationality, phronesis, dramatistic pentad, paradigm, serviceability, history-making

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There are four colossal figures in my village, figures whose voices echo in the background of every word, sentence, paragraph and choice in this study. The most formidable of all the voices, an Odin like figure in her own right, belongs to my mother. When I was in my teens my mother Mirja-Leena said something that has stayed with me ever since: “There is nothing more valuable in society, than to have your own voice.” This study would not exist without the indelible wisdom in my mother’s words. Kiitos äiti kaikesta antamastasi viisaudesta ja tuesta!

Roughly a decade ago, my mentor and teacher Esa Saarinen brought Socratic illumination into my life. Through a series of gentle nudges Esa engendered in me an interest towards well-being, he unlocked tones of thoughtful respect and heartfelt empathy in my voice, and he guided me towards my own form of scholarship and concomitant style of writing. In Esa’s words: “You are a teacher, teach your readers as you would teach your students.” I have indeed done my best to do so. I treat my students as capable and mature adults and try to guide them toward the valuable and yet difficult to obtain insights. This study is indeed no different.

At the outset of my doctoral studies and much before, I often felt intellectually homeless. It was not for lack of exploration, but because all familiar and readily available academic homes seemed to some extent unsatisfactory. Then along came Dr. James Wilk. As an intellectual adventurer of the first order, he was able to navigate me across vast areas of scholarship. My mentor “Captain Jim” pointed me toward dusty tomes and other occluded works of scholarship whilst assuring me that there is a pattern that connects, as long as one is willing to do the work to truly understand them. Surely enough, I began to find kinship amongst scholars who moved within, across, and above singular domains of knowledge. And finally, I found a place of warmth and comfort. From my point of view, that home is far better and nothing like I had imagined in my years of intellectual homelessness. The home was always there, I was just searching for it in the wrong way and thus in the wrong places.

The fourth towering figure to whom I owe more than he realizes is my former teacher and mentor, Paul Buhanist. Paul always used to talk about the value and wisdom in history, how qualitative case studies have more to teach us than any other kind of study can possibly accomplish and see the tiniest of details as the most interesting and valuable part of a study. I somewhat agreed with him then, and I agree with him wholeheartedly today. I hope this study has enough interesting tiny details about everyday life in organizations, just the kind Paul loves to discuss and contemplate for hours on end. Especially the empirical parts of this study echo Paul’s ancient Greek wisdom and love for the intricacies of everyday affairs.
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Helsinki, 7th of September 2020
Peter Kenttä
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Author’s Contribution

Peter Kenttä asserts his moral right to be identified as the author of this monograph, which is an independent work of scholarship. The author alone is responsible for any errors or omissions this monograph may contain and for how the research has been conducted.

The thesis supervisor Prof. Esa Saarinen and thesis advisor Dr. James Wilk have contributed with valuable suggestions and guidance regarding pertinent literature, the style of argumentation, the scope and structure of the study, improvements in readability, and how to make the case for the scientific contributions in the study.

The interviews that form the empirical material of this study were recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim by an independent service provider.
Preface

This preface consists of four individual parts, which (I) discuss the format of this study (II) introduce the motivation and chief problematics underlying this study from the author’s perspective, (III) comment on the use of language, the use of references, and thus the overall style of writing, and (IV) describe the author’s relationship with philosophy and how the author employs it in this study.

I

How should we think about wellbeing? This question has now engaged me for over a decade. Instead of substituting this question for “What has so far been written about wellbeing?” or “What is the definition of wellbeing?” as it is so often done in academic research, in this study I propose we focus on the first question, as an important question in its own right. This focal point leads to some unorthodox choices in the format of this study. That is to say, the choices concerning for example the literature, style of writing, length and narrative of this study. There are a multitude of reasons for why this study looks and feels the way it does, all of which it would not be prudent to go into. However, some choices are probably worth explaining at the outset. The format is a consequence of this study dealing with metatheory, a shift in perspective, and edification. Please allow me to explain these further.

My view is that this important question of “how should we think about wellbeing” cannot be properly addressed on a typical theoretical level, where trenches have been dug between theories, academic disciplines and communities. Rather, my suggestion is that this “how” question should be approached on a higher level, a bird’s eye view that sees and appreciates the grand landscape beyond individual trenches, moats, and fortifications. One of many key insights that I learned during this investigation and which this study subsequently builds upon is that one should not underestimate how thoroughly one way of thinking about wellbeing can deflect alternative ways of grasping the issue. I consequently raise the “how” question to the level of metatheory with the overarching intention of refreshing our vocabulary about wellbeing. One way to describe what this study is about is to say that it aims to offer new ways of answering the question of “how should we think about wellbeing”, especially within organizational settings. With a focus on metatheory – i.e. “grammar” and alternative “linguistic forms” (Burke 1945) – I mean to discuss the practical concepts and other tools of thought one could use to describe and handle wellbeing in everyday life.

Within the social sciences I have come to believe in a way of doing and reporting research that guides the reader to view the world differently – to see the familiar as strange, to see the theoretical as the practical, to grasp choices and possibilities in situations where previously there may not have been any (see e.g. Berger 1963; Chia & Holt 2008; Morgan 1980; Toulmin
In my experience, these kinds of insights do not come cheaply. The design of this study thus asks the readers to trust that the author’s charted course will with time lead beyond simple low hanging fruits to insights of great relevance for organizational life.

I have consequently written this study in a way that attempts to guide the reader – regardless of their academic background – toward the use of a new set of conceptual tools and respective paths of thought about wellbeing. This is a shift in perspective, a gentle questioning and remolding of underlying patterns of thought similar to “double-loop” learning (Argyris 1976; 2003). To change how one thinks is admittedly a challenging and ambitious endeavor, both for the reader and author alike. The way of thinking about wellbeing presented in this study is based on a web of interdisciplinary thought, which moves between different levels of abstraction. Addressing the “how” question without digging unnecessary academic trenches leads to discussing and connecting a wide range of observations, phenomena and concepts. By being very precise and adequately comprehensive about how wellbeing is and could be conceptualized and thus thought of, it is my hope that the readers are able to reflect on their own views and preferred conceptual tools of thought concerning wellbeing, instead of taking them for granted.

It has taken me a decade to truly appreciate and understand the potential in an interactional and relational outlook, how different it is from more established ways of thinking (e.g. Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009). It is my hope that this study would enable the reader to grasp the scope and potential of these relational ideas both easier and quicker than what I was able to. I understand that this is a tall order. These hopes and beliefs have nonetheless led me to write this study the way that I have, and consequently to a format and style that is noticeably different from most studies in the social sciences. It is not my argument to say that all studies in the social sciences should be like this one. I would however argue that there should be more studies like this one in the social sciences and especially about wellbeing, where edification is taken seriously not only as a matter of content but also as a method of writing and reporting (Chia & Holt 2008). “In other words, how a claim is made matters as much as the content of the claim itself” (Chia & Holt 2008: 472, Italics in original).

The question of “how should we think about wellbeing” is not owned by any academic discipline nor is there an acknowledged authority on this question. Indeed, my aim in this study is to further understandings in three different streams of knowledge – wellbeing research, relational scholarship, and practical wisdom in organizations – in addition to suggesting contributions that fall outside of such established research traditions. This study consequently aims at “theoretical integration” between different audiences and interests instead of attempting to add to “theoretical compartmentalization” (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010). However, over and above thinking about wellbeing as an abstract topic ‘out there’ amongst other academic topics, the “how” question invites the readers to think about their own wellbeing. For example, how you think about your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your family and colleagues, regardless if you are for example a manager, an employee, or a wellbeing or organization scholar? That wellbeing is something dear and personal for every one of us, and that we are already quite knowledgeable about our wellbeing, underlies the aim and method of edification.

One example of this choice of format and method is that I do not offer straightforward practical implications at the end of this study, even though I can think of a range of practical insights that stem from the findings. The insights in this study are chiefly of a different type than a plain hammer or screwdriver. Furthermore, I have come to understand practice as an inherently creative enterprise and that in dealing with practical implications about wellbeing a great
deal of leeway should be left to the imagination, creativity and moral guidance of the reflective practitioners who are the “practical authors” of their own and other's wellbeing (Cunliffe 2001; Shotter 1993). This study provides them with a variety of novel concepts, case examples and understandings upon which they can formulate their own conclusions and personally useful tools of thought.

Being concerned with metatheory, a shift in perspective and edification may however come at a cost. Without the use of common simplifying measures such as choosing a single theoretical vocabulary within an established domain of knowledge or limiting the discussion to a singular issue and research audience, the door is opened for added complexity in the narrative. Moreover, the choice of being clear about “the way of thinking” invites philosophical and related theoretical discussions into the mix, thus increasing the length of the study. Extensive philosophical and theoretical discussions are not unfamiliar to neither wellbeing (e.g. Haybron 2008) nor organization scholarship (e.g. Gergen 2009; Shotter 1993; 2016), especially when one attempts to pave the way for an alternative point of view. Nonetheless, there could be a risk that some readers may see that this study is unnecessarily complex, that this study is sporting with a lot of theory, or perhaps that this study is overextending its usefulness by including too much philosophy and heavy theory into the discussion about wellbeing in organizations. If such thoughts would arise while reading this study, then I would humbly try to reassure the reader that there is method to the madness.

II

“We are building up our new ideals by utilizing the work of our ancestors, even where we condemn it, and so it will be in the future. Whatever our generation may achieve will attain in course of time that venerable aspect that will lay in chains the minds of our successors, and it will require new efforts to free a future generation of the shackles that we are forging. When we once recognize this process, we must see that it is our task not only to free ourselves of traditional prejudice, but also to search in the heritage of the past for what is useful and right, and to endeavor to free the mind of future generations so that they may not cling to our mistakes, but may be ready to correct them.” (Franz Boas 1928/1986: 200-201)

By taking a look at the table of contents of this study even a connoisseur of academic texts can be surprised about the scope and structure of what is to follow. To me the scope is very natural and sits well with the problematics that I faced and subsequently have tried to rigorously investigate in this study. The structure has shown to be one of the most difficult aspects to resolve: how to explain the path of thought and findings step-by-step so that it makes sense even though the research process was all but linear. In a study like this, in which one moves about between perspectives, linguistic forms, and more or less connected streams of research – thus between multiple layers of abstraction and different types of language games – there is seldom one right structure to follow. Consequently, the structure is and most likely will remain open for debate, even though the final structure of this study in my mind presents the problematics and my grip on them in a suitable order. In what follows, I will briefly and with the clarity of some hindsight try to explain the course and also the reasons for some of the key choices in this study.

Getting almost unhindered access to an organization to study its people and circumstances, enjoying the trust of your academic supervisors, and being given the opportunity to choose the
topic of the study freely can be a fruitful journey and yet risk becoming a perilous personal odyssey. I early on chose to study well-being in organizations from my own perspective, which can be concisely described as accentuating and investigating the interactional, systemic and relational facets of well-being in organizations. Coming from a department that studies and teaches leadership and organizational development this point of view is perhaps fringe but not uncommon. For a scholar baptized and thoroughly accustomed to social constructionism this perspective is perhaps even natural. Within the study of well-being, as perceived by the hugely influential movement known as Positive Psychology, my perspective can perhaps be described as ‘special’, in the way the word is often used when one does not quite know what to make of it. It is because this perspective does not address what one could consider as the traditional problematics regarding well-being. I have grown up with the organization studies overall point of view: that there are a variety of different vantage points from which to investigate phenomena of interest, and all are equally acceptable albeit some may turn out to be practically more fruitful than others. So, choosing to study well-being in organizations from my own relationally attuned perspective did not seem radical or unconventional.

Once I had begun gathering the empirical material for this study, I experienced a surprise. When I interviewed organizational members across hierarchies, positions, backgrounds, and skills, I noticed that what people were telling me was not in line with what the Positive Psychology literature on well-being had taught me. The people were adumbrating cases about mundane and yet important social encounters in the organization that had vast consequences – including on their assessment on how they were faring in the organization. The consequences to their well-being seemed to be rooted in those encounters. Moreover, the consequences to people’s well-being seemed to be right there on the surface, what I later on became to designate as the relational structure of the encounters. That is to say, the encounters were often self-explanatory merely due to the form of the interaction (Aristotle 2005; Bateson 1972; Burke 1945; Kovesi 1967). Thus, there was a discrepancy between my empirics and the bulk of well-being scholarship as I had come to understand it.

I initially experienced the misalignment as well-being theory being too developed and saturated with additional assumptions, probably stemming from the use of methodologies that first develop theory and then test it, as is typical in quantitative research. I came to realize that those supplementary presuppositions often conceal actions and their relations to context. Instead, they often accentuate the properties of the individual or those belonging to the surroundings. Indeed, I came to the view that most of the literature on well-being seemed to present its point of view from the perspective of the individual; that well-being was an inherent quantity or “trained capacity” (Burke 1954/1984) within the internal landscape of the individual mind, whereas I was seeing and hearing well-being in contextually rich actions and embedded within the relationships of an interdependent organization. Unexpectedly, I came to the view that well-being theory seemed to be much like neoclassical economics, despite the fact that the science is a behavioral science, there did not seem to be actual persons in it (Phelps 2006). I came to view the literature as still portraying human beings as close to the Cartesian image of “thinking statues”, as originally described by Norbert Elias (1998). My data and the literature pinning findings about well-being on a generic human nature or onto a variety of resources in a universal environment seemed miles apart. Put differently, despite having already read much into relational, interactional and systemic literature, I noticed that my thoughts about well-being had nonetheless been extensively organized according to an individual-centric view that deflected a relational and everyday way of grasping well-being.
Today, with some hindsight and with the time to choose my words to fit a broader audience, I can here attempt to describe the discrepancy in more familiar terms. According to both classic studies and more recent developments within both wellbeing scholarship and organization studies, to say that “work design affects wellbeing” amounts to stating the obvious (see Hackman & Oldman 1980; for a relatively recent review see Grant & Parker 2009). There are of course different takes on what constitutes work design and there are some differences between what one takes as wellbeing, but few would contest the gist of the above statement. But what I was coming to and what seemed to be obvious to the interviewees was that “work design is wellbeing” in organizational settings. This seemingly small difference between “affects” and “is” is the root problematic of this study. I do not exaggerate when I say that over a hundred pages in the beginning of this study is dedicated to the migration from one word to the other.

Here also lies one problem with the structure of this study. Even though I began from empirics and from there came to revelations about the research perspective that allowed me to make sense of the empirics, this account nonetheless begins from the philosophical discussions about the shift in perspective about wellbeing. This conceivably gives the impression that the philosophical perspective was chosen first and then came the empirics. This is however not the case. I had an interest in relational and interactional phenomena but could not find a path of thought that would connect my findings with an ongoing discussion about wellbeing without saturating the findings with presuppositions I could not find support for in my own empirical material. This became a problem I thenceforth began to investigate and which I have since incorporated into this study. After trying out several structures and narrative storylines, I can say that a study that serendipitously jumps between empirical analysis, discussions about philosophical perspectives, and reviews of pertinent wellbeing theories causes bewilderment even in the most allowing of audiences. Even though this would have more accurately portrayed the actual research process.

It is reasonable to ask why I felt compelled to include a philosophical discussion about research perspective into this study. The main reason is also more easily described now at the end of my journey. The reason is that the small change in words from “affects” to “is” gives rise to several fundamental problematics. When one says that “work design affects wellbeing” there is an understanding of what the concept on the left, work design, and the concept on the right, wellbeing, consist of. Given that the “affects”-statement is more or less ubiquitously accepted most would in all likelihood moreover take the two as distinctly separate from each other. And this is how the two literatures by far and large present themselves. Moreover, the word “affects” puts the two in a causal and thus in an orderly relationship across time.

Once the term “affects” is changed to “is”, several changes occur all at once. The conceptual distinction between wellbeing and work design is not only blurred or challenged but reorganized so that what one would find within the box of work design is now found within the box of wellbeing and vice versa. The causal order is also altered from a linear causality to the possibility of systems causality (Bateson 1972) and “confluence” (Gergen 2009). Although there is ample supporting literature for these conceptual shifts from especially cybernetics, family therapy, and relational organization scholarship, this reorganization of conceptual boundaries is mostly philosophical. It is foremostly a philosophical and thus a conceptual challenge to say that what one tends to find in the box on the left can beneficently and benevolently be put in the conceptual box on the right.

It is not difficult to show why it is mostly a philosophical endeavor. It is rather well known that in the sphere of social sciences the empirical cloth of experience and data can be cut in a
variety of ways, giving rise to alternative paradigms (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012). Many historians and philosophers of science might furthermore want to add that these paradigms often stem from foundational conceptual distinctions underlying philosophical schools of thought (e.g. Toulmin 1990; 2003). These distinctions can also be found at the conceptual root of different research streams and what constitutes culturally specific everyday common sense (Boas 1928/1986; Oakeshott 1991a). Some of the best-known conceptual boundaries are between mind and nature (Bateson 1972), experience and nature (Dewey 1958; Heidegger 1962/2008), and history and nature (Collingwood 1946/2014; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). The creation and resolution of these boundaries have been at the heart of philosophy for the past several centuries and their various resolutions have opened up new scientific frontiers and formed novel cornerstones in the history of science. For instance, opening the doors to psychology, archeology, geology and artificial intelligence (see e.g. Makari 2008; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977; Toulmin 2003). The reorganization of the distinction between wellbeing and work design is a similar philosophical endeavor, albeit in a humble scale fitting a single study.

Work design can be colloquially described as the practical improvement of interdependent actions of mindful human beings in a community of practice (see Wenger 1998). Once wellbeing and work design are cut from the same cloth it opens up the possibility that wellbeing might be constituted by interdependent and systemic actions within such a community instead of merely being affected by actions or circumstances in the surroundings. Furthermore, there is an increasing call for more contextually sensitive and qualitative studies on the topic of work design (Grant & Parker 2009), whilst similar yearnings with regards to wellbeing in general and wellbeing in organizations in particular are scarce. There would in other words seem to be also an issue about the preferred research questions and methodologies concerning the two topics. These are also altered once the two boxes are reorganized. It is not a secret that quantitative methodologies predominate in wellbeing scholarship even though some qualitative studies have yielded interesting findings especially in connection with identity scholarship (e.g. Bauer & McAdams 2004; 2010; Pals Lilgendahl & McAdams 2011).

What Grant and Parker (2009: 319) state in their seminal review about work design, that new “emerging perspectives take a much-needed step toward crafting work design theories that capture the work context of the twenty-first century”, could in my mind be stated also about wellbeing theories in organizations. To me it now seems obvious that there is a need for novel and emerging theories of wellbeing in organizations that capture the changing landscape of work and the novel and intricate interdependencies that have developed alongside the proliferation of knowledge work (Barley & Kunda 2001). This study tries to do its part in such a shift in focus. This study is however not about work design, but about wellbeing in organizations. Thus, to put the above stated key statement a bit more precisely and a bit closer to the topic of wellbeing, we can now state it as: “interaction design is wellbeing in an organizational context.” The difference between work design and interaction design is small, especially from a relational perspective, but focuses the issues at hand more on what is at the heart of relationally constituted wellbeing instead of bouncing between the two academic topics.

In this study it is important to keep in mind that this study is actually and chiefly about wellbeing in organizations. In the lengthy conceptual reshuffling that takes place I have utilized a number of conceptual scaffolds like grammar, main theoretical prototype, linguistic form and the dramatistic pentad by Burke (1945). Their primary aim is to help to conceive of wellbeing from an action and context oriented frame of reference, albeit I cannot help to think that some of the scaffolds that I borrow from the likes of Burke might be of more general use than how I
employ them here. Once the conceptual move about wellbeing is argued to a sufficient degree, I suggest that this move also opens up the vocabulary and perspective to issues not often talked about in connection with wellbeing. For example, upon viewing wellbeing as intimately connected to action and context this study has found several insights very helpful stemming from research streams ranging from microsociology and more specifically Erving Goffman’s (e.g. 1967; 1981) vocabulary about interaction setups, family therapy and especially Eric Berne’s (1961/2016; 1064/2010) framework about dyadic interactions, and practical moral reasoning as theorized by Jonsen and Toulmin (1988). This leads to one of the more unconventional choices in this study.

After opening the conceptual door to conceive of wellbeing in organizations in terms of action and context I provide an overview of the conceptual and philosophical world this move opens up. I, in other words, showcase the overarching perspective and its ‘way of thinking’ at length and portray how it connects issues in an unorthodox way, worthy of the label of a perspective, even though I do not use all of these discussions later in my empirical analysis and subsequent theorizing. Here I may explain my rationale for this choice by way of comparison. A more concise and often used method is to label a paradigm perspective about interactional and relational research by standing on those studies that have outlined its use in a variety of topics like leadership (Barge & Fairhurst 2008), knowledge and learning (Cunliffe 2008), and relational being more generally (Gergen 2009). The idea would be to extend the paradigm toward the topic of wellbeing in organizations. I in part use this style as well to ease the path for those familiar with this sort of labeling and argumentation. For a reader who is not familiar with the underlying literature it could however feel like opening a thick book at the middle, say chapter 18, and having to guess what the first 17 chapters were about. This is how research papers are often written in order to be as concise as possible.

However, to be honest about how I came to perceive wellbeing in organizations in an action and context lighting, I needed to really understand the first 17 chapters, to use the above analogy. I for example needed to understand how action is inseparable from the situation, understand how emotions might not be at the core of wellbeing but connected to action and context, understand how intentionality and the formation of the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993) plays a seminal part in enabling contextually-attuned and coordinated actions, and understand how wellbeing generative relational coordination might be built on top of roles, rights and obligations of everyday civil conduct instead of stemming from an immutable inner nature (Rorty 1989; Searle 1995; 2009). These ideas in unison taught me how wellbeing might be perceived as a creative relational accomplishment instead of a natural endowment inherent in individual agents. They opened my eyes to the seminal importance of purpose in organizations. And they taught me how wellbeing could be first-hand related to the “we” instead of the “I” (Lewin 1948).

I felt that I needed these understandings to gain confidence in my perspective and really understand wellbeing in organizations and especially the depth and breadth of my empirical material. Thus this book is equally a manual or guide to my former self, the one who a decade ago became interested in wellbeing, and an empirical inquiry into the relational dynamics that could be pinpointed as wellbeing generative or degenerative in organizations. So to answer why I opted for the unconventional choice of showcasing this perspective at length: I say that this study includes all these parts because to me it seems plausible that there might be someone else than myself who may need these parts in order to make sense of wellbeing in organizational settings. Moreover, that hopefully they might see force and reason in an action and
context oriented perspective to wellbeing in organizations. The point I wish to make is that an action and context frame of reference is not only a possible perspective, but a compelling one once one gains a grasp of the larger philosophical and broader academic streams that support this view.

The empirical parts of this study build on insights that in my mind should be granted the status of basic knowledge in an action and context oriented study into wellbeing in organizations. This includes face work (Goffman 1967; Schein 2009), the relational dynamics in dyadic interaction (Berne 1964/2010; Goffman 1974; 1981), and moral action in uncertain and partly socially constructed surroundings (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). To my knowledge these literatures have not been conjoined before in a study of wellbeing, which can be considered a contribution in its own right. It may also be worth mentioning that to build on such a variety of sources is not uncommon in an interactional, systemic, and relational study (e.g. Barge & Fairhurst 2008; Gergen 2009; Shotter 2016). My humble empirical contribution to this backdrop is to bring to light certain interaction setups and relational frames and how they come together in situated action conducive of wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination.

In the first empirical encounter I present the terms interaction setup, relationship setup, organization setup, ideal setup and incident setup to discuss different relational dynamics in encounters. I subsequently argue with the help of this vocabulary that there are different forms of relational coordination in interaction setups that are wellbeing generative or degenerative. Positional proficiency, relational affirmation and setup alignment are argued to be characteristic of wellbeing generative relational coordination whereas positional incompetence, relational invalidation and setup misalignment are presented as forms of wellbeing degenerative relational coordination.

In the second encounter with the empirical material I outline five different relational frames. The five relational frames – that consist of relationally attuned actions within a relationally constituted scene of action – can be considered examples of situationally intelligent and moral action under particular circumstances. The five relational frames are theoretically dense constructions that draw upon a range or resources including “face” (Goffman 1967), an interactional vocabulary I call relational structure (Bateson 1972; Berne 1964/2010; Goffman 1981), “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993), and practical moral judgement about what I refer to as relational balance (Annas 2011; Aristotle 2005; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). One contribution of this study is to present a framework that draws these resources together and to show them in situated moral action through the quotes and case examples in the five relational frames. My overall argument is that all of these theoretical ideas are necessary to the formation of a novel, empirically grounded, and action and context oriented theory of interactional wellbeing in organization settings.

During the writing of this study I found that it is not easy to convey the uncertainties that people face in the midst of action, to show that there were many alternative paths available, and yet people according to their own accounts on many occasions chose pathways that lead to successful outcomes. I try to show that the reason for the success is because the people acted relationally smart in relationally constituted surroundings – in ways that engendered wellbeing generative relational coordination and a shared sense of relational balance. In order to convey the context of uncertainty and the fact that there are always alternatives to action – which is what makes all action moral action (Bakhtin 1993; Giddens 1984) – I chose to contrast successful actions to unsuccessful and thus wellbeing degenerative alternatives. I believe this
contrast allows for practical and thus also actionable insights about wellbeing in organizations. This is what I perceive as the highest form and ultimate purpose of social theory, that it allows people to act more intelligently in their mutable and relationally constituted surroundings.

In this study I use the key term “grammar” similar to (Burke 1945), the use of which is explained in more detail later on. I also use the term to denote that this study includes an argued shift in perspective toward an action and context frame of reference in addition to putting on the table the basic building blocks upon which one can build theory within such a perspective. In my mind the distinction between perspective and theory can at times be elusive (see e.g. Abend 2008) – theories can with time ascend to become broader perspectives and broader perspectives descend into particular theories (e.g. Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1962/1982; 1965/1977). In this study I do not draw a clear line between the two, but instead work from a broader relational perspective toward a narrower theory of interactional wellbeing in organizations. Thus understood, a grammar denotes the notion that to understand the theory one needs to understand the perspective from where it is coming from, that is, the employed linguistic form or grammar that is the glue that holds the theory in one piece (see Burke 1945; Fauconnier & Turner 1998; 2002; Kuhn 1962/2012; Rorty 1989).

To summarize, this study is my attempt to formulate a theoretically sound position for the production of more local, actionable and timely understanding about wellbeing in organizations. Such understanding builds upon situational characteristics in order to provide added serviceability in a locally inhabited world. With this overarching purpose in mind I in this study explore the character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

III

“The account of ‘rationality’ underlying the philosophical program of Modernity thus rested on three pillars – certainty, systematicity and the clean slate, and when after 300 years John Dewey and Richard Rorty read the burial service over this program, their obsequy had wider significance. The idea that handling problems rationally means making a totally fresh start had been a mistake all along. All we can be called upon to do is to take a start from where we are, at the time we are there: i.e. to make discriminating and critical use of the ideas available to us in our current local situation, and the evidence of our experience, as this is ‘read’ in terms of those ideas. There is no way of cutting ourselves free of our conceptual inheritance: all we are required to do is use our experience critically and discriminately, refining and improving our inherited ideas, and determining more exactly the limits to their scope.” (Toulmin 1990: 179)

Following the early examples of Heidegger (1962/2008) and Wittgenstein (1953/2009; 2009) I believe that the style of writing in an academic investigation should be aligned with the overall purpose of the study. Given that a governing purpose of this account is to compose a conceptually coherent relational perspective and gain clarity about interactional wellbeing from the point of view of this relational perspective, the arguments have been laid out at some length at the hope of adequate precision conducive of synoptic and in-depth understanding. My chosen style of writing owes to the likes of Toulmin (1958/2003; 1990; 2003), Berlin (1996; 1997; 2001; 2013a; 2013b), Oakeshott (1991a; 1991b; 2001), and Wilk (2010a; 2010b; 2013). This tradition of scholarship can be described as integrative, non-foundational, historically situated, philosophically informed, and iconoclastic scholarship.
I believe the works of these astute scholars show that proper intellectual illumination “from where we are, at the time we are there” (Toulmin 1990: 179) about a difficult conceptual topic requires a panoramic and integrative style that includes multiple layers – from a satellite view to a microscopic view, appreciating and showing the larger and often multiple conceptual, scientific, societal, and historical contexts whilst rigorously scrutinizing the important and often intricate details on the topic. The works of seminal scholars highlight that to truly understand the details and how they come together one may need to grasp the multifaceted intellectual landscape surrounding them. This I fully agree with.

Unfortunately, in our current day and age this integrative style and its even longer intellectual tradition – which locates “itself in relation to the broadest array of sources, ranging from fine arts, through politics, culture, and history, to the natural and social sciences” (Seligman 2018: 240) – is nowadays found almost exclusively in studies within psychotherapy (e.g. O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987; Seikkula & Arnikil 2006; Seligman 2018; Stern 2004) and philosophy (e.g. Berlin 1997; Saarinen 2013; Taleb 2013; Wilk 2010a), thus seldom within organization studies.\footnote{For a similar synoptic and essayistic style that is used across social psychology and organization studies see for example Shotter (1993; 2016) and Gergen (2009). My argument is that it is exceedingly rare to find studies within organization studies that rely on and integrate equally vast and multifarious sources as is done within psychotherapy and philosophy, not that these forms of literature would be entirely unknown to organization theory (e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006).} One possible reason for why this style has not more widely penetrated organization studies is that the already buried grand ideal of “Modernity” (Toulmin 1990) that rests on ideas of certainty, systematicity, and the clean slate seems to still be alive and well within organization studies despite its recent funeral service (e.g. Cunliffe 2008). The value of the present style and form of reasoning in this study may not be entirely understandable from Modernity’s widely advocated and yet 300-year-old perspective.

I think that the works by Toulmin, Berlin, Oakeshott, Wilk, Collingwood, Taleb and others also show that understanding is perhaps best conveyed when the author writes and argues a standalone piece on the topic using principally his own words and reasoning. Such a style does not require vast amounts of prior knowledge from the reader and thus the study does not rely on references to be adequately understood. Instead the author aspires to give an argued and relatable account, which I would describe as scenic, non-simplistic, down to earth and ripe with practical examples and conceptual comparisons. By way of mundane examples and other connections to lived life the author attempts to show that the account is “reasonable” (Toulmin 2003); reasonable in terms of accrued life-experience and practical wisdom (Oakeshott 1991b; Toulmin 1990; 2003). In this study I have tried to pay homage to this intellectual tradition whilst making use of some of the insights that have accumulated within it. One could describe it as a style that varies between essayistic and erudite depending on the onlooker, the topic, and how deeply or synoptically I have felt a particular topic needs to be discussed in order to cultivate understanding.

There are arguably multiple benefits of writing with a style that emulates and furthers this particular intellectual tradition. Taleb (2013) – a proponent of erudition, non-departmentalization of knowledge and of iconoclastic scholarship (especially towards the certainty-seeking sandcastles of Modernity) – has pointed out the conceptual differences between his “Triad” of “fragile”, “robust” and “antifragile.” According to Taleb, academic knowledge is often a fragile form of knowledge, expertise is robust knowledge and erudite knowledge is closest to “antifragile.” Taleb forcefully argues that anything fragile, including knowledge, perceives time as an enemy; with time a theory will break, and fragile knowledge may be disproven or
undermined whereas time is an ally of antifragile knowledge. With antifragile knowledge Taleb (2013) means views and insights that actually gain from for example criticism, ridicule, controversy, or from being banned. Antifragile arguments and views thus tend not only to withstand the turbulence of time as does robust expert knowledge, but antifragile knowledge thrives from turbulence.

With these distinctions at hand, one can say that a reason to choose a style that mimics integrative and original authors like Taleb, Toulmin, Seligman, Oakeshott, Berlin and many more iconoclastic scholars, is that their work is arguably robust or perhaps even antifragile. In my humble opinion, a robust or antifragile study is a sign of quality that is unapologetically worth striving for in academic research, especially so in the social sciences. In this study I in part aim at robustness and antifragility with the chosen style of writing, partly by including multiple layers and by panoramically discussing important topics in close proximity to the issue of interactional wellbeing, especially those issues that concern its understanding from our present day and age in organizational contexts.

I have most often resorted to the use of the male pronoun (he) and possessive determiner (his) if and when talking in the third person. This mimics many of the referenced scholars from before a time when this practice had become an overt issue. To me, for example ‘man’ and ‘mankind’ are acceptable words and synonyms to a ‘person’ and ‘humankind’ respectively. In honesty, I do not believe that women’s emancipation or the interests of any other marginalized population is advanced through the banning of words but by understanding and using them in a different light. To think that particular words carry certain universal and timeless meanings in my mind tend to proliferate misunderstandings about language and the use of words (see Oakeshott 1933/2015; Wittgenstein 1953). In my mother tongue Finnish, a gender-neutral pronoun equivalent to s/he and possessive determiner hi/rs is the norm and consequently the whole issue, even aesthetically, renders itself borderline odd from my historical and situated perspective.

On the issue of references: Following the examples from Toulmin, Oakeshott, Berlin, Wilk, and others, in my discussions I have tried to hold myself to explicit references to those I consider worth reading and referencing instead of following the common academic convention of ‘when this word is used cite these articles and books so that the reader knows that you have done your homework and know the discipline’s unspoken rules and authorities and thus muster an aura of knowledgeability yourself.’ The old-school style of limiting references even in empirical studies (e.g. Goffman 1967; Milgram 1974/2009) to only a handful of pertinent works is closer to my preferred style than the modern style of citing close to a hundred references in each study and even more in books and book chapters. I do recognize the occasional need to show the extent of the literature one has at some point considered relevant for the study, which in my mind primarily serves the purpose of putting other scholars at ease. To show all that one has read and considered at some point may however amount to merely demonstrating superficial academic prowess, which I do not consider a merit in a scientific investigation. On this issue I agree with Taleb (2013), there is something fishy in reading the works of other academics in order to write to the same academics, thus contributing to the departmentalization of fragile academic knowledge. There is consequently a stylistic tension in this account. This account attempts to balance the convention bound style of a modern-day academic study, and the degrees of stylistic freedom a monograph format and its lengthy academic traditions provide (Kivistö & Pihlström 2015).
Secondly, I have my own view on whom and what works are worth reading in connection with an issue because, as will be discussed later on, one paramount question is how the phenomenon of interest should at all be written and talked about. It is a question about the vocabulary and the often-unsaid forms of thought that glue the vocabulary together into a coherent perspective and concomitant “linguistic form” (Burke 1945; see also Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Kuhn 1962/2012). I have given prominence to those references that I have considered particularly helpful in this regard. Thirdly, I do not believe that rallying an army of more or less acclaimed academic authorities is of real value in an account that tries to argue for the use of a novel perspective and its concomitant novel linguistic form in relation to a phenomenon. Quite the contrary. The arguments should be able to stand their own ground; not as logical arguments assessable with the tools of formal logic (see Toulmin 1958/2003), but as road signs in the path towards understanding the phenomenon in a beneficent and benevolent light.

I have therefore in many chapters used references with consideration. In cases where I have overtly cited a scholar – in some cases perhaps to my detriment renowned scholars often taken as academic authorities in their own right – it may be interpreted as blind allegiance to scientific or philosophical deities. I have used these present and past historical figures as scouts of the linguistic terrain in order to move about more quickly to where I think the helpful paths of thought lie. By doing so I merely want to acknowledge my debt to some figures without any insinuation of dogmatic servitude, which is arguably the antichrist of post-Enlightenment era scholarship (Collingwood 1946/2014; Kant 1784/2009). This should furthermore allow the modesty of my own assertions and achievements to be shown in their proper lighting.

That said, I have at times used lengthy quotes that have either expressed a matter more vividly and clearly than what I ever could. And at times to give a taste of a particular scholar’s style and clarity of thought whom I have grown to admire or whom I think should be acknowledged for their considerable achievements as scholars. Needless to say that the reader is not obliged to anything of the sort. Nonetheless it is my hope that some of the scholars who have made their way into the list of references are rewarded their time in the sun also by more astute scholars than myself. In my mind, many of the referenced scholars offer robust and anti-fragile insights, which are especially valuable in the social sciences.

IV

“The real ‘movement’ of the sciences takes place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision [...] Basic concepts determine the way in which we get an understanding beforehand of the area of subject-matter underlying all the objects a science takes as its theme, and all positive investigation is guided by this understanding.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 29-30)

My dealings with philosophy may also deserve commenting. The impetus behind this account is the aspiration towards clarity and understanding of the phenomenon of interactional well-being in organizational settings. As such this study is partly a philosophical exploration and its subsequent exposition. To think clearly on matters of import and difficulty I have found it necessary to read those who have been able to think clearly on the selfsame or proximal issues. I have come to the realization that proper social science is an engagement of extreme difficulty, as it is continuously in the process of being blinded by its own inventions, especially its own “basic concepts” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 29). This I believe is one reason for why the social has for so long and despite a plethora of attempts to understand it remained elusive and even
erratic (for a lengthier account see Berlin 1996). I see myself as a scholar and I cannot conceive of practicing proper scholarship without the use of philosophy.

In my mind a familiarity with philosophy is necessary in order to ‘go on’ with the practice of social science without succumbing to bad faith. With bad faith I principally mean creating or perpetuating a gap between academic discourse and everyday lived life. Such practice tends to make the esoteric discourse unverifiable through personal experience and propels a multiple worlds hypothesis (see Searle 2009) and concomitant fragmentation and compartmentalization of knowledge (Taleb 2013). Perceived against this backdrop, for me philosophy is a practical engagement which one engages in when one finds oneself in intellectual difficulty, and thus what one uses to get oneself out of the theoretical entrapment (Wittgenstein 1953; see also Shotter 1993). Philosophy thus conceived is an everyday engagement especially within scholarship. Only when engaged in such an action for a prolonged period of time does it become noticeable as philosophy. Berlin (1996) calls a person who thinks that there is one right philosophy, one right method, the right vocabulary, even in the face of contradictory evidence, as “doctrinaire”, which I consider to the antipode of a scholar. When a scholar finds himself struggling with ambiguity, bad faith, muddleheadedness or having succumbed to dogmatic slumbers of a presumed “final vocabulary” (Rorty 1989), in such an instance philosophy shows itself as an invaluable source of clarity, humility, and guidance.

My preoccupation with philosophy as a scholar instead of a trained philosopher may have certain advantages but also limitations. One advantage is that I do not perceive philosophers as authorities but as friends and fellow students of lived life who at times have been concerned with similar issues from a more or less similar vantage point of an intrigued and puzzled human being. In my mind proper philosophy in not an engagement of trying to win an argument or to build a philosophical system, but the practice of seeing past them, seeing what is good in each system and vocabulary, without succumbing to dogmatic slumbers (see e.g. Rorty 1989; Saarinen 2008; 2013; Wilk 1999; 2010a; 2010b; 2013). I consider myself to be an offspring of the first wave of Axial thought (Morris 2011), when religious beliefs turned toward intellectual mastery, emancipation, self-improvement and benevolent scholarship. I am firmly at odds with the second wave in which disenchantment, dialogue and contemplation became tainted by doctrine, mythology, privileged mystique, and authoritarianism. One of my chief philosophical concerns in this study has been, what Rorty (1989: 105, italics in original) refers to as, “the problem of ironist theory. It is the problem of how to overcome authority without claiming authority.” In other words, how to further the intellectual climate of benevolent and helpful scholarship without inadvertently propagating views that could be used as “shackles” (Boas 1928/1986) for the opposite effect. In conjunction with wellbeing scholarship I believe this concern cannot be taken seriously enough, as the topic can be perceived as touching upon the very character of “human nature” (Berlin 2013b; Waterman 2013). With this concern in mind, I have found a particular style of writing, exemplified by the likes of Berlin and Toulmin, to be of indispensable service.

During the first-wave of the Axial Age, which took place roughly between the 7th and 3rd century BCE, there was a historical turn in collective thought. Ancient Greek philosophy, Judaism, Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Jainism emerged. A disenchantment of the world, intellectual mastery and scholarship came into being, which later during 3rd century BCE to 1st century CE enabled historically unprecedented social development. During the second-wave, roughly 3rd to 7th century CE these strands of thought were formed into religious schools such as Christianity, Islam and others which offered salvation during a decline in social development. Before the Axial Age king, God and authority were a single person, who had replaced one’s inner voice of moral conscience. Social and state construction were comparatively limited before the Axial Age. (Jaynes 1976; Morris 2011)
As a scholar I can settle for the sufficient and do not have to deal with mathematical absolutes or metaphysical certainties (Toulmin 1990; 2003). I have tried to understand what different philosophers have probably intended to say instead of a pedantic reading of what they did write down. This has given me some leeway to choose and move about what I consider to be genuine insights and helpful to this study and my present-day work as a scholar. I have not been concerned with the ‘right’ understanding of philosophers as it is deemed by others than myself nor interested in the ‘philosophies’ of philosophers beyond what I think they have apprehended with insight and clarity. I at times honor some philosophers by giving my own understanding or “redescription” (Rorty 1989) about their works, which may change the way their contribution is perceived. Such novel interpretations are rather common in the course of history. Many ancient philosophers have been modified and reinterpreted again and again in the unfolding present and in its modern furniture and lighting. I see no problem with this course of action where philosophers and their insights are used in the scholarship of some contemporary and pressing issue instead of investigating the historical figures in their own right.

Philosophy as I perceive it is in the service of truth and practical engagement, which I surmise to be a single issue. The essence of truth lies in how it is used and therein lies its helpful character (Heidegger 2005). Truth is stubborn and steadfast which requires no support from arguments, but merely to be shown as it is. In my view, in the practice of science truth is not merely told but to some measure also shown (see Heidegger 1962/2008; cf. Rorty 1989). Truth brings with it coherence to experience and resolution of disharmonies (Oakeshott 1933/2015; Spinosa et al. 1997). I have been interested is what is right and helpful by my project and the phenomenon at hand. If I have erred in some way it is my hope that the errors are nonetheless fruitful ones. In the course of this study I have come to correct several of my prior beliefs, which I had previously neither thought of critically nor seen as relevant to investigate. For the sake of transparency, I cannot say that all of my investigations have come to a harmonious close. The reader may sense this aspect through a character of exploration in this account instead of, for example, it being a concise system of assertions. Yet, considering the purpose of this account I believe this study to be sufficiently complete, but by no means perfect, so that it may be helpful to others than myself.

There is a fable I have found illuminating, one that I have found myself returning to in times of philosophical desperation during this study, about the use of philosophy within a domain of knowledge:

“The late Ludwig Wittgenstein used to compare the re-ordering of our ideas accomplished in philosophy with the re-ordering of the books on the shelves of a library. The first thing one must do is to separate books which, though at present adjacent, have no real connection, and put them on the floor in different places: so to begin with the appearance of chaos in and around the bookcase inevitably increases, and only after a time does the new and improved order of things begin to be manifest – though, by that time, replacing the books in their new and proper positions will have become a matter of comparative routine. Initially, therefore, the librarian’s and the philosopher’s activities alike are bound to appear negative, confusing, destructive: both men must rely on their critics exercising a little charity, and looking past the initial chaos to the longer-term intention.” (Toulmin 1958/2003: 233)

While this study is about the subject of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, this is also a philosophical exploration that in part re-orders knowledge in order to understand the
phenomenon in a novel and illuminating light. For those interested in the empirical phenomenon of interaction wellbeing, it is my hope that they bear with me the initial chaos and re-ordering, so that later the empirical phenomenon can come to be seen in an intellectual context that makes the findings reasonable and relatable.
“As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. Of course there is argument and inquiry and information, but wherever these are profitable they are to be recognized as passages in this conversation, and perhaps they are not the most captivating of passages. It is the ability to participate in this conversation, and not the ability to reason cogently, to make discoveries about the world, or to contrive to a better world, which distinguishes the human being from the animal and the civilized man from the barbarian. ... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance.”

Michael Oakeshott (1991b: 490-491)
PART I: INTRODUCTION

“Where error is impossible, truth is inconceivable.” (Oakeshott 1933/2015: 86)

1. Approaching interactional wellbeing with an organizational mindset

The subject of this study is interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. In this study this subject is approached in a way that requires maneuvering on multiple levels of abstraction. This study thus resembles modern-day knowledge work, where managers and employees are often engaged in discussions on multiple and often not that well defined levels. As one manager in this study put it: “The level of discussion is at times really difficult to determine, at what level should the issues be discussed.” (Manager#24)

Unfortunately, in academia many of these different conceptual levels are most often referred to with the same concept of “theory” (Abend 2008). In order to distinguish these many levels of abstraction and uses of the word theory from each other, in this study I use terms like linguistic form, perspective, approach, empirical phenomenon, and theoretical model. As will become clear in a moment, I also employ other conceptual devices to help maneuver these levels. At the outset it may nonetheless be of help to highlight the relations between four of these concepts.

The first level is the phenomenal level, which is intimately connected to empirical observations on the level of everyday life. All of the above levels are conceptual levels that vary in their level of abstraction. One step higher from the phenomenal level comes the notion of a theoretical model. For the highest conceptual level of abstraction, I use the term “linguistic form” (Burke 1945; cf. paradigm, Kuhn 1962/2012), which is tied to metatheoretical issues and to the conceptual description of the phenomenon as a phenomenon of interactional wellbeing within organizational settings (for a similar three-level rendition see Morgan 1980). I employ a

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3 Wellbeing has by now been established as a common household concept with a multitude of commonsense uses and thus no longer has use of hyphenation in the spelling of “well-being.”
theoretical lens to move about between these levels, which I call an interactional and relational perspective. Understanding these different levels and how they come together is key to understanding this study and its contributions. In this study these many levels of abstraction are investigated and organized as an interweaved dialogue of discovery where advancements on one level inform the others, and when appropriate, in the order the insights occurred during the research. In what follows I give a short account about the contents and relevance of this study.

Interactional wellbeing in organizational settings can be said to be of interest for a variety of reasons. One reason is that the subject matter does not nominally exist as an investigated phenomenon nor as a recognized field of scholarship within organization and management theory (Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Morgan 1997; Tsoukas & Knudsen 2005). Studies into topics such as “care” (Kahn 1993; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012), “compassion” (Dutton et al. 2014; Rynes et al. 2012), and “engagement” (Bakker et al. 2008; Kahn 1990; Seligman 2011) show that such concepts can be theoretically expanded in a variety of interesting directions and enlighten a scope of empirically specific phenomena. With this in mind one could perhaps expect to find such a field of research as interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

An interest into interactional, situational and systemic perspectives on employee health alongside other humanistic concerns have existed for decades within domains such as organizational development (OD), organizational learning (OL), and organizational culture (e.g. Argyris 2003; Schein 2006; Senge 1990/2006; Weick 2004). In addition, similar interests can be found within more distal and yet influential domains such as microsociology, psychotherapy and constructivist research more broadly (e.g. Bateson 1972; Goffman 1967; Haley 1963; Seligman 2018; Watzlawick et al. 1974).

An interactional and relational perspective has penetrated organization scholarship amongst other disciplines (Bateson 1972; Cunliffe 2008; Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009; Goffman 1974/1986; Laing 1960/2010; Shotter 2015), but the employment of the view has remained as a scattered and interdisciplinary undercurrent instead of manifesting as a bona fide subject of research about wellbeing and especially within organizational settings. This is surprising for the fact that organizations are in many quarters recognized to be relational environments (e.g. Kahn et al. 2013) wherein wellbeing is thought to be of seminal importance for executives, employees and for those organizations who, for example, trust that higher wellbeing leads to higher performance, motivation and creativity (Amabile et al. 2005; Deci et al. 2017; Spreitzer et al. 2005; Wright & Cropanzano 2000). Why interactional wellbeing has remained outside of the limelight of both wellbeing and organizational scholarship can be considered a mystery (Alvesson & Kärreman 2007), one that begs for a metatheoretical investigation and thus for an inquiry on multiple levels of abstraction.

Part I: Introduction

authenticity (Haybron 2008; Ryff & Singer 2008; Wood et al. 2008), a positive self (Dutton et al. 2010; McLean et al. 2007), and a sense of coherence (Antonovsky 1993). The negative phenomena and related concepts of stress (Edwards 1992), depression (Joiner & Coyne 1999), helplessness (Seligman 1990; Watzlawick 1983), anxiety (de Botton 2008; Smail 1984), mental illness (Szasz 1974/2010), low self-esteem (Baumeister et al. 2003), and trauma (Bonanno 2004; Janoff-Bulman 1992) may also come to mind.

This range of concepts as a whole illustrates one encompassing way in which wellbeing is conceptualized and consequently studied. The key concepts about wellbeing are often formulated in a way that allows them to be studied in quantitative terms. This means that qualitative distinctions in life are apprehended as homogeneous and commensurate so that they can be measured in an exact manner (see Nussbaum 2001). Consequently, qualitative changes in conduct, feeling and thought are conceptualized as quantitative changes often in a single aggregate construct. As a consequence, the metaphors “higher” wellbeing means “more” and “lower” means “less” of wellbeing or some of its determinants (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

It follows that the concepts are most often formulated in a universal and timeless framework to be either positive (optimism, resilience, positive emotions) or negative (stress, depression, anxiety), which can be summed into various higher-order aggregates and their corresponding formulations of wellbeing (e.g. Diener 1984; Diener et al. 1999; Keyes 2002; Ryff 1989; Seligman 2011). Positive constructs are often found to be straightforwardly related to other positive constructs and vice versa. For example, higher positive emotions lead to higher resilience (Fredrickson et al. 2003), higher wellbeing leads to higher productivity (Cropanzano & Wright 2001; Deci et al. 2017), increase in positive emotions leads to increased happiness (Diener et al. 2003), and so forth. There is no dearth of research about the relations between measurable constructs of wellbeing.

A fourth common conceptualization often found in connection with the first three, is that the constructs either are themselves or build dynamic “resources” or “capital,” which vary depending on the situation and vicissitudes in life (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Dutton et al. 2006; Fredrickson 2001; 2009; Hobfoll 1989; 2002; Luthans et al. 2007). This conceptual move can actually be seen as a consequence of the first conceptualization, which posits qualities in life as commensurate and thus also exchangeable and accumulative. A fifth popular conceptual choice accompanied with the others, is that the key psychological constructs are grounded in a stable and universal psychobiological makeup some refer to as “human nature” (Pinker 2002; 2011; Haybron 2008; Waterman 2013), a metatheoretical foundation of wellbeing, which allows the postulation that more of a construct is good and less of it is bad for a person’s wellbeing (e.g. Fredrickson 2013). Need and desire satisfaction theories can be said to be the main metatheories within wellbeing research (e.g. Deci et al. 2017; Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Goldstein 1939/2000; Haybron 2008; Maslow 1987).

A single such idea of how to conceptually handle a subject matter can be called a “proto-idea” (Fleck 1979: 23-27), which often reflects a historically situated “commonsense” (Toulmin 2003; Tsoukas 1994) way of treating the subject matter. The clustering of such particular proto-ideas into a common way of reasoning with the concepts of the subject matter according to, what I call, a common theoretical prototype (inspired by Burke 1945), illustrates a phenomenon that has been referred to in the broad context of science as a representative “thought style” of a “thought collective” (Fleck 1979) or “paradigm” (Kuhn 1962/2012).

A paradigm is based on a “strong network of commitments – conceptual, theoretical, instrumental and methodological” that provides a foundational way to “model problems and
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solutions” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 42, xlii). According to Fleck (1979: 9, 28) a paradigmatic thought style “determines the formulation of every concept”, which is of consequence because evidence “conforms to conceptions just as often as conceptions conform to evidence.” Prototypical paths of thought can be deliberate conceptual choices or implicit “rules” (Bateson 1972; Kuhn 1962/2012; Goffman 1974; Winch 1958/2007) colloquially known as “sacred cows” that are “in each field, and even within subfields” (Schein 2006: 290). An interesting facet of these theoretical prototypes and paradigms more broadly is that they build on conceptual preferences and cause consequent blind spots by deflecting alternative conceptualizations, which are seldom known explicitly if one has not engaged in their analysis (Burke 1945; Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012; Rorty 1989; Toulmin 1990; 2003).

In organization scholarship paradigms were introduced to allow mutual understanding between fields of research and thus turn interdisciplinary discussions more respectful and generative (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Gioia & Pitre 1990; Lewis & Grimes 1999). In organization scholarship it is often helpful to delineate paradigms according root metaphors and analogies for understanding organizations such as machine, organism, or theatre (Boje et al. 2003; Cornelissen 2004; Ketokivi et al. 2017; Morgan 1980; 1997), or according to widely recognized labels such as symbolic, postmodern and functionalist paradigms (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Tsoukas & Knudsen 2005).

In contrast, within wellbeing literature a discussion about paradigms is a rare occurrence. When one does come across the gist of the idea or even explicit use of the word paradigm (e.g. Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009; Ryan & Deci 2001), it is used to discern interdisciplinary traditions of thought that cluster thematically around, for example, hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing (Deci & Ryan 2008; Delle Fave et al. 2011; Waterman 1993). Given that the widely used organizational paradigms have not crossed over into wellbeing theory it can perhaps be assumed that similar metatheoretical characterizations would probably be unhelpful in furthering wellbeing scholarship. New paradigm boundaries may be needed to capture the breadth, character, and variable density of wellbeing research.

The study of wellbeing has relatively recently taken a multitude of forms and directions (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Haybron 2008; Seligman 2011) also within organization scholarship (Bakker et al. 2008; Cameron & Caza 2004; Dutton et al. 2006; Kahn 1993; 2019; Gergen 2009; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012). This suggests that the time might be ripe for a more widespread use of paradigms within wellbeing scholarship to explicate why and how conceptual choices pattern, combine, and differ in focus as they do (see also Waterman 2013). As with any scholarly endeavor, it can be argued that an increasing “fragmentation of inquiry threatens the advancement of knowledge and practice” (Ferris et al. 2009: 1380; see also Glynn & Raffaelli 2010), which is also true within wellbeing research (e.g. Pollard & Lee 2003). An appreciation for and explicit use of wellbeing paradigms would thus serve two purposes: to provide coherence to theoretical and practical inquiries on wellbeing, and secondly serve as an invitation to participate in the inclusive enterprise of wellbeing scholarship, wherein one may further alternative philosophical preferences in the pursuit of different theoretical aims. A principal claim of this account is, then, that wellbeing scholarship would benefit from metatheoretical analysis.

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4 For example, the commensurability of human goods and different qualities in life easily deflects the notion that there might be situations and goods that are incommensurable, heterogeneous, and non-exchangeable like one’s own unique family and beloved friends (see Nussbaum 2001).

5 One possible reason is that most present-day wellbeing scholarship is well known to be chiefly a quantitative and thus presumably a “functionalist” (Burrell & Morgan 1979) or equivalently “modernist” endeavor (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006).
This begs the question as how to delineate paradigms in the vast and multifarious wellbeing literature in an illuminating way? My suggestion is that wellbeing scholarship would benefit if paradigms were delineated according to their “grammar” or “linguistic form” (Burke 1945). With the term linguistic form I mean the trusted conceptual “selections”, “reductions”, and “mergers” that can be found in any account of a subject matter and which rely on the use of some theoretical prototypes above others (Burke 1945). Such analysis, which I call theoretical serviceability analysis (inspired by Burke 1954/1984), can explicate employed theoretical prototypes as well as illuminate novel conceptual pathways, and paradigmatically different ways in which proto-ideas could be put together (cf. Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008; Morgan 1980; Oswald et al. 2011; Tsoukas 2009). In this study I will consequently delineate wellbeing paradigms based on their conceptual character (Kuhn 1962/2012).

The concept of “serviceability” (Burke 1954/1984) is related to two seminal notions: (1) that linguistic forms are rooted in philosophical preferences (Burke 1945), and that language is used purposively (Burke 1945; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Wittgenstein 1953), also in research. The first idea is well known within organization theory, albeit often framed as the implicit assumptions of a paradigm (e.g. Gioia & Pitre 1990; Morgan & Smircich 1980). The latter idea has to my knowledge not been introduced into organization theory-building as an analytical method. The two ideas in unison suggest that linguistic forms are fitted, designed and employed to effectively get at their aim (Burke 1954/1984). The overarching purpose of an investigation gives rise to a theoretical “discourse” (Grant et al. 2004) or particular “language game” (Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009; see also Rorty 1989) regarding the subject matter, which is concomitantly fitted with a suitable and effective linguistic form that provides serviceability in the pursuit of that purpose (Burke 1954/1984).

Scholars who share a common interest, for instance, the study of wellbeing as an inherent, timeless and universal characteristic such as in need satisfaction theory and organismic valuing theory (Deci & Ryan 2000; Ryan & Deci 2000), can most likely use a particular linguistic form with much benefit and effectiveness for this purpose. However, if one is interested in how and what kinds of acts build enduring wellbeing in organizational settings, then the idea of serviceability suggests that another kind of linguistic form would probably be more fitting for the purpose (Burke 1945; 1984). The notions of paradigms, grammar and serviceability suggest that wellbeing scholarship, in the widest sense of the term, can serve a variety of purposes and include different linguistic forms, many of which may not currently be recognized or acknowledged as wellbeing scholarship.

The issue of serviceability of language has immense practical relevance, especially regarding wellbeing in organizational settings. As the science of wellbeing is not isolated from its surrounding society, the most often used linguistic forms have crossed also into organizational life and modified the commonsense understandings of wellbeing (Ellenberger 1971; Foucault 1965; Moscovici 2008). For example, in the beginning of 20th century psychoanalytic vocabularies dominated wellbeing theory and its views and concepts readily crossed over into the public

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6 I use “grammar” and “linguistic form” interchangeably, which to my understanding parallels Burke’s (1945) use of the terms.

7 Burke is often referenced to as the originator of “organization-is-theatre” perspective (Boje et al. 2003), whereas the full resourcefulness of his analysis of linguistic forms and the idea of serviceability have so far, as far as I know, remained outside the interest of organization and management theory.

8 At the outset of Positive Psychology and its interest into wellbeing as a positively defined phenomenon, a key criterion of inclusion into this wellbeing discourse was methodological rigor (Seligman et al. 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). In this study I suggest conceptual diversification to the field of wellbeing scholarship on the basis of serviceability of linguistic forms. For a similarly inclined idea in wellbeing scholarship see Waterman (2013).
domain. They took over the vocabularies of how persons viewed themselves and others (Moscovici 2008). With historical hindsight it can be considered typical that mainstream academic paths of thought influence how persons understand and assess how they are faring within their organizations and in life more generally (Ghoshal 2005). The issue of wellbeing is consequently not merely an academic discourse, but a “conversation of mankind” (Oakeshott 1991b: 488). An understanding of serviceability allows both practitioners and academics to examine theories not only according to already familiar scientific merits, but according to what the language of the theory is geared towards and thus enables most serviceability in. My claim is that theoretical serviceability analysis can help to discern between linguistic forms and thereby provide a generative platform for “theoretical integration” between currently distal fields of wellbeing scholarship (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010). It is my hope that this would open up wellbeing research in directions that are in our present day and age barely imaginable.

In this study I use the method of theoretical serviceability analysis to explicate the linguistic form of the field of research I call interactional wellbeing in organizational settings and how its linguistic form differs in focus from individual-centric theorizing, what I consider the current stronghold of wellbeing theory. The interactional and relational perspective which in this account connects the different levels of abstraction is a loosely coupled constellation of views that have the common denominator of including or reintroducing a neglected theoretical frame of reference (Cunliffe 2008; Danziger 1997). The force of this perspective is that it has the potential to bring forth novel phenomena and connect familiar phenomena in new and helpful ways with added serviceability (e.g. Bateson 1972; Emirbayer 1997; Shotter 2015; Wilk 2010a). On an empirical level it can be utilized to discover what other theories may have missed, distorted, overemphasized or unnecessarily inserted due to their philosophical preferences and linguistic form.

On a conceptual level the interactional and relational perspective is an epistemological, methodological and phenomenal outlook which variously includes or overlaps with, for example, enactivism (Thompson 2010; Weick 1995a), phenomenology (Heidegger 1962/2008; Spinelli 2005; Zahavi 2008), embodiment (Maturana & Varela 1998; Shotter 2010; Varela et al. 1992), cybernetics (Bateson 1972; Beer 1979), interpersonal approaches (Laing 1960/2010; Sullivan 1953/1997), social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Searle 1995; 2009), social constructivism (Hosking & Bowen 2000; von Glasersfeld 1984), relationality (Cunliffe 2008; Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009), views that have been laid on communication and interactional foundations (Argyris 2003; Goffman 1967; Oakeshott 1991a; Schein 1992; 2006; Shotter 1993; 2016), and those that underscore action in lived everyday life (Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945; Macmurray 1957; 1960; Vygotsky 1978). According to the enactive approach, for example, “cognition is the exercise of skillful know-how in situated and embodied action” and that a “cognitive being’s world is not a prescribed, external realm, represented internally by its brain, but a relational domain enacted or brought forth by that being’s autonomous agency and mode of coupling with the environment” (Thompson 2010: 13).

Albeit the interactional and relational perspective is difficult to pin down in precise terms due to its vast scope, philosophical maturity, interlaced history and the gamut of authors whose work it is built upon, it is convenient to say what it is not. It is not a view which relies on theoretical prototypes that portray phenomena in entitative terms, it does not prioritize individualism, and it does not condense lived life into commensurate and neatly measurable concepts.

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9 I do not argue that a theory could not be extended to serve a variety of purposes (e.g. Deci et al. 2017), however, the serviceability may still be patterned and geared towards, for instance, individualism (see Gergen 2009).
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(e.g. Cunliffe 2008; Hosking 2011; Shotter 2015). For me the interactional and relational perspective is foremost a linguistic, metaphysical or epistemological orientation (Becker 1932; Burtt 1932/2003; Emirbayer 1997; Heidegger 1962/2008; Toulmin 1990; Wilk 2010a), depending on the issue at hand.

The interactional and relational way of thinking – i.e. a “way of seeing” and a “way of reasoning” (Ketokivi et al. 2017: 653) – about phenomena, including wellbeing, can be described as unconventional. It deliberately theorizes in terms of process, relations, and context instead of things, individuals, and properties (Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). It is consequently not uncommon to find lengthy and experimental expositions of its character (e.g. Bateson 1972; Bateson & Bateson 1987; Elias 1998; Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009; Shotter 1993; 2016; Watzlawick 1990) in the endeavor to make “strong relationality” (Gergen 2009) a compelling point of view (see also Emirbayer 1997). Given that this study is not confined to relational scholars, I have especially in latter parts of this study taken the freedom to show the relational way of reasoning across a range of commonsense subject matters. I do so while I present and connect helpful proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes within the interactional and relational tradition of scholarship for the purpose of this study. The point of this is to conscientiously formulate a theory of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings that builds on the tradition of strong relationality, and in order to show what useful and often interwove proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes this tradition of scholarship has to offer.

There is reason to believe that metatheoretical analysis can inform and thus enrich and provide guidance for theory-building on the level of theoretical models (Gergen 2009; Kuhn 1962/2012; Morgan 1997; Toulmin 1990). There is however a paucity of empirical scholarship that builds on strong relationality (see Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011 for a seminal exception). This suggests that there are difficulties in conjoining at least this particular philosophically mature perspective with novel empirical research. My suggestion is that a main theoretical prototype is one conceptual device that solves this problem and allows a scholar to efficiently move from the wealth of abstract understandings to empirical investigations without drowning the empirical investigation in preconceived relational tenets and proto-ideas. My claim is, then, that through the employment of a main theoretical prototype one can move about between the vast conceptual and philosophical resources a linguistic form affords and employ them systematically on a particular empirical phenomenon.

Other scholars have referred to the idea of a main theoretical prototype as a “model” (Fleck 1979; Powers 1973), “representative anecdote” (Burke 1945) or “exemplar” (Kuhn 1962/2012). A main theoretical prototype answers the question of how the authors perceive or model the main empirical phenomenon under investigation (see Ketokivi et al. 2017). In my mind this question is imperative, because intangible phenomena such as interaction, action, wellbeing, and organizing can on an empirical level refer to altogether different phenomena. For example, in the study of care within organizations the theoretical discourse may form a thought community through a similar use of language (Rynes et al. 2012), but in empirical investigations the main theoretical prototypes of care can and do differ (e.g. Kahn 1993; Lilius et al. 2008; Martela 2012). In this study I consequently use the idea of a main theoretical prototype to disaggregate a linguistic form for the purpose of empirical investigation. Thereafter this study is formed into a dialogue of discovery between the empirical phenomenon and helpful theoretical conceptualizations through investigations on multiple levels of inquiry.

\[10\] In this account these concepts can be taken to be interchangeable, which to my understanding does not do injustice to any of the concepts as they have been employed by the original authors.
1.1 Research questions

The main research question of this study is:

1. **What is the character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings?**

This question consists of two parts, a phenomenal and a conceptual part. The empirical question aims towards empirically uncovering wellbeing as an interactional phenomenon that is instrumental to a person’s wellbeing in organizational settings. What is therefore sought after is a theory of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings that builds upon a specific main theoretical prototype, which due to the employed theoretical lens, focuses on the interactional and relational character of the phenomenon (Cunliffe 2008; Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009; Shotter 2016). In this study I use as my main theoretical prototype symmetric and complementary interactions (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011) in the developed form of interconnected Parent, Adult and Child relational positions stemming from Transactional Analysis (Berne 1961/2016; 1964/2010; see also Kahn 1993; 2001). I expand on this main theoretical prototype especially with the help of Goffman (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981).

My chief empirical claim is that interaction setups in their design and enactment are crucial for interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. In this study I empirically show and subsequently theorize of how interaction setups can be generative and degenerative for cooperative “co-action” and “relational coordination” (Gergen 2009). Interaction setups link an individual agent’s actions to the formation, maintenance, representation, subordination, and breakdown of the “collective mind” of the organization (Weick & Roberts 1993). The empirical part of this study contributes to the burgeoning literature on relationality (Cunliffe 2008; Gergen 2009; Hosking 2011) and specially to understanding relational and collective processes of wellbeing in organizational settings (Dutton et al. 2006; Kahn 1993; 2001; Lilius et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002).

The conceptual question is about how one could describe the phenomenon in a way that pinpoints the empirical phenomenon as a single example of a broader group of theories contributing to a common paradigm of interactional theories of wellbeing in organizational settings. I claim that it is possible to group a body of extant theories into a paradigm of interactional wellbeing by analyzing the linguistic form of theories, even though the original authors have not called their subject of study with such a paradigm label. To determine conceptual character of theories, I use the herein described method of theoretical serviceability analysis. More specifically, Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad – consisting of scene, act, agent, agency, and purpose – to delineate differences in linguistic forms. In this study, I claim that the paradigm of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings is concerned primarily with the dialectic between act and scene (cf. agency-structure, Giddens 1984), where, for example, relational coordination is created and torn apart in the act-scene dialectic in resonance with the organization’s collective mind.

The supplementary research questions are:

2. **On what basis can one argue that a theory is a wellbeing theory even if it utilizes an unconventional linguistic form?**

3. **What proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes are especially helpful in theorizing about interactional wellbeing in organizational settings?**
4. What metatheoretical understandings of wellbeing is one inclined to commit to by using the theoretical prototypes stemming from the interactional and relational perspective?

Questions 2 and 3 concern the possibility of extending wellbeing scholarship to explicitly include other than already established linguistic forms. It is especially in the pursuit of question 2 that I utilize the method of theoretical serviceability analysis. Consequently, in this study the theoretical fabric of extant literature is cut using Burke’s (1945) pentad, which has the consequence of focusing the discussion on linguistic forms instead of some other “criteria” (Toulmin 1958/2003) for disciplinary boundaries of what is and is not, for example, wellbeing theory and organization scholarship. One contribution of this study is, then, to outline a family of wellbeing paradigms and thus invite scholars from many fields into inclusive interdisciplinary research on wellbeing, which I hope would provide added serviceability to wellbeing research and to the practice of wellbeing (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010).

On question 3 I deliver an account of what ways of thinking are helpful in theorizing about interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. While providing a broad selection of scholarship I elucidate on the relational point of view in a way that tries to satisfy both those who are familiar and those who are unfamiliar with the interactional and relational perspective. What the selection has in common is that it illuminates ways of thinking that resist loading wellbeing onto the “agent” (Burke 1945) or “bounded individual” (Gergen 2009; see also “homo clausus” in Elias 1998), but instead, give reason to believe that there might be forms of wellbeing with a different character. In order to give the utilized main theoretical prototype conceptual wings in directions that would otherwise stay hidden I, for example, juxtapose Berne’s (1964/2010) Transactional Analysis with the conceptualizations of Sigmund Freud (1995 ed. Gay), Kurt Lewin (1948), Martin Heidegger (1962/2008), John Macmurray (1960), George Herbert Mead (1934/2015), Anthony Giddens (1984), and Spinoza et al. (1997).

Question 4 concerns the metatheoretical disposition of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, that is, toward what kind of a definition of wellbeing (Dodge et al. 2012; Haybron 2008; Seligman 2011) is the description of the phenomenon geared towards on the basis of its linguistic form. My claim is that interactional wellbeing in organizational settings is inclined towards a “phronetic” (Flyvbjerg 2006; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a) definition of wellbeing formed by the local relational setting (Kahn et al. 2013; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012), where wellbeing can be defined as the harmony between the coordinates of Burke’s dramatistic pentad. More specifically, as harmony or relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad. The analysis of linguistic forms and the dramatistic pentad more specifically provides an alternative vista for metatheories of wellbeing. With the help of the pentad the common “homeostatic” and “dynamic equilibrium theories” (Dodge et al. 2012) can be framed in terms of harmony between coordinates of the pentad. My suggestion is that theoretical serviceability analysis may be able to provide a vista of metatheoretical coherence to the “confusing and contradictory research base” on wellbeing (Pollard & Lee 2003: 69; see also Waterman 2013).
1.2 Deliverables, research strategy, and type of empirical research

Based on the research questions, the specific ‘deliverables’ of this study are:

1. An empirically grounded theory of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, which zooms in on interaction setups and relational coordination within organizational settings.
2. An example of the use of the method of theoretical serviceability analysis in order to pinpoint the forthcoming theoretical model within a paradigm of wellbeing research.
3. An example on the use and expansion of a main theoretical prototype as a way to dive into empirical investigations from a wealth of theoretical understandings, and subsequently build a more encompassing theoretical model of interactional wellbeing in organizations.
4. An account of useful proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes within the interactional and relational perspective in the service of the main research question of this study.
5. An account of a metatheory of wellbeing that fits the study of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, delivered with the help of the dramatistic pentad.

Thereby, the modus operandi of this study is dual. On one level to elucidate on a largely overlooked phenomenon, the empirical phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. On a second conceptual level, to formulate an inclusive theoretical frame of reference surrounding the phenomenon that I claim puts it and its kin in an illuminating light. Hence the multiple levels on abstraction in this study. I call this a frame-dialogical research strategy. This strategy reflects the idea that “ideas shape ideas, they lead on to other ideas, they enact their own contexts” (Weick 2004: 657). This strategy, however, inevitably leaves behind holes between the phenomenon and the novel frame of reference for future research. For example, this study is not about giving an exhaustive and general account of wellbeing paradigms, of theoretical serviceability analysis, of the use of a main theoretical prototype, of the whole interactional and relational perspective, or of the metatheories of wellbeing. This study is built on the assumption that it can be beneficial to ‘reason with’ such not yet fully established ideas instead of first synoptically and thoroughly ‘reasoning about’ them separately as subject matters in their own right. This study is consequently limited on many fronts, because the research strategy of this study subordinates these notions to the primary objective of investigating the character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

Given the research questions and deliverables, this study can be considered both a theoretical study into the conceptual character of wellbeing and an exploratory case study (Edmondson & McManus 2007; Silverman 1993; 2000; Yin 1994), where the examined case is the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. On an empirical level this study takes into account particularities and local morality in the historical context of the phenomenon, it can thus be perceived as an example of “phronetic organization research” (Flyvbjerg 2006; see also Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a).

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11 This research strategy draws inspiration from especially Bateson, Burke, Goffman, Shotter, and Weick. Goffman’s (1974; 1981) and Weick’s (1993; 1995b; 1996) technique of developing helpful intermediary notions in order to come to the full vista of their accounts lie in the background. For the term “dialogical” see Tsoukas (2009).
12 See Shotter (2006) for more on these distinctions.
“Phronetic organization researchers realize that our sociality and history is the only foundation we have, the only solid ground under our feet; and that this sociohistorical foundation is fully adequate for our work as organization researchers.” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 375)

In accordance with this point of view, my preference was to seek an understanding of interactional wellbeing that directly relates it to how work is currently done in organizations (Barley & Kunda 2001; Grant & Parker 2009). For my empirical context I therefore chose a “knowledge-intensive” organization (Alvesson 1993; Alvesson & Sveningsson 2003; Starbuck 1992). Prior research suggests that in the rapidly developing context of new technology (Orlikowski 1996; 2002), there exists inherent ambiguity (Alvesson 1993) that gives rise to relational clashes and also to constant mutual coordination of the kind that is of interest especially for interactional and relational research (Gergen 2009; Kahn et al. 2013; Kaplan 2008). My assumption was that this research context would be conducive for the study of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

The rest of this introductory Part I proceeds as follows. Next we will look at the interactional and relational perspective more closely and on my own theoretical proclivities within this interdisciplinary domain. In search of the empirical subject matter of this study we then take a look into five different streams of wellbeing scholarship, three of which this study builds upon and two of which provide a useful contrastive backdrop. The following chapter deals with defining wellbeing in a way that illuminates its connection to metatheories of wellbeing. We also discuss currently acknowledged boundaries of wellbeing scholarship.

In this context I introduce Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad and its use in the form of theoretical serviceability analysis as a tool of thought for delineating wellbeing paradigms. I subsequently further the argument that complementary paradigms are needed if wellbeing scholarship truly and indiscriminately aims to further flourishing in life. I argue that wellbeing scholarship should be able to provide a wide range of serviceability, which includes servicing interests ranging from the construction of thriving organizations to how to live and act well in unsettling relational settings. It will be shown that currently these interests are not recognized as part and parcel of wellbeing literature, because the linguistic forms that would advance these interests are not recognized as wellbeing scholarship. Part I ends with a synopsis of Parts II to VI and how they are related to the research questions of this study.
Part I: Introduction

2. Overview of the interactional and relational perspective

“Our knowledge is influenced by the ‘ways’, the literary and textual means, we have used in formulating our concerns. To go further: it means that we have spent our time researching into myths of our own making. [...] How can we escape from this entrapment? By studying how it is that we come to entrap ourselves in the first place.” (Shotter 1993: 26)

In order to grasp the interactional and relational perspective one in my mind needs to grasp its origin and development primarily on a conceptual level and how it affects percepts on the phenomenal level. According to the key tenet of the interactional and relational perspective, empirical observations and theory intermix (Bateson 1972; Cunliffe 2008; Fleck 1979; Gergen 2009; Shotter 1993; Wilk 2010a). Consequently, perceptions about phenomena can be saturated with philosophical preferences stemming from theoretical models and higher-order linguistic forms (Burke 1984; Cunliffe 2008; Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin 1990; 2003).

Much of the interactional and relational perspective has a revolutionary undertone with the aim of subverting common taken-for-granted ways of perceiving phenomena (e.g. Bateson 1972; Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009). In my mind the point of this perspective is not to replace the current vocabulary that, for example, loads properties onto entities (Bateson 1972) and privileges individualism and thus a focus upon agents (Gergen 2009). But instead, the impetus is in my view to build alternative paths of thought that add theoretical serviceability toward directions that currently dominant philosophical commitments neglect or perhaps even undercut (O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987; Seikkula & Arnkil 2006; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011). To understand this overarching agenda of the interactional and relational perspective, it is in my mind conducive to begin from its philosophical lineage and especially from a historical perspective.

As I see it, much confusion about the interactional and relational terms stems from a misunderstanding regarding particular intellectual lineages (for a similar account see Emirbayer 1997). As I understand the general background, the interactional and relational point of view has its beginning in the collapse of the Cartesian dualism (e.g. Bateson 1972; Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000; Toulmin 2003). Descartes (1637/2006) separated mind from body with the consequence of instigating the problem of, for example, other minds, the integration of mind and body, and the separation of mind and Nature. For several centuries this became the

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13 The different levels of abstraction should consequently be understood as conceptual scaffolds in the sense of the Wittgensteinian ladder, which help to elevate understanding. And after such elevation is accomplished, the ladder itself is no longer needed and can as a consequence be discarded.

14 In this study I, for the sake of clarity, refer to the interactional and relational perspective as a single overarching perspective despite the fact that there are differences in details between approaches within this perspective (e.g. Cunliffe 2008; Emirbayer 1997; Hosking 2011).
dominant “thought style” (Fleck 1979) that all science and scholarship should build upon. This distinction still lies at the heart of many prevalent taken-for-granted understandings by scholars embroiled on all sides of these divides. For example, the conceptual separation between subject and object stems from a Cartesian heritage (Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000; Hosking 2011; Shotter 2015).

The four centuries since Descartes can be perceived as the endeavor to reunite the two sides once more in an intelligible fashion (Kant 1781/1993; Toulmin 1990; 2003). Multiple new forms of science have been formed upon ideas that originally belonged to different sides of the divide (Toulmin 1990; Toulmin & Goodfield 1965/1977). For example, geology and archeology were founded on ideas that joined historical ideas associated with mind with materialistic ideas on the side of nature, which according to Cartesian notions should be kept strictly separate (Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1982; 1965/1977). Sediments and items could have a history, which was a revolutionary thought at the time but common sense today. At the beginning of the 20th century pragmatism, phenomenology, idealism and perhaps many more “-logies” and “-isms” found ways of thought past the dualism. Key concepts that enabled the feat were concepts like experience (Dewey 1958; Oakeshott 1933/2015), for some it was through consciousness or the mind (James 1912/2003; Mead 1934/2015; Searle 1995; 2004; 2009) and for some it was language and Being in a world of doings and graspsables (Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1991a; Rorty 1979/2009; Wittgenstein 1953/2009).

During the Enlightenment, a system worldview of a stable and predictable Cosmos was put in motion around Earth (Berlin 2013a; 2013b; Cassirer 1951/2009; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). Newtonian mechanics became the hallmark of science and provided the going synthesis for the divine mechanics of the world (Becker 1932/2003; Burtt 1932/2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). The Newtonian worldview had a problem which Newton already tried to address in his Principia, which subsequently was called the three-body problem. According to Toulmin (2003: 207), the three-body problem contributed to the growing dissatisfaction with “the program by which philosophers of the early Modern period linked Necessity with Rationality with Certainty in a single mathematical package.” With only three bodies and even though knowing the mathematically precise mechanics for their interactions, it was nonetheless impossible to predict their future paths with geometrical exactness and certainty.

Multiple bodies in interaction with one another resulted in unpredictability. It eroded the view that Nature could be described through concise and rationally elegant mathematical formulas. It was a development of the classic Enlightenment and Newtonian worldview similar to Einstein’s contribution in his general theory of relativity (Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). Tides, the weather and other phenomena caused by innumerable interactions and the complexity sciences more broadly are built on this classical heritage (Becker 1932/2003; Burns 2005; Stacey 1995; Toulmin 2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). This lineage is often confused with an epistemological approach that disagrees with a priori ontological distinctions between things and their interactions (Bateson 1972; Emirbayer 1997; Hosking 2011). For example, in the study of leadership and organizational change both the classic and the epistemological views have been used and designated as relational views even though their views diverge on the nature and origin of relationality (Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000; Burns 2005; Cunliffe 2008; Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Uhl-Bien et al. 2007).

In organization scholarship it was cybernetics, information- and systems theory that breached the epistemological dualism between mind and nature (Bateson 1972; Beer 1979; Keeney 1983; Maturana & Varela 1987/1998; Powers 1973). Early systems theory in for
example sociology used the metaphor of organs and the body, building on the classic Enlighten-
ment views; that to understand the body of society one needs to understand the organs it
consists of and how they interact with one another (e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979; Emirbayer
1997; Giddens 1984). This essentialist view of systems was however still within classic Carte-
sian epistemology and thus far afield from the interactional view of for example cybernetics
and information theory. These latter and philosophically novel foundations were laid when
scientists across disciplines began to collaborate and work on similar problems and especially
with information handling and other ideas that made computers and communication possible
(Bateson 1972; Wilk 2010b). It was a philosophical and thus conceptual re-patterning of entire
sets of questions. Since the 19th century, science had been divided into natural (or exact) and
social sciences (or man-made). In communication and information studies a bridge between
the two worlds was formed and nature and the man-made began to be united once again (Toul-
min 1990). The separation between mind and body, mind and nature and other minds were
being indirectly solved or dissolved in a variety of ways.

Other non-dual paths of thought stemming from the Counter-Enlightenment were molded
foremost within the developing discipline of sociology into social constructionism and by other
adjacent communities of scholars (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Burrell & Morgan 1979; Cunliffe
2008; Danziger 1997). Anthropology and the sociology of knowledge are often pinpointed as
the foundation for this stream of thought (e.g. Cunliffe 2008). The foundational ideas embed-
ded within anthropology and the sociology of knowledge were, however, arguably formed upon
the seminal works of the Counter-Enlightenment philosophers (see Part IV of this study). The
acknowledgement of the importance of language, various forms of knowledge, situatedness
and creative self-expression lies in the background. Albeit social constructionism is still
shunned by some scholars (e.g. Pinker 2002; 2011), the original questions that gave rise to this
stream of thought are rather commonsensical: how come there are multiple cultures in the
world and how is it that people come to live so effortlessly within them? (e.g. Boas 1928/1986;
Elias 1998)

Some of the answers that scholars came to was that there has to be knowledge embedded in
everyday actions (Boas 1928/1986; Elias 1998; Giddens 1984), a process of intersubjective
meaning-making and institutionalization (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Goffman 1963b; 1981),
and relational ways in which persons construe a sense of reality (Gergen 2009; Harré 1998;
Watzlawick 1984). Contemporary discussions within, for instance, practice and discourse the-
ory as well as sensemaking can be perceived as continuations of these traditions (Bourdieu

A third notable stream of thought breaching dualism had been brewing in the study of the
mind, that is, within psychoanalysis (Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008). In the academic tradi-
tion instigated by Freud, the divide that was breached was however not that of mind and Na-
ture but mind and other minds. Freud was a prolific and astute theoretical integrator, which
subsequently allowed many theorists to approach the study of the mind from a variety of aca-
demic backgrounds. This in turn made his theories accessible and popular. Although Freud's
entire argument is not easily condensed nor was it always coherent (Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Gid-
dens 1984; Schafer 1976), his big move was to postulate that action and thought were directed
by the unconscious mind.

The mind could furthermore be studied by an informed analyst through talk and observation.
Dissimilarly from the views of Boas and Elias who perceived knowledge in action, Freud origi-
nally thought that actions were directed by unconscious instinctual urges and primal forces
much akin to Newtonian mechanics. It is worth remembering that Newtonian theorizing was and perhaps still is one of the hallmarks of scientific language use (Burtt 1932/2003). Freud (1995 ed. Gay) later developed the tripartite division of the mind – the id, ego, and super-ego – which was by all accounts a novel way of describing a person and the workings of the mind. Since Freud, theorizing about the mind as a more encompassing phenomenon beyond isolated subjectivity has developed within psychotherapy more broadly (Seligman 2018). Current day psychotherapy is influenced by and infused with various non-dual streams of thought including insights from Wittgenstein and Heidegger (Fromm 1976/1997; May 1983/1994; O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987; Schafer 1976).

Within this realm of intellectual accomplishments, one should not forget those who have taken an ever more nuanced view of language and communication. Especially ordinary language philosophy (Ryle 1949/2000; Searle 1995; 2009), rhetoric (Billig 1996; Toulmin 1958/2003), dialogue and conversation (Bohm & Peat 1987; Isaacs 1996; Shotter 1993), the use of tropes and conceptual blending (Cornelissen 2005; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Fauconnier & Turner 1998; 2002) and the Russians connection spearheaded by Voloshinov, Bakhtin (1993), Vygotsky (1978) and others do not deserve to be downplayed (Gergen 2009; Seikkula & Arnkil 2006; Shotter 2016). Although it can be disputed which traditions were more influential than others and hurried the collapse of dualism in the 20th century, to me it seems indisputable that various paradigms and corresponding thought communities emerged as a result. Once the mirror shattered and mind was freed from the isolation of the enclosed individual and Nature was no longer merely ‘out there’ all forms of philosophical constellations and interests became discernible (Cunliffe 2008; Gergen 2009; Rorty 1989). Whilst the most radical views became labelled as postmodernism (e.g. Hatch & Cunliffe 2006), I would argue that the most interesting developments have been more moderately seeking ways of thought beyond unreasonable conceptual demarcations (e.g. Bateson 1972; Hosking 2011; Oakeshott 1991a; 1933/2015; Toulmin 1990; 2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977).

What I call the interactional and relational point of view, the two in unison, builds on this epistemological inheritance. It is a heterogeneous assembly of views, emphasis, and tenets that are variously entertained. The ethos of interactional and relational research has followed Bateson’s (1972) example and deliberately been an inclusive interdisciplinary endeavor, in the hope of generative discourse between forms of science and domains of research (Gergen 2009). Although this view cannot due to its disparate intellectual inheritance be equated with social constructionism, Danziger’s (1997: 400) concise overview of the field is helpful: “It is an area in which the contributions of psychologists mingle with those of sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, literary theorists and many others. … [O]nce one adopts a wider, cross-disciplinary, perspective, the ‘ism’ in social constructionism becomes virtually impossible to pin down.” Moreover, the interactional and relational views are arguably more alike than separate and often used interchangeably; even if they can be used as somewhat different language games.

The gist of this intellectual movement which we here call the interactional and relational approach, is that there are unsubstantiated philosophical preferences at work in how we have been trying to understand social phenomena; foremost as things (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Heidegger 1962/2008; 2011; Toulmin 1990). The interactional point of view pays homage to the inheritance stemming from cybernetics and information systems without forgetting the mind and the observer (Bateson 1972; 1979; Bateson & Bateson 1987). “The observer must

15 For an ontological account of relationality see Emirbayer (1997).
be included within the focus of observation, and what can be studied is always a relationship or an infinite regress of relationships. Never a ‘thing’” (Bateson 1972: 246; see also Cunliffe 2001; 2003). This particular issue has been especially significant in psychotherapeutic research. In psychotherapy the interactional and relational perspective has focused on the therapist as a part of the system instead of being outside it. Wachtel’s (2014: 343) description about the relational point of view is an apt example:

“The relational point of view in psychoanalysis refers not to a single tightly constructed theory but to a broad umbrella of ideas and perspectives, not all of which are necessarily shared by all relationalists [...] But there is sufficient coherence among them that the concept of a relational point of view is nonetheless a meaningful one and identifies a comprehensible thread in psychoanalytic thought. Especially central in the writings that launched the relational tradition in psychoanalysis was a concern with epistemology. Relational writers were critical of the objectivist assumptions of what was, at the time of the origins of the relational movement, mainstream psychoanalytic epistemology. Analysts of that era seemed to implicitly assume that if they could just ‘get out of the way,’ the real or true transference and real or true underlying personality dynamics would emerge. Relationalists, in contrast, emphasized that it was impossible to see ‘the patient’ divorced from the context of observation and that the analyst inevitably contributed to what emerged in the session, could not just get out of the way; what was observed was a coconstruction.” (italics in original)

Bateson was originally an anthropologist before expanding his scope of research to other matters including cybernetics. Bateson (1972), for example, noticed that tribes in Bali could not accurately be described in isolation but in patterns of relations with their neighboring tribes (Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011). Similarly, ideas and information could not be made sense of without the adjacent ideas (i.e. context). Bateson (1972: 271-272) was consistent with this notion in his famous definition of an idea; that an idea is “a difference which makes a difference.” Given that the interactional view had its origin in interdisciplinary research it is not unexpected that it has also contributed to multiple disciplines. As a point of view, it has influenced and been developed further to satisfy various purposes within at least psychotherapy (Haley 1963; O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987), sociology (Benford & Snow 2000; Goffman 1967), developmental psychology (Kegan 1982), and organization studies (Bartunek & Moch 1994; Tsoukas & Chia 2002).

The relational point of view is often perceived in two ways, which are not mutually exclusive. Either as a novel philosophically minded break away from essentialist theorizing (e.g. Emirbayer 1997; Wachtel 2014) or as a continuation of the tradition of social constructionism towards relational realities, multiplicity, agency, personal relations and dialogue (Cunliffe 2008; Gergen 2009; Hosking 2011; Shotter 1993; 2015). In a seminal review of the field Hosking (2011) proposes the term “relational constructionism” as a social science perspective that embraces both social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1966) and constructivism (Watzlawick 1984).
Hosking (2011) pinpoints several contexts for the relational constructionist perspective: criticism towards traditional empiricism and naturalized entitative constructions within science, a critique of objective science as ahistorical and acultural, the focus on language processes and the relational construction of the person, and the breakdown of subject-object as well as self/non-self relations. According to Hosking (2011: 52-53) relational constructionism is an inclusive “orientation” that bundles various tenets to provide elucidation about “person-world relations” (see also “process orientation” in Shotter 2010). Hosking’s (2011: 53) focus upon “inter-actions”, locality and a “historical quality” (p. 55) are worth highlighting: “I use the term inter-acting (a) to speak of a performance (b) that involves a coming together (c) of ‘whoever and whatever’ thereby (re)constructing person-world relations as (d) relational realities.” Hosking (2011: 56) depicts relational constructionism as encompassing also theory construction and empirics in uniting the process of scientific discovery with philosophical justification: “it is science ‘with philosophy’ so to speak.” Hosking’s (2011) rendition of relational constructionism as interested in “history making” (p. 55), “person-world making” (p.62) and “forms of life” (Wittgenstein 1953) aptly highlights the linguistic form and approach of the interactional and relational point of view.

Bradbury and Lichtenstein provide an alternative summary of what they perceive as the contribution of the relational perspective:

“[A] relational perspective provides solutions for three longstanding tensions in organizational research. Relationality transcends the distinction between subject and object through a dynamic objectivity that is generative of the space between organizational phenomenon. Relationality transcends the tension between knowledge and power through structurational approaches that use knowledge about social structures as power to change them. Third, relationality transcends the traditional separation of knowledge and action through participatory, action-oriented methods that link researchers and participants in a learning journey that supports both in making good use of the insights gained from research.” (Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000: 554)

In sum, there is not one interactional and relational view but many and often customized according to the researcher’s own interests and proclivities. What tenets and views one picks out from the plethora of interactional and relational views into one’s own approach most likely depends on the problematics and concerns at hand. That is, if one views the interactional and relational orientation as a smorgasbord of proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes. Put differently, the researcher is to use his own judgement and sensemaking based on the relevant problematics and his totality of experience he has at his disposal without privileging taken-for-granted conceptualizations, instead, he seeks relational depictions that offer novel serviceability (Oakeshott 1933/2015; 1991a; 1991b; Toulmin 1958/2003). Regardless of what exact perspective is utilized, there is nonetheless a general call for more research utilizing a relational approach (Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000; Hosking 2011).

What is of particular interest within this perspective, and especially given the aims of this study, is that within the tradition of interactional and relational scholarship, there is not a definition and thus an explicated metatheory of wellbeing. To my knowledge no one has directly asked and answered the question: “What is wellbeing from an interactional and relational point of view?” The topic of wellbeing has been central from the outset (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009), but the question and its answer have been formulated in different terms, in light of
psychotherapy and psychopathology, that is not easily translated into the terms of present-day wellbeing scholarship (e.g. Seligman 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000), as shall be discussed more thoroughly later on. The interactional and relational perspective can, moreover, be described as a philosophically mature approach. The interactional and relational perspective is consequently, I would argue, difficult to grasp without extensive immersion into its literature. There is a paucity of accounts that would in plain terms describe why it is a compelling point of view and, for instance, show its alternative way of reasoning about familiar everyday phenomena.

The present work contributes to the interactional and relational tradition of scholarship in three ways: (1) by explicating a metatheory of wellbeing which concisely depicts the character of wellbeing from the interaction and relational perspective; (2) by drawing forth relevant proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes within the interactional and relational tradition which are of use in the study of interactional wellbeing within organizational settings; and (3) by giving an original and extensive account of the interactional and relational perspective that portrays the reasoning behind some key tenets and its way of thinking in relation to familiar phenomena.18

2.1 My orientation within this domain

“We have to start from where we are” (Richard Rorty 1989: 198, italics in original).

My own approach within this domain of scholarship is in some ways very common to the field and yet in other ways perhaps eclectic due to the many varying sources I draw from. Like Giddens (1984: xxii) puts it: “To some this may appear an unacceptable eclecticism, but I have never been able to see the force of this type of objection.” The concerns for epistemology (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1984; Wilk 2010a), for the understanding of persons within their local surroundings (Berlin 1996; Goffman 1961a; 1961b; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012) and the search for novel conceptual delineations are familiar and commonly shared amongst a variety of relational approaches. In comparison to social and relational constructionism, I would accentuate considering what, how and why minute proto-ideas and grand theoretical prototypes are put together in a paradigm or commonsense “climate of opinion” (Becker 1932/2003). I do not believe that proto-ideas can be isolated and combined freely similar to mathematical operations, but there are patterns that are not easily broken (Toulmin 1990; 2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1962/1982; 1965/1977). Within organization and management theory this sort of interest toward language use in theorizing has been studied chiefly through the use of metaphor (Boje et al. 2003; Cornelissen 2004; 2005; Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008; Ketokivi et al. 2017; Morgan 1997; Oswick et al. 2011).

I have come to think that to study the minute with sufficient care one needs to grasp the grand overarching aspirations of theories and broader perspectives. I have found those authors and scholars to be compelling who have managed to weave encompassing and novel accounts past traditional divides and especially across the Cartesian dualism (e.g. Bakhtin 1993; Bateson 1972; Dewey 1958; James 1912/2003; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Wilk

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18 In this account, I for example explore “person-world relations” (Hosking 2011) in the chapter on history-making, behavior as “conduct” and “performance” (Goffman 1974/1986; Oakeshott 1991) in the chapter on a grammar of management, and “emotions” and the “self” (Goffman 1961b/1991; Mead 1934/2015) as arising out of the interactional arrangement, which is given primacy, in the chapter on interactional wellbeing.
Comprehensive and compelling accounts – which often manage to turn phenomena previously thought of as elusive and not worth the time into graspable and important – are of the kind that potentially change the course of human civilization (Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1977). Heidegger (1962/2008: 63, 30) was very insightful when he said that it is the “grammar” of how the very “basic concepts” in their everyday use which needs re-molding in order to understand something truly anew. This process interests me, and this interest sets the tone for much of this study. As I see it, compelling and comprehensive accounts are up for the job as they can remodel the shared conceptual world that the concepts make sense of and lies behind the choice of writing this study as a monograph (Shotter 1993; 2016).  

On a general level I can agree with many constructionist accounts (e.g. Cunliffe 2008; Hosking 2011; Shotter 2016). Relations and the process of how man-made phenomena are made into being are of imminent concern (e.g. Searle 1995; 2009; Watzlawick 1984). The emphasis upon the use of language, interaction, self-expression and situatedness are arguably crucial for self-knowledge and to understand mankind’s self-made condition (Collingwood 1946/2014; Dewey 2011; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 2001). That said, the difficulty is not in pinpointing the abstract terms of the interactional and relational terrain, but the specific path that actually takes you to the phenomenon and then allows it to be seen in an illuminating light. I do not believe that there is one general path to a grand understanding of everything relational and man-made (see Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1990). Each inquiry and phenomenon under investigation should in my mind provide its own set of proto-ideas and vocabulary to make the phenomenon under investigation intelligible and relatable. This conclusion is to my understanding a common thread within the new non-dual epistemology (Bateson 1972; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Wilk 1999; 2010a; 2013).

My own interests engulf views from, for example, political and moral philosophy (Berlin 1996; 2013b; Nussbaum 2001; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b), philosophy of history (Collingwood 1946; Oakeshott 1999), history (Morris 2011; Scott 2019), philosophy of education (Dewey 2011; Oakeshott 2001), psychotherapy (Berne 1964/2010; Fromm 1976/1997; Rogers 1951/2003; 1961/2004; 1980), microsociology (Goffman 1959; 1981), ordinary language philosophy (Toulmin 1958/2003; Wittgenstein 1953/2009) and philosophy of mind (Ryle 1949/2000; Searle 1995; 2009). It may be surprising that to draw from such a breadth of research is not uncommon in the interactional and relational perspective (e.g. Gergen 2009) albeit it is commonly narrowed down to a more specific approach of the scholar such as the “relationally responsive orientation” (Cunliffe 2008) or “relational pragmatics” (Emirbayer 1997).  

Within the interactional and relational perspective, I would call my own orientation a serviceability orientation, because one of my chief concerns in theory-building is the service the theory provides and for what purposes. As Davis (2015) argues, theories need to do more than merely be interesting and novel; they need to be truthful, informative, and practically relevant. At any rate, merely by stating such a list of subjects from which one draws from does not necessarily allow a grip of how the topics and their minute ideas are actually entwined or how they are employed. Nor how in the hands of particular scholars, certain topics are rendered sensible that in their own way contribute to the interdisciplinary domain of interactional and relational research. Suffice to say, that many of the conceptual contributions within the interactional and relational perspective will be utilized in the forthcoming chapters.

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19 In this sense, this account is a remolding of the commonsense concept of wellbeing by showing some often-omitted ideas in its proximity and how they can be put together.
This is a concise description of the general theoretical landscape from which I draw from in this study. It is by no means confined to organization and management theory alone. Given the unconventional character of the interactional and relational perspective I later on provide a lengthy and scenic – perhaps even experimental – exposition of its ways of reasoning, whilst I investigate helpful theoretical proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes which I subsequently utilize in investigating the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.
3. Finding the subject of study as a field of scholarship

“Instead of continually instituting new professions and disciplines, we need to bring into rational visibility the fact that, we are already in our everyday affairs relating ourselves to, and consciously participating in, a ‘common world’, and that when we do this, an objective order and determinateness becomes readily available to us. [...] we need to turn outward, toward a world that is already trans-individual, inter-subjective, general, and valid for all. [...] Thus if our task is to seek to understand what we experience and perceive only in terms of itself, as a unique, unclassifiable entity, then we must talk from within the actual living of our lives, rather than from an illusory pre-organized ‘space’ outside them.” (Shotter 2016: 114, italics removed)

In drawing forth extant literature on the subject of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, even without the resources of theoretical serviceability analysis, one can find a plethora of literature to build upon. This is not surprising, because a mountain of literature has been written about wellbeing and happiness ever since Aristotle (2005; see also Hadot 2004; Haybron 2008; McMahon 2006), although less so with an organizational and relational frame of reference. Be that as it may, in trying to understand more closely the character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, I found three streams of research to be especially pertinent.

One focuses specifically on the interactional character of wellbeing and can be said to be both a precursor to and a recent development in relational organizational scholarship (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009). Wellbeing as a relational and collective process is another (e.g. Kahn 1993; Lilius et al. 2011), and “acting well” within relational settings (e.g. Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a), the third, both of which are squarely within organization and management scholarship. These domains of scholarship can be thought of as sympathetic to investigating interactional wellbeing in organizational settings both as a distinct paradigm of wellbeing and as a specific relational phenomenon. It is instructive to juxtapose these streams of research with individual wellbeing research within Positive Psychology (e.g. Diener 2000; Ryff 1989; Seligman 2011), and to some approaches to group wellbeing within organizations (e.g. Hackman & Oldham 1980; Wright & Cropanzano 2000). Consequently, five streams of research are reviewed, the last three of which pertain to interactional and relational theories of wellbeing.

These five streams can be fitted into three different categories or “meta-frameworks” for wellbeing theories (Seligman 2018). Seligman (2018) has aptly described the difference between three approaches with the colloquial terms: “one-person”, “one-and-a-half person” and “two-person” psychotherapeutic theories. With “one-person” theories, Seligman (2018) means theories that primarily focus on an individual’s psychobiological makeup; instincts and needs, internal psychic structure, and personal fantasies. This realm of psychological research was
originally instituted by Freud and since then has become conceptualized as internal mental landscape of an individual mind (e.g. Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008; Seligman 2018). Within psychotherapy it has recently been furthered by especially Kleinian theorizing (Seligman 2018). With “one-and-a-half” person theories Seligman (2018) means those theories that include the individual and the individual’s immediate environment. Historically, these theories emerged after Freud. Its main proponents in the psychotherapeutic literature are Winnicott and Bowlby, who were among the first to theorize of the holding environment and childhood attachment to primary caregivers (Seligman 2018; see also Kahn 1993; 2001). With “two-person” theories Seligman (2018) designates those theories that are in the contemporary sense called relational theories. The underlying tenet of this overarching relational approach is that relationships are seen as “the primary motivators and organizers of psychic life” and the “dynamic transaction between people, rather than within individual minds” is understood as “the primary context for theory building and clinical technique” (Seligman 2018: 83).

These five different research streams can be organized according to their emphasis on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. The difference on theoretical emphasis can be ascertained by underscoring the subject of study in the present work in different ways, which highlights the varying expectations regarding the direction and emphasis of the research.²⁰

For example,

1. (Interactional) wellbeing (in organizational settings) (one-person theories)
2. (Interactional) wellbeing in organizational settings (one-and-a-half person theories)
3. Interactional wellbeing (in organizational settings) (two-person theories)
4. Inter-actional (well)being in organizational settings (two-person theories)
5. Inter-actional wellbeing in organizational settings (two-person theories)

These different emphases throw the subject matter into somewhat different areas of scholarship. The different emphasis portray the above mentioned streams: (1) individual wellbeing (one-person), (2) group wellbeing (one-and-a-half person) (3) interactional wellbeing, (4) wellbeing as relational and collective process, and (5) acting well within relational settings (last three all pertain to two-person approaches).

Within the academic community and its tendency toward fragmented and compartmentalized knowledge (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010; Taleb 2013), different streams of research can be apprehended as further apart than what they are, especially from an integrative and relational perspective. As will be shown during the course of this study, especially the last three two-person theories are closer to each other than what it may seem at face value. Furthermore, this is not an exhaustive review, instead, this review illustrates the difference between an interactional and relational approach to other views on wellbeing, and what kinds of literature a study into interactional wellbeing in organizational settings can build upon. In the following review I give a relatively detailed account of many particular studies, with the aim of giving a feel for the differences in linguistic forms (Burke 1945), before dealing with this metatheoretical issue head on in subsequent parts of this study.

### 3.1 Individual wellbeing

In this section I provide a short overview of how wellbeing has been approached within modern philosophy (Haybron 2008) and especially within modern-day wellbeing scholarship (e.g.

²⁰Burke (1945) uses a similar technique to highlight differences in linguistic forms and their primary frames of reference.
Individual wellbeing is not the topic of the present work, but as a contrastive background it may be illuminating to quickly run through the primary debates in this body of literature. Here I will hold myself mainly to developments within Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Gable & Haidt 2005; Linley et al. 2010), and its “desire to understand general principles of human psychological functioning that are applicable across people” (Waterman 2013: 128). Characteristic of Positive Psychology is its pursuit to understand wellbeing as presence of mental health and flourishing instead of absence of negative symptoms and psychopathology. Relatively recently Positive Psychology has been steered toward understanding both the good and the bad in life instead of only focusing on the positive (Linley et al. 2006).

At the outset it should be acknowledged that an interest into human potentials and wellbeing has been around at least since Maslow (1968/2011; 1971; 1987), Fromm (1947/2003; 1993/2011; 1976/1997), Rogers (1951/2003; 1961/2004; 1980), Horney (1950/1991), and May (1983/1994). This particular school of thought became subsequently known as humanistic psychology. There have been many papers on the overlap and possible philosophical, methodological and therapeutic integration of positive and humanistic psychology (Linley et al. 2006; Resnick et al. 2001), but there has been meager development in these directions and some remain skeptical about its prospects (e.g. Waterman 2013). Positive Psychology can be depicted as drawing on neo-Aristotelianism, using quantitative methodologies, and relying on empirically validated therapeutic techniques to accomplish increase in positivity (Waterman 2013). In contrast, humanistic psychology draws heavily on social constructionism and phenomenology, uses qualitative research methodologies and its therapy is oriented toward existential questions (Resnick et al. 2001; Waterman 2013).

In a review including the philosophical and psychological literature on happiness and wellbeing, Haybron (2008) suggests a taxonomy of wellbeing theories:

1. Hedonistic theories
2. Desire-fulfillment theories
3. Authentic happiness theories
4. Eudaimonistic theories
5. List theories

Hedonistic theories characteristically emphasize pleasure. In contemporary wellbeing scholarship, “subjective well-being” is the best-known hedonic theory of wellbeing (Diener 1984; Diener et al. 1999; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005a). Subjective wellbeing is often colloquially referred to as happiness, and it is also due to this reason, that there is a considerable conceptual overlap or even confusion between the concepts of happiness and wellbeing (e.g. Biswas-Diener et al. 2009; Deci & Ryan 2008; Haybron 2008). Subjective wellbeing is operationalized as the prevalence of positive affect, absence of negative affect, and a global cognitive assessment of one’s satisfaction with life in general (Diener et al. 1999). There have been many studies into the physiological health benefits of positive affect (see Pressman & Cohen 2005 for a review) as well as arguments that positivity leads to success in life (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005a). Fredrickson (1998; 2001; 2009; 2013) has meticulously studied her broaden and build theory of positive emotions, which is one of the seminal background theories within present-day wellbeing scholarship (Seligman 2002; 2011). According to the theory, positive emotions broaden “momentary thought-action repertoires” and build “enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources” (Fredrickson
According to Haybron (2008), a principal philosophical problem with the hedonic account is that it fails on the experience machine thought experiment. According to this thought experiment, if the hedonic theory of pleasure was right then a person would be happy to plug himself into a machine that manufactured pleasurable experiences. Haybron argues that this seems intuitively false; it actually matters to people if the experiences are real or not.

According to Haybron (2008), desire-fulfillment theories dominate in philosophy and economics. According to this body of theories, wellbeing is the satisfaction of one's individual desires. Haybron argues that the desire-satisfaction accounts have philosophically many appealing characteristics. For example, that they ascribe to self-authority over one's happiness and can accommodate everyday observations that people are after all kinds of goods in their daily lives. Authentic happiness theories are according to Haybron a recent addition to the philosophical spectrum. They reflect the idea of subjective wellbeing but include a notion of individual sovereignty. “The root idea is that one’s happiness should reflect a response of one’s own, to a life that is one’s own” (Haybron 2008: 35, italics in original). Haybron’s (2008) own view is arguably between an authentic happiness theory and eudaimonic theory as he argues for an emotional state theory of happiness and a self-fulfillment theory of wellbeing.

Eudaimonistic theories refer to “fully functioning” and “functioning well” in accordance with human nature (Haybron 2008). According to Haybron (2008), eudaimonistic theories should be perceived as including all Hellenistic ethical theories, for instance, Epicurean notions of happiness (see Hadot 2004; Waterman 2013), but most refer to only Aristotelianism with the word eudaimonism. The significance of moral virtue is often underscored in Aristotelian accounts of wellbeing (e.g. Annas 2008; 2011; Haybron 2008). Haybron (2008: 35) however argues that if there is a common feature amongst all the Aristotelian notions of eudaimonia, then that would be the characteristic of “nature-fulfillment”, which roughly means the perfection of one’s true inner nature as a human being (e.g. Ryff & Singer 2008). Waterman (2013: 127) for example posits that for “positive psychologists, there is not only a generic human nature but also an individual nature.” Of contemporary eudaimonistic theories perhaps best known are self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 2000; Ryan & Deci 2000) and Ryff’s (1989; Ryff & Keyes 1995; Ryff & Singer 2008) six-dimensional theory of “positive psychological functioning”, often referred to as psychological wellbeing. Ryff’s (1989) six dimensions are: self-acceptance, positive relations to others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Self-determination theory posits that human beings have three universal psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, and it is these three inherent needs that need satisfying for optimal functioning and wellbeing (Deci & Ryan 2000; Deci et al. 2017).

List theories as the name suggests, lists individual goods that are of importance to wellbeing (Haybron 2008). Probably the best-known list theory to date stems from Seligman (2011). Seligman (2011) argues that the five constructs in his PERMA model together capture the higher-order construct of wellbeing. The constructs in the PERMA model are positive emotions (P), engagement (E), positive relationships (R), meaning (M), and achievement (A). Most studies that aspire to capture wellbeing on a broad spectrum nowadays rely on a list-theoretical conceptualization of wellbeing or of its adjacent concepts such as thriving (e.g. Feeney & Collins 2015) or flourishing (Keyes 2002; 2005; 2007). Keyes (2002) for example conceptualizes flourishing as an aggregate of hedonic, eudaimonic and social wellbeing measures.

In addition to Haybron’s synoptic overview of wellbeing theories, there are other ways as well to cut the cloth of wellbeing scholarship. For example, in a systematic review of the literature on child wellbeing, Pollard and Lee (2003) argue that the literature can be divided into five...
domains: physical, psychological, cognitive, social and economic. According to Pollard and Lee, mainly positive indicators of wellbeing are used in domains of physical, cognitive, social and economic wellbeing, but in the psychological domain the indicators are mostly deficit indicators. They argue that there are no consistent standards to how child wellbeing should be measured or conceptualized. Pollard and Lee (2003: 69) summarize their review thus: “Inconsistent use of definitions, indicators, and measures of well-being has created a confusing and contradictory research base.” These findings and especially the sentiment echo many other studies that have attempted to gather the insights from a wide range of present-day wellbeing scholarship (e.g. Biswas-Diener et al. 2009).

In modern-day wellbeing scholarship the psychological domain is often divided into two constructs or definitions of wellbeing: the hedonic and the eudaimonic tradition. There is no dearth of research that discuss the overlap and differences between the two traditions of scholarship and constructs of subjective wellbeing and eudaimonia (Biswas-Diener et al. 2009; Delle Fave et al. 2011; Keyes et al. 2002; Keyes & Annas 2009; Ryan & Deci 2001; 2008; Waterman 1993). There has relatively recently been much discussion if happiness is one big construct or if there are two forms of happiness: hedonic and eudaimonic happiness. Biswas-Diener et al. (2009: 209), for example, argue that the evidence does not support two qualitatively distinct forms of happiness albeit they recognize that “the sheer number of constructs and variables related to eudaimonia serve to confuse, rather than clarify, this interesting concept.” Some scholars have recently separated between happiness and meaningfulness (Baumeister et al. 2013; Delle Fave et al. 2011; Martela & Steger 2016), which testifies to the wealth of constructs and conceptual distinctions within contemporary wellbeing scholarship.

In addition to these focal constructs Keyes (1998) has suggested “social well-being” with five dimensions: social integration, social contribution, social coherence, social actualization, and social acceptance. Similarly, Ryff and Singer (2000) argue that there is plenty of evidence on the importance of intimacy and quality ties to others, but this research is fragmented across several disciplines even within psychology. They accordingly suggest new research into “interpersonal flourishing”, which they argue is “a core feature of quality living across cultures and across time”, and especially to its different emotional configurations and physiology (Ryff & Singer 2000: 30). Recently Feeney & Collins (2015) have reiterated the claim by Ryff and Singer. According to Feeney and Collins (2015: 113) “the mechanisms linking relationships to health, and the specific features of relationships that should be cultivated, are not well understood.” Feeney and Collins (2015) suggest a model of thriving, which they conceptualize as a combination of hedonic wellbeing, eudaimonic wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, social wellbeing, and physical wellbeing.

To summarize, in Positive Psychology the central issues revolve around questions of appropriate constructs to capture happiness and wellbeing as universal and timeless phenomena. These studies are especially interested in the physiology of emotions and the neo-Aristotelian tradition of self-fulfillment (e.g. Fredrickson 2013; Waterman 2013). In philosophy the criteria of a satisfactory account of happiness and wellbeing of course differ to some extent (Haybron 2008; McMahon 2006). From the point of view of the present work, perhaps the most important take-away is that “relational flourishing” (Ryff & Singer 2000) and mechanisms related to “relational support” (Feeney & Collins 2015; see also Spreitzer et al. 2005) are still only partially understood. This is in part due to the fact that the literature on relational wellbeing is fragmented across many traditions of research and different practices of psychotherapy.
3.2 Group wellbeing

Similar to the previous section on individual wellbeing, the literature on group wellbeing can serve as an illuminating background for when we turn to the studies that are most relevant for investigating interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. In this study I refer to group wellbeing as the study of the wellbeing of individual agents whose scores are aggregated into an overall score of the group. This composite score is perhaps confusingly at times referred to as employee wellbeing or organizational wellbeing (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). I reserve the term collective wellbeing for those studies that specifically argue that individuals are interrelated and embedded in relational processes to the extent that it is preferable to look at the relational system and its processes instead of aggregating individual wellbeing into a compound score of wellbeing (e.g. Kahn et al. 2013; Lilius et al. 2011).

A distinguishing characteristic about group wellbeing is that it is frequently and quite deliberately studied in connection to individual and organizational performance (Cropanzano & Wright 2000; Deci et al. 2017; Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). The interest into group wellbeing is in large part due to the fact that “employee well-being is significantly related to a number of important work outcomes, including job performance, employee retention, workplace accidents, sick days, absenteeism, customer engagement, quality defects, profitability, and such health outcomes as cardiovascular health, obesity, and disease burden” (Wright & Huang 2012: 1188). The literature on group wellbeing stems from studies into motivation (e.g. Gagné & Deci 2005), organizational stress (e.g. Karasek 1979), job satisfaction (e.g. Brief & Weiss 2002), and a more recent stream on positively defined employee wellbeing (e.g. Bakker et al. 2008).

There is a long history of studies into group wellbeing, reaching all the way back to the classic Hawthorne studies reported by the esteemed Harvard professor Elton Mayo, who is also accredited for the launch of the human relations movement (e.g. Brief & Weiss 2002). Following the path laid out by the Hawthorne studies, a landmark study in the 1980s concerned job redesign (Hackman & Oldham 1980). Hackman and Oldham (1980) argued that the prevalence of job resources in the form of job characteristics (e.g. skill variety, task significance, non-motorous, responsibility), essential tools, co-workers, information, facilities, and guidance were key facets to understanding motivation at work (Hackman & Oldham 1980). At this point in time, employee mental health was not yet a principal concern whereas motivation theory was well established within organization studies (e.g. Gagné & Deci 2005; Maslow 1987). For a long time the main interest into employee health was in the form of physical and occupational injuries (Danna & Griffin 1999). Perhaps the best-known resource theory, i.e. carved out of the same tree as Hackman & Oldham (1980), on specifically employee health is the demand-control model (DCM), which has dominated the research into occupational stress for several decades (Karasek 1979; Van Der Doef & Maes 1999). According to the model, job strain is caused by high job demands and low job control.

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) argue that there are numerous studies that have investigated how job characteristics impact employee wellbeing as well as how job resources like social support and autonomy can lead to learning, engagement and commitment at work. They however argue that there has not been an apt theory to consolidate the findings, to which they suggest the Job-Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The main problem they perceive with the DCM is that it has managed to produce a laundry list of potential stressors and resources but does not connect the list to individual job positions and requirements. The JD-R model is argued to be more precisely moldable to the individual level according to specific job descriptions. Furthermore, the JD-R model values resources in their own right. They are for example theorized to
enable learning, development and commitment (Bakker & Demerouti 2007). This stream of research subsequently spawned the concept of “work engagement”, which is characterized by vigor, absorption and dedication (Bakker et al. 2008). According to Bakker et al. (2008) work engagement is related to personal and job resources. It thus complements the JD-R model as to what an abundance of resources can accomplish. Both the JD-R and work engagement have since their inception accumulated a large research base (e.g. Christian et al. 2011; Hakanen et al. 2006; Schaufeli & Taris 2014).

Following the Hawthorne studies, several scholars began to congregate on what subsequently became known as the happy/productive worker hypothesis (Cropanzano & Wright 2001; Wright & Cropanzano 2000). Within this stream of literature wellbeing was conceptualized as job satisfaction (see Brief & Weiss 2002 for the history on job satisfaction). Roughly two decades ago the literature on job satisfaction and the happy/productive worker hypothesis more specifically took a decisive turn toward broader conceptualizations of happiness and wellbeing. In a series of articles, it was argued that job satisfaction is a too narrow measure to capture the happiness of employees and showed meager connections to performance (Cropanzano & Wright 2001; Wright & Cropanzano 2007; for a meta-analysis see Judge et al. 2001).

This literature has lately built on developments within Positive Psychology. Wright et al. 2007, for example, build on Fredrickson’s broaden and build theory in arguing that psychological wellbeing (Ryff 1989) moderates the effects between job satisfaction and job performance (operationalized as supervisory performance ratings). Their results show that job performance was at its highest when employees reported high scores in both job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. Page and Vella-Brodrick (2009) argue that the studies by Wright, Cropanzano and others indeed show that job satisfaction should not be used as a single measure of employee wellbeing. However, they argue that the meta-analysis by Judge et al. (2001) does support its use as part of a larger construct on employee wellbeing, especially when the desired outcome is job performance.

Following the rise of Positive Psychology, several new initiatives were taken within the field of employee wellbeing. For example, Page and Vella-Brodrick (2009) review the studies on employee wellbeing and argue for a model that comprises subjective wellbeing (e.g. Diener et al. 1999), psychological wellbeing (e.g. Ryff 1989), and context-specific measures of workplace wellbeing. They suggest the measures of job satisfaction and job-related affect as indicators for workplace wellbeing. By drawing on multiple studies, Page and Vella-Brodrick (2009) argue that there is reason to believe that employee wellbeing is of relevance for “organizational wellbeing”, which they conceptualize through the indicators of economic performance and employee retention. In a stream of literature called “positive organizational behavior” (Luthans & Youssef 2007), Luthans et al. (2007) have suggested the construct of “positive psychological capital” (PsyCap) consisting of measures on hope, resilience, optimism, and efficacy. The construct is argued to measure “individual motivational propensities that accrue through positive psychological constructs” (Luthans et al. 2007: 542). According to initial findings by Luthans et al. (2007), PsyCap predicted both work performance and job satisfaction.

Self-determination theory (SDT) was originally a theory on the distinct difference between autonomous (intrinsic) and controlled motivation (extrinsic), which was formulated to explain why extrinsic rewards could at times decrease motivation (Deci et al. 1999; Gagné & Deci 2005). SDT has subsequently integrated several theories (see Deci & Ryan 2000; Ryan & Deci 2000), which have, for example, taken the theory toward an eudaimonic wellbeing theory (Deci & Ryan 2008; Ryan & Deci 2001). According to Gagné & Deci (2005) at the time of publication
of their article, SDT had been studied relatively little in work contexts but was empirically well established in other fields such as in health care, education and sports. In a recent review, Deci et al. (2017) no longer posit such a lack of empirical research. Deci et al. (2017) argue that SDT is a “macro theory of human motivation” which describes how to promote “autonomous motivation, high-quality performance, and wellness” at work.

In their new model of workplace motivation, Deci et al. (2017) argue that there are both individual and context-dependent variables that affect performance, health and wellbeing. The effects are mediated by the type of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and the basic psychological needs postulated by SDT: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. According to the model, a workplace can be “need supporting” or “need thwarting” (Deci et al. 2017). The authors argue that positive work outcomes can be predicted based on how well the workplace manages to satisfy the basic psychological needs of the employees (Deci et al. 2017). According to Deci et al. several studies have investigated the atmospheric qualities of workplaces based on employees’ perceptions of their managers as autonomy supportive or need supportive. Deci et al. argue that indicative empirical findings support the model. Deci et al. (2017) also report several intervention studies that substantiate the findings. In the intervention studies managers who have been trained in autonomy and need support or in the basic principles in applying SDT have shown positive work outcomes radiating from managers to employees, including increased trust and motivation at work.

To summarize, the literature on group wellbeing for the most part utilizes constructs and models based on individual psychology by extending the theory to apply to work contexts. Hence, for example, the conceptualization “employee wellbeing” (e.g. Deci et al. 2017). It might be fair to say that studies on employee wellbeing investigate the phenomenon as the interaction of an individual agent within a context dependent work setting and aggregate the findings to the level of the organization. Group wellbeing theories, which quantitatively combine individuals into a group, traditionally conceptualize the interaction between the settings and the individuals as a balance between provided and required resources or support. The studies on group wellbeing often explicitly investigate the significance of employee wellbeing on individual job performance or overall organizational performance. The present work can be viewed as contributing to this stream of research by providing a complementary conceptualization of the phenomenon of wellbeing in work settings, one that does not load the phenomenon mainly onto the agent or perceive wellbeing in terms of resources in an interaction between an individual agent and the work setting (e.g. Bradbury & Lichtenstein 2000; Gergen 2009).

3.3 Inter-actional and inter-actional wellbeing

Henceforth the reviewed literature is directly pertinent to the present work and the study of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. This literature I have divided under three main headings, beginning with inter-actional and inter-actional wellbeing.

To underscore that a study is inter-actional suggests a focus on the actions that are taken between at least two agents in one another’s “copresence” (Goffman 1963a) within a world of “co-constitution” (Gergen 2009). The widely used “thought model” (Watzlawick 1990: 7) or “meta-framework” (Seligman 2018: 92) to understand interactions originally stems from the field of cybernetics and systems theory (Bateson 1972; Beer 1979; Powers 1973; Watzlawick 1984). Therein arose the seminal idea of feedback, and other systemic concepts that were
subsequently applied to understanding human behavior including psychopathology. A holistic and inclusive systems and relational view has since proliferated (e.g. Sameroff & MacKenzie 2003; Seligman 2018). This approach has focused its interests in the “bidirectional models of mutual influence” and onwards to “triad and family level models, where arrows seem to proliferate exponentially” (Sameroff & MacKenzie 2003: 614). According to one of the forefathers of cybernetics, Bateson (1972: 484) thought that the idea of feedback was revolutionary and “the biggest bite out of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge that mankind has taken in the last 2000 years.”

Here at the outset it should be noted that when cybernetics was at the top of its powers, there was not yet an established field of scholarship on wellbeing as there is today. Instead, the focus was on the theory and practice of psychiatry and psychotherapy. The interests were consequently on the analysis of dyadic and larger systems of communication. As a consequence, this stream of research does not have a definition of wellbeing in the contemporary and agent-centric sense of the term (Dodge et al. 2012; Seligman 2011), but multiple ideas and forms of psychopathology and subsequently what psychotherapy is about and how to make its practice more effective (Bateson 1972; Laing 1982; O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987; Szasz 1975; Watzlawick 1990).

This approach is still alive in relational psychotherapy, wherein dysfunctions and psychopathology remain in the limelight (Seligman 2018). In his synoptic review of the relational approach in clinical practice and research, Seligman (2018) describes wellbeing in terms like vitality, the ability for self-reflection and “metacognition”, a secure relational environment and concomitant secure attachments. One is inclined to draw the conclusion that in this psychotherapeutic-relational approach wellbeing is understood as those abilities and capacities that are strengthened in therapy. It that case wellbeing would still be conceptualized mainly from the point of view of correcting deficits instead of theorizing about wellbeing directly, as is the modus operandi in the wellbeing scholarship that began to blossom with the rise of Positive Psychology. If this is true, then wellbeing still may remain undertheorized from the point of view of this inter-actional meta-framework.

Be that as it may, the idea of feedback connects the actions between two agents into inter-actions. Even a single person’s behavior alone within an environment can be viewed in terms of the feedback process (Bateson 1972; Maturana & Varela 1987/1998; Powers 1973). Moreover, the feedback process contributes to the organization of experience and enables communication between agents (Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Powers 1973). An observer of communication between two agents can, for example, deduce the implicit rules of the communication process by observing acts and responses to those acts, as in a chess game (Watzlawick 1990). Through observation and by figuring out the patterns in communication as well as with trial-and-error feedback processes one learns to participate in communication (Bateson 1972). Feedback processes enable learning and thus serve as the basis for enculturation and socialization (Bateson 1972; Dewey 2011; Gergen 2009). “In the presence of another person all behavior – active or passive, intentional or unintentional – takes on meaning and therefore becomes communication. Since there is no such thing as non-behavior, one cannot not communicate.” (Watzlawick 1990: 22, italics in original)

The idea of feedback became one of the seminal ideas in the epistemologically oriented view called social constructivism (Glasersfeld 1984; Hosking & Bowen 2000; van der Haar & Hosking 2004; Watzlawick 1984). Watzlawick (1984: 10) depicts constructivism as “reality research”, which does not take the process of “knowing” for granted. According to von Glasersfeld
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(1984: 32), who underscores the philosophical contributions of Giambattista Vico (see Part IV), constructivism builds on the idea that all knowledge is attained within “the experiential world of goal-directed consciousness.” Thus, constructivism becomes the study of “ordering and organization of a world constituted by our experience” (von Glasersfeld 1984: 24).

“Real is, after all, what is called real by sufficiently large number of people. In the extreme sense, reality is an interpersonal convention, just as use of language depends on the unspoken and mostly quite unconscious agreement that certain sounds and signs have specific meanings.” (Watzlawick 1990: 19, italics in original)

The overarching point of constructivism is that there is not an objective reality discoverable out there which may be distorted by psychological processes (e.g. Kahneman 2011) as postulated by metaphysical realism, but reality is always partly an active construction and organization of experience (see Kant 1781/1993; Goffman 1974/1986). There are relational and conversational realities constituted through communication that cannot be analyzed in terms of traditional natural scientific notions of what is true and what is therefore inexorably false (Shotter 1993; Watzlawick 1990; Toulmin 2003). One could call a communicatively constructed reality an “inhabited world” (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b), to point out the difference. As a consequence of the focus on “knowing” within constructivism one talks of and privileges “epistemology” (Bateson 1972) in a way that subordinates “metaphysics” and ontology (Burtt 1932/2003) into the process of knowing.

In relational settings the epistemology of constructivism took several conducive directions of research often bearing the stamp of communication, interaction or information exchange. From the idea of feedback emerges the notion that the actions of one agent can be connected to the prior actions of another. Thus an action of one agent can be a reaction to the other agents action, who’s subsequent action is in turn a response to the actions of the first agent, ad infinitum. Weick (1969: 33 cited from Weick 2004) refers to this interactional model as a “double interact.” This simple model can also be extended towards the future (Bateson 1972; Goffman 1959; 1967). One agent can take into account in his actions how the other agent probably reacts to it, which he will in turn respond to, ad infinitum. Thus the interactional design of the communication becomes part of the “interpersonal” situation (Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011).

For the sake of clarity let us call this way of understanding communication and interactions as the interactional model. With this model in mind, constructivism was subsequently extended to include a variety of other intricately connected key ideas such as circular causality, metacommunication, Theory of Logical Types, paradox, symmetric and complementary interactions, double bind, and schismogenesis (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011; Watzlawick et al. 1974/2011). One popular idea was that of “frames” (Bateson 1972; Goffman 1974; Kaplan 2008) or equivalently, the “punctuation” of experience (Keeney 1983; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011; Watzlawick et al. 1974/2011). Goffman (1974: 10), for example, calls a punctuated piece of experience “cut from the stream of ongoing activity” a “strip.” The notion of a frame was introduced to discern between contexts and understand how context affects acts. A frame “delimits a background” (Bateson 1972: 189) and thus “provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied” (Goffman 1974/1986).

In Bateson’s (1972: 177-193) seminal essay on play and fantasy, he presents the idea of frames as a way of understanding the difference between play and the nonplay and fantasy and nonfantasy as well as between the contexts of, for instance, an interview, a job, or a movie. Bateson
uses the Theory of Logical types to discern between a message and the frame for the message. When communication concerns the frame, they are called “metacommunicative messages” (Bateson 1972: 178). Goffman (1974) calls this “keying” a particular frame. According to Bateson (1972: 188) “every metacommunicative message is or defines a psychological frame.” A frame gives meaning to acts and information, which is thus imminently connected to why persons engage in certain acts instead of others. With this perspective in mind, Bateson (1972: 191) argues that “therapy is an attempt to change the patient’s metacommunicative habits.” By immersion in a therapeutic relationship a therapist attempts to change the metacommunicative “rules” of how a patient handles frames and guide his actions (Bateson 1972). Similarly, Watzlawick (1990) uses the distinction between content of a message and the relationship as the frame within which the message is delivered (see also Searle 1995; 2009). According to Watzlawick (1990), disturbing behavior often arises from problems of the relationship (frame) instead of the message.

Watzlawick (1984; 1990; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011; Watzlawick 1974/2011) uses the idea of frames to expound how multiple agents can understand their environment, interactional situation and the actions of one another differently despite the fact that they are in the same physical environment. According to this view, persons are in a world constituted by present and past information and act based on and in concordance with their understandings, which becomes information for other agents (cf. Weick 1995). The impetus behind the notion of frames is that two agents can conceive their informational environments (context) differently, which affects how subsequent information is interpreted and what sort of response one takes to be intelligent and appropriate (Bateson 1972). This way of understanding provides the possibility of understanding all behavior even pathological as intelligent, within a certain frame. Thus even schizophrenic communication can be viewed as intelligent, given its frame and the suggested aim in double bind theory of not wanting to communicate whilst not being able to not communicate (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1990).

Authors in this field have suggested that different agent’s particular acts can be put together into a more complete systems view that can describe the interactional system as a recurring pattern of behavior in a relationship or larger social systems (Watzlawick 1984; 1990 Watzlawick et al 1967/2011; Watzlawick et al. 1974/2011; see also Kahn et al. 2013). The notion that persons can have vastly different frames of a situation and act in accordance with those frames puts psychopathology, mental illness, communicational paradoxes and problematic behavior in a drastically different light in comparison to prior Freudian and all agent-centric approaches (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Szasz 1975; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011). 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et al. 1967). Especially Wittgenstein’s (1953/2009; 2009) later contributions have become seminal sources of guidance in making psychotherapy more effective in helping persons out of their own entrapments (O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987; Shotter 1993; 2016; Watzlawick 1990; Wilk 2010a). Wittgenstein’s (1953/2009; 2009) insights about language games, rules and paradoxes has given a platform for much subsequent theorizing about communication. For example, Watzlawick (1990) argues that pathological systems, which include relationships and larger relationship systems, have a common characteristic:

“[P]athological systems do not have adequate meta-rules, i.e., rules for changing their rules. This implies that such a system will be unable to cope with a situation for which its rules (its behavior repertoire) are inadequate, while at the same time it is incapable either of generating new rules or of changing the existing rules in such a way that the problem can be solved.” (Watzlawick 1990: 34-35).

Due to the fact that the interactional model and the systems view on communication and information exchange is a generic model it has been relatively easy to transport to other disciplines. It has subsequently been selectively employed and developed into novel directions in a variety of fields such as infant research (Beebe & Lachmann 2002; Beebe et al. 2010), adult development (Kegan 1982), systems research (Jackson 2003; Meadows 2002), the learning organization (Argyris 2003; Senge 1990/2006), psychotherapy (Haley 1963; 1986; Wachtel 2014; Wedding & Corsini 2014), antipsychiatry (Laing 1960/2010; 1967; 1982), microsociology (Goffman 1967; 1974; 1981), organization scholarship including organizational change research (Bartunek 1984; Bartunek & Moch 1994; Kahn 1993; Tsoukas & Chia 2002; Weick 1995) and a program of “strong relationality” as an own stream of relational research (Gergen 2009: xxii). A couple of pertinent examples from this broad range of scholarship may suffice to grasp the subsequent development of the interactional model.

Goffman’s microsociology (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981), which extensively built on Bateson’s work, developed the interactional model further in the form of detailed structural analysis of what occurs in interaction and relational “encounters.” One of Goffman’s enduring and groundbreaking contributions has been his systemic vocabulary of interactions. He points to several issues such as one’s “footing” (Goffman 1981), the “definition of the situation” (Goffman 1974), and ritualistic “face work” (Goffman 1967) as instrumental to what goes on in interactions. In Goffman’s (1959) view, all acts have an audience by being embedded within society and thus are immersed in feedback systems, which make the acts into performances (see also Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b) and at times to mutually “scripted productions” (Goffman 1974: 58).

The immersion in an institutionalized context and the relationships and roles within the setting can determine an agent’s actions and his “self” by limiting certain forms and allowing other forms of self-expression according to the “interactional arrangements” (Goffman 1959; 1963b; 1981). According to Goffman’s (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1967) account, the self is a part of the relational matrix in which action and communication occur, and the participants’ “selves” in an encounter help determine its character and arrangement. According to Goffman (1967), one of the implicit rules of social engagement is that everyone has to care for and maintain a socially validated self. The differences in what “face” the participants have, i.e. footing and participation status, directs the “production format” and “participation framework” of the encounter (Goffman 1981).
Goffman (1974; 1981) has provided a powerful tool of analysis of social situations with three overlapping forms of analysis: the overarching “primary frame” which gives meaning to everything within the frame, the “frame of the activity” which describes the “person-role formula” and participants’ involvement in the activity, and the “interactional arrangement” which describes the footing, production format, and participation statuses in the interaction. According to Goffman (1974: 24), “we tend to perceive events in terms of primary frameworks, and the type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied.” With a “primary framework” Goffman means a culturally shared understanding that is central to that culture and establishes a common experience to the participants. According to Goffman (1974), all situations have multiple possible frames and individuals can apply several frameworks at any time, but primary frameworks describe what is “real or actual” (Goffman 1974: 47) and thus dominates all other understandings.

In Goffman’s (1974: 21) analysis, frames and especially primary frames are principally social instead of psychological and used to render “what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful.” Goffman (1974: 85) is very specific in that the frame is always an understanding of the setting as oneself in it; “a correct view of a scene must include the viewing of it as part of it.” Goffman (1974) uses the “definition of the situation” synonymously with frame and highlights its seminal importance to what goes on in interactions. In his analysis of primary frames, he is after the question, ‘what makes this real’, which puts him squarely within the scholarly tradition of Bateson and constructivism.

The “frame of the activity” describes “what is it that is going on” and what is the person’s role in that activity (Goffman 1974: 247). According to Goffman (1974: 269), “whenever an individual participates in an episode of activity, a distinction will be drawn between what is called the person, individual, or player, namely, he who participates, and the particular role, capacity, or function he realizes during that participation.” Goffman (ibid.) calls this the “person-role formula” of the frame. The primary frame and the frame of the activity frame how meaningful the activity is, what role participants have, and thus organizes what level of involvement participants should have in the frame. Goffman (1974: 345) explains it thus: “All frames involve expectations of a normative kind as to how deeply and fully the individual is to be carried into the activity organized by the frame.”

The normative level of involvement and the performed level can vary from total engrossment like in playing sports, to situationally more distant reflection of the frame as in participating in a lecture, to resignation from the frame by sleeping during a movie. Goffman (1961a; 1963a; 1974) argues that the norm of being suitably involved in the ongoing engagement is often actively enforced by other participants. With “interactional arrangement” (Goffman 1981) means the rules for how the ongoing activity is produced, who is allowed to participate and in what manner to the production of the activity, what everyone’s status is during the interaction, and the “footing” of that status.

Goffman argues that in order to act intelligently within an interactional system it is imperative to take the feedback environment and thus the surrounding social conventions into account (Goffman 1959; 1961a; 1967). To act in accordance with the situation. In some instances, the feedback environment and thus primary frame may be the effective reason for why someone acts in a specific way, instead of actions being freely determined (Goffman 1967; 1981; see also Giddens 1984). This was a radical point in the context of mental asylums. Goffman’s (1963b) argument was that the institutional settings prompted patients to act as if they were mentally ill by taking away their autonomy, any possibility of self-authorship, and the ability
to influence the frame of the interactional situation. I concur with Schein’s (2006: 291) analysis that to this day “people do not take Goffman’s work seriously enough.” I will later on expand on the contributions of Goffman, while I in Part IV uncover conducive proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes from the interactional and relational perspective.

Gergen (2009) has recently provided a revitalization of the vocabulary in the interactional model in his encompassing vision on relational being. Similar to Shotter (1993; 2008; 2015; 2016) and Cunliffe (2008), Gergen has developed the interactional model toward an emphasis on action (e.g. Bakhtin 1993; Vygotsky 1978; Wittgenstein 1953) and thus toward a direction can be described as an inter-actional model. With his program on “strong relationality” (p. xxi), which Gergen distinguishes from “weak relationality” by how “sufficiently” the theory separates “from the individualist tradition”, he is after a “full reconstruction of the psychological world” (Gergen 2009: xx-xxi, 75). His aim is to put the world in a light that fundamentally privileges relationship before bounded entities; and coordinated action before “biologizing of behavior” (Gergen 2009: 280). According to Gergen (2009: xv) relationship and “a process of coordination” precedes, for example, “the very concept of the self.” Consequently, and akin to Goffman, Gergen argues that “the very idea of individual persons is a byproduct of relational process” (Gergen 2009: xxvi). Similarly, he suggests that all knowledge is co-constructed, and consistent with this point of view, that “reason and emotion” are not “possessions of individual minds” (Gergen 2009: 32; see also Heidegger 1962/2008; Toulmin 1958/2003; 2003). According to Gergen (2009: xv), “we exist in a world of co-constitution.”

Gergen (2009: 53 ff) argues that for instance intelligibility in general and “all meaning” emerges through “relational performances” and “collaborative action.” Gergen calls the fundamental state of relational being as the process of “co-action” from which emerges collaboration and mutual coordination. According to Gergen (2009: 39), “all meaningful action is co-action”, which also serves as a definition of the term. Gergen argues that the process of co-action is a prerequisite for, for instance, socialization and learning from others in general. In co-action one is continuously in feedback processes with the environment and other agents. Because co-action is ongoing, Gergen argues that cause and effect thinking of human agents is too simplistic. He suggests the term “confluence” instead, which “draws attention to the web of relations in which the actor is enmeshed” (Gergen 2009: 94). Accordingly, Gergen suggests that “co-action” occurs within “relational confluence” instead of simple causality (Gergen 2009: 31).

A key concept in Gergen’s account is that of “multi-being.” With this concept, Gergen refers to the potentials given by each relationship a person at one point or another finds himself enmeshed in. Gergen (2009: 133 ff) argues that each relationship offers a model for conduct, an identity unique to that singular relationship, and its unique coordinated “dance” of co-action. “In sum, all meaning/full relations leave us with another’s way of being, a self that we become through the relationship, and a choreography of co-action” (Gergen 2009: 137). According to Gergen, multi-being thus offers numerous potentials but also frustrations and conflict, because relations tend to sediment coordination over time, potentials consist also of values and can be in conflict with each other, social roles confine relationships, and each relationship suppresses certain potentials in the formation of that unique relationship.

To come to the issue of wellbeing, Gergen (2009: 47) makes an interesting distinction between “degenerative” and “generative” relational processes. The former brings co-action to an end while generative processes catalyze co-action. Generative co-action and thus mutual coordination is facilitated by “synchrony, affirmation and appreciative exploration” (Gergen 2009: 170). With “synchronic sensitivity”, Gergen (2009: 165) means a fusion of minds in the form
of mutually responsive actions with complete attentiveness on the process of relating and on its outcomes. According to my interpretation, he means a formation of “shared cooperative activity” (Bratman 1992) or “collective intentionality” (Searle 1995; 2009). With affirmation Gergen points to the mutual acknowledgement of one another as equal participants to the co-constructed meaning making process. If I understand Gergen correctly, with affirmation he refers to the making of “we” (cf. Lewin 1948). With appreciative exploration Gergen means the process of finding common ground or constructive dialogue (Isaacs 1993; Seikkula & Arnkil 2006) instead of succumbing to denial, hostility, ridicule and other forms that degenerate co-action.

Gergen, in a manner consistent with the academic tradition began by Bateson and constructivism, deals with wellbeing primarily from the point of view of psychotherapy. “Therapy is but a single relationship nested within a potentially limitless and dynamic complex. There is no personal problem, mental illness, or family dysfunction in itself, but only within this complex” (Gergen 2009: 271). The psychotherapeutic challenge is, according to Gergen, to alter the relational matrix and complex of the patient through the co-action of the patient-therapist relationship. One interesting technique Gergen highlights, is that of “dialogical meetings” (Seikkula & Arnkil 2006) in which the patient, other mental health professionals and even significant others and thus much of the complex can be invited to participate in the meetings to openly discuss the problem and what should be done about it. The solution is sought through repatterning of “coordinated action”, which facilitates “relational recovery” (Gergen 2009: 303). In the context of organizations, Gergen (2009: 314, 322) argues that the challenges to “relational coordination” lie in “welcoming into the processes of meaning-making” and to “mobilize collaborative processes in the service of effective action” (see also Hatch 1993; Smircich & Morgan 1982). Gergen offers the above-mentioned remedies of affirmation and appreciation to the upkeep of collaborative action. “It is in the flow of collaborative action that vitality and direction are spawned” (Gergen 2009: 312; see also Drath et al. 2008).

In sum, this stream of research has traditionally approached the issue of wellbeing from the point of view of psychiatry and psychotherapy, which leaves the specific issue of wellbeing and its definition open to interpretation. An understanding of wellbeing can be said to be embedded in the interactional model, which points toward the direction that wellbeing is somehow embedded in the relations between an agent and his inhabited world including the surrounding relational matrix (Gergen 2009; Seligman 2018). It is easier to say that wellbeing is generated and degenerated within these dynamic interactions and relationships, instead of providing an explicit answer to questions about the character of wellbeing. This is however a very global depiction and leaves the definition and consequent metatheory of wellbeing largely undiscussed. In perhaps the latest review on the Batesonian tradition of interactional scholarship, Watzlawick (1990) argues that there is still only a fragmentary understanding of “relationship phenomena” (p.19) in comparison to objective knowledge of things. Watzlawick suggests that the ideal would be a comprehensive “grammar or calculus of human relationships” (Watzlawick 1990: 43), but according to Watzlawick we are still far from such understandings.

The present study contributes to this stream of research in three ways: (1) by utilizing and extending the interactional model in organizational settings to draw forth interactional phenomena pertinent to wellbeing; (2) by specifying types of relational coordination that generate and degenerate interactional wellbeing in organizational settings; and (3) by providing an explicit and concise account of the character of interactional wellbeing in
organizational settings on a metatheoretical level thus providing a way to define wellbeing that is in accordance with the interactional and relational perspective.

### 3.4 Wellbeing as a relational and collective process

In organization studies the issue of emotions and consequently happiness and wellbeing, in present-day terms (Seligman 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000), was widely shunned until the rise of a positive agenda for organizations (Brief & Weiss 2002; Wright & Quick 2009) in the form of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS, Cameron & Caza 2004; Cameron et al. 2003; Cameron & Spreitzer 2011) and the more psychologically attuned Positive Organizational Behavior (Luthans et al. 2007; Luthans & Youssef 2007).

Cameron and Caza (2004: 737, 731) characterize POS as an umbrella term for studying “life-giving dynamics” and “the ways in which organizations and their members flourish and prosper in especially favorable ways.” Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) refer to the emphasis on ‘especially favorable ways’, as the study of “positive deviance.” Cameron et al. (2003: 4) emphasize the inclusive character of POS, as a general focus “on dynamics that are typically described by words such as excellence, thriving, flourishing, abundance, resilience, or virtuousness.” Before the rise of POS, a humanistic undercurrent could be found fragmented across research on organizational development (OD), appreciative inquiry (AI), prosocial and citizenship behavior, and corporate social responsibility (Cameron et al. 2003; Rynes 2012; Schein 2006; see also McGregor 1960/2006; Pugh 1971). POS became an umbrella term to draw forth and unite these traditions.

POS also builds upon the insight of present-day wellbeing scholarship represented by Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). Interestingly, Positive Psychology was at the outset explicitly interested in the development of “positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions” (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000: 5; see also Gable & Haidt 2005). But the interest in positive institutions has arguably been left in the shadow of all individual-centric studies on wellbeing and happiness (for an exception see Linley et al. 2010). This omission can however be said to the the hometurf of POS, and thus complements Positive Psychology in one of its original key areas of interest.

Comparatively recently POS has taken a set of interesting directions including investigations in the dimensions underlying work relationships (Ferris et al. 2009), positive relationships (Cameron et al. 2003; Dutton & Ragins 2007), affect in organizations (Barsade & Gibson 2007; Brief & Weiss 2002), positive identities (Dutton et al. 2010), thriving at work (Spreitzer et al. 2005), growing and progressive self-change at work (Sonenshein et al. 2013), and job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton 2001). Those directions that accentuate relationality, action, and interactional processes at the microfoundations of organizations are of particular interest for this study. Within organization scholarship these characteristics can be found especially in the study on compassion (Dutton et al. 2014), care (Rynes et al. 2012) and in the interrelated coordination that gives rise to collective capabilities (Kahn et al. 2013; Lilius et al. 2011; Weick & Roberts 1993).

#### 3.4.1 Acts and processes of compassion

Compassion is distinct from many other relational processes by including a trigger of suffering, which begins the episode and process of compassion (Dutton et al. 2006; Kanov et al. 2004). This stream of literature has been developed mainly theoretically in a series of articles, albeit
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with a couple of notable exceptions (Dutton et al. 2006; Lilius et al. 2011). What is particularly interesting about “compassion at work” (Dutton et al. 2014) from the point of view of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, is that its development and linguistic form bear the hallmarks of what I later argue to be constitutional for a more encompassing paradigm of wellbeing.

According to Kanov et al. (2004: 810) much of organizational literature have failed to portray organizations as “human institutions” where there is suffering, compassion and healing. Kanov et al. (2004) consequently explore compassion in work organizations. They argue that there is no dearth of pain and suffering at work, which highlights the salience of compassion. According to Kanov et al., pain and suffering can prompt acts of compassion, which they distinguish from empathy, sympathy and caregiving. The key distinction which they make is the responsive character of compassion, how the feeling of compassion is followed by fitting “compassionate responding” (Kanov et al. 2004: 814). Their focus is on the individual level and especially on the process of compassion, but they extend the notion to “organizational compassion.” They argue that the process of compassion consists of three subprocesses: “noticing another’s pain, experiencing an emotional reaction to the pain, and acting in response to the pain” (Kanov et al. 2004: 808). On an organizational level, they argue that collective responding requires some sort of coordination. They juxtapose this to Weick & Roberts (1993) notion of “collective mind” and “heedful interrelating” between the members of the organization. They theorize that collective compassion requires some level of coordinated heedful interrelating to take place. Kanov et al. (2004: 821) suggest that compassionate responding can become a virtuous cycle and ingrained in the organizational culture by “propagating, legitimating, and coordinating member’s acts.” Their suggestion is that interpretive and qualitative studies would fit particularly well for the study of compassion processes in organizations.

In their study on “compassion organizing”, Dutton et al. (2006) build on the work of Kanov et a. (2004). Dutton et al (2006: 59) define compassion organizing as when “individuals in organizations notice, feel, and respond to human pain in a coordinated way.” They especially highlight features of the organizational context and how they provide resources for the patterned coordination of compassion. Thus their focus is on the interrelationships between actions and structures within organizations (Giddens 1984; Orlikowski 2002; Weick & Roberts 1993). Dutton et al. (2006: 84) put emotions on center stage, but while doing so, they argue that the contextual features both “constrain and enable responses to human pain on organizations.” As their case context Dutton et al. study the partly spontaneous and partly coordinated responses of an organization to how three MBA students of a business school lost their belongings in a fire. Their theory specifies five mechanism of coordination that mobilized acts of compassion: “contextual enabling of attention, emotion, and trust, agents improvising structures, and symbolic enrichment” (Dutton et al. 2006: 59). They unite these mechanisms with a resource-based view and argue that these mechanisms show how the “social architecture of the organization” interacts with agency in the “extraction, generation, coordination, and calibration of resources” (ibid.).

Lilius et al (2008: 210) contribute to the compassion literature by investigating “the emotional tone of compassion” through a survey and a narrative study. They connect compassion to positive affect and reduction of negative affect and thus to the increase in hedonic wellbeing (Diener et al. 1999; Fredrickson 2009), but more importantly, how compassion plays out in organizational settings. Lilius et al (2008) argue that acts of compassion can take several forms: giving emotional support, giving time or flexibility, or giving material goods (see also

In a recent review on the literature of compassion at work, Dutton et al. (2014: 277) depict it as a “vital interpersonal process” triggered by human suffering at work. Dutton et al. (2014) outline a range of positive outcomes of compassion at work, which include speeded recovery of the sufferer, stronger connections between coworkers, shared positive emotions, lower turnover, and greater collective commitment. In their model on the processes of compassion, Dutton et al. (2014), connect the subprocesses of noticing, feeling and acting to the subprocess of sensemaking. According to Dutton et al (2014: 283-284), the prior notion of “compassionate responding” does not adequately take into account that sensemaking is involved in all of the subprocesses, and thus use the term “acting compassionately” instead. Dutton et al. (2014: 285) argue that it is especially the sensemaking subprocess that makes compassion processes interpersonal: “the dynamic, interpersonal nature of compassion is particularly salient in the sensemaking subprocess as both the sufferer and the focal actor seek to comprehend the situation and their roles in relation to it and each other.”

Dutton et al. (2014) analyze three different contexts that are involved in the compassion process: personal, relational, and organizational. With personal context, Dutton et al., mean individual differences in compassion, for example, stemming from past experiences with suffering and one’s role in the organizations and how it enables one to engage in the subprocesses of compassion. In the relational context, Dutton et al. (2014) argue that especially similarity, closeness, and social power influence the expression of suffering and the likelihood that one will engage in compassion. According to Dutton et al. (2014: 289), in the organizational context “shared values, shared beliefs, norms, practices, structure and quality of relationships, and leaders’ behavior” have an impact on the compassion process.

With structure and quality of relationships, for example, Dutton et al. (2014: 292) mean how the “relational fabric of an organization is captured by both the patterning of network ties and the quality of the connections between people in those ties.” Despite the burgeoning literature on compassion at work, Dutton et al. argue that there are some holes in the literature. According to Dutton et al., compassion has thus far been perceived mostly from the perspective of the attentive, cognitive and emotional processes of the actant. They consequently highlight the need for more research on especially how the sufferer may affect the process of compassion, as well as the interactional and “relational mechanisms that undergird the compassion process” (Dutton et al 2014: 296).

Compassion and care have been closely knitted since the classic study by Kahn (1993; see also Barsade & O’Neill 2014). It may however be of interest that some treat them as two distinct streams of research (e.g. Dutton et al. 2014) whereas relatively recently the two have been explicitly united in a special issue of Academy of Management Review (Rynes et al. 2012). Lilius et al. (2008) have similarly suggested that compassion is a form of care. Albeit it might feel like splitting hairs, the reason why this is of importance is that the care literature is much more developed in respect to relational processes and mechanism (e.g. Kroth & Keeler 2009), a key area of interest also within compassion research (Dutton et al. 2014).

### 3.4.2 Acts and processes of care

The literature of care in an organizational context has been developed mostly by William Kahn (1993; 1995; 2001; Kahn et al. 2013; see also Kahn 1990; 2019) in a series of articles. The study
of care is in comparison more mature within the contexts of nursing and education (Kroth & Keeler 2009; Martela 2012) and has been used as a source of inspiration in subsequent theorizing within organization studies (e.g. Lawrence & Maitlis 2012). Care in organizations has, according to Kroth and Keeler (2009), more often been associated with “perceived organizational support”, which distinguishes it from nursing and education literatures.

Since the rise of POS, care, in the tradition begun by Kahn, has received increasing attention and been expanded into an inclusive and encompassing framework for organization studies (e.g. Barsade & O’Neill 2014; Rynes et al. 2012). Beside POS, other approaches to care include a Heideggerian perspective (Tomkins & Simpson 2015), a cultural perspective (Barsade & O’Neill 2014), and a system perspective (Martela 2012), and care has been used to study and theorize of subjects ranging from leadership (Tomkins & Simpson 2015) to organizational surveillance (Sewell & Barker 2006). Here I focus on those studies that I find illuminating about the acts of processes of care within organizational settings from an interactional and relational perspective.

In his classic study, Kahn (1993) theorized of caregiving organizations. According to Kahn (1993: 544) the behavioral dimensions of caregiving are “accessibility, inquiry, attention, validation, empathy, support, compassion, and consistency. These dimensions designate categories of behaviors that enable care-seekers to feel cared for and about.” Kahn argues that the acts of caregiving replenish the emotional supplies of organizational members. Kahn (1993) also outlines patterns in organizational caregiving, which he argues are focused on the hierarchical superior-subordinate relations. It is worth noting that Kahn draws extensively from family therapy and family systems theory as a key frame of reference to illuminate the patterns in his study (see also Kahn 1995; 2001; Kahn et al. 2013).

The patterns Kahn (1993: 547) specifies are “flow; reverse-flow; fragmented; self-contained; and barren.” With the flow pattern he highlights the act of the superior who turns himself to a parental helper during role related interactions thus creating a “collaborative rather than authoritarian relationship” (Kahn 1993: 548). In reverse-flow the flow of care is reversed and originates from the subordinate to the superior. According to Kahn, this pattern is reminiscent of a dysfunctional family where a parent is turned into a care-seeker and the child into the caregiver. Fragmented is a pattern where caregiving is contained to a cycle of caregiving within a superior-subordinate relationship and does not spill over to the surrounding network of relations. According to Kahn, this pattern resembles a dysfunctional family where some remain within and other are left outside of support. Self-contained refers to the pattern in which a subsystem of care is formed between members of the organizations, but which is separate from the hierarchical structure. Kahn mirrors this pattern to a dysfunctional family where a child has been emotionally abandoned by his parents and consequently seeks support elsewhere. Barren is characterized by a mutual lack and withholding of caregiving and thus the absence of an emotional bond or “caring connection” (Kroth & Keeler 2009; Martela 2012) between superiors and subordinates. According to Kahn (1993), and in line with the interactional model presented above (e.g. Watzlawick et al. 1974/2011), a system of caregiving emerges when the relationships and their patterns are put together.

In subsequent works Kahn (1995; 2001; Kahn et al. 2013) has increasingly focused on the dynamics that develop or undermine a relationally secure environment (see also Kahn 1990; 2019). Kahn refers to this environment as a “secure base” (Kahn 1995) following Ainsworth and Bowlby, and as a “holding environment” (Kahn 2001) following Winnicott (see also psychological safety, Edmondson 1999; ontological security, Giddens 1991). In one study, (Kahn
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Kahn (1995) takes an organizational development point of view. "Like therapists who create secure base relations with their clients", Kahn (1995: 491) argues, "change agents may be most effective when they help organizational members feel secure enough to explore new ways of relating." Kahn (1995) argues that change agents need to take a parental role in which the help their clients to solve their own problems (cf. Schein 1999), similarly how a parent educates a child. Kahn argues that the dilemma of the change agent is to find a balance between being too responsive and unresponsive to the needs of the client.

In another paper, Kahn (2001) argues that organizations are turning less hierarchical (see Lee & Edmondson 2017), which means that self-reliance is increasing while the reliance on formal superior-subordinate relations is decreasing. Kahn notes that based on past research, paradoxically, organizational members are most self-reliant when they are in a secure environment. In this context, Kahn (2001) argues that the establishment of a supportive "holding environment" is essential in combating organizational members stress, burnout, anxiety, and turnover. "Metaphorically, holding environments are temporary shelters to which people, caught in storms, find their way" (Kahn 2001: 268). Caregiving in the form of emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal (personalized feedback) support is increasingly on the shoulders of co-workers, mentors, and leaders (Kahn 2001).

According to Kahn (2001), holding environments can be collective or in another person, when that person is authorized and thus empowered to function as a task-focused temporary caregiver. In the task that creates anxiety, a care-receiver can thus authorize and throw oneself in the hands of the care-giver. Kahn (2001) argues that there are some facilitating conditions for establishing holding environments. These are: trust in others and the concomitant making of oneself vulnerable (see also Brown 2012), available and competent holding, competent receiving, and resilient boundaries. Available and competent holding, for example, Kahn (2001) divides into three types of behaviors (cf. Gergen 2009): containment, which means accessibility, presence and acceptance toward the point of view of the care-for; emphatic acknowledgement meaning affirmation and interest in the others situation; and enabling perspective, by which Khan means help in meaning-making.

In a recent article, Kahn et al. (2013) look at organizational crisis as a disturbance of the relational system. They argue that perceiving organizations as “relational systems” enables understanding the resilience and transformation of organizations as a whole. Their practical argument is that crisis management and leadership could be more effective if they were equipped with a relational systems approach and better knowledge on how to repair and transform relational systems. According to Kahn et al. (2013), a family systems perspective allows a way to define and analyze the “relational health” of an organization. In organizational crisis, Kahn et al. suggest that it is this relational health that is disturbed.

According to Kahn et al. (2013), relational systems can be assessed through three dimensions: cohesion, flexibility, and communication. Cohesion means the balancing of “separateness and togetherness” in the relations within the organization (Kahn et al. 2013: 379). Flexibility refers to the balancing of stability and change within the relationships. Communication refers to “how system members listen, speak, self-disclose, respect, regard, and stay focused with one another as they discuss task and affective dimensions” (Kahn et al. 2013: 379). Kahn et al. argue that communication is key to rebalancing and maintaining coordination within the organization, thus affecting cohesion and flexibility.

In an instructive and relatively recent review on caring, Kroth and Keeler (2009) integrate the literature from nursing, education and management. According to Kroth and Keeler the
literature is most developed in nursing and education whereas within management the topic of care is relatively new and seldom studied. Kroth and Keeler (2009) argue that the literature fits into five themes on caring, four of which can be called processes of caring and one, recursiveness, portrays the interactional and cyclical character of caring in relationships. The four processes are: invites, advances, capacitizes, and connects. According to Kroth and Keeler, invites is characterized by presence and attentiveness toward the other. With advances they mean a prioritization and commitment to the success of the cared-for. Kroth and Keeler depict the process of capacitizes as nurturing growth and healing in the cared-for. With the fourth process, connects, Kroth and Keeler mean the development of attachment and emotional connection between the care-giver and cared-for. Kroth and Keeler thus argue that the general processes of care are relatively well charted. Consequently, looking more closely at the “employee–manager, employee–employee, manager–organization, and organization–environment levels” would, according to Kroth and Keeler (2009: 525), increase our understanding of care in organizations.

Lately, the focus has indeed been more in the dimension of theorizing how certain acts can transform the entire relational system of an organization. This can be exemplified by the studies of Kahn et al. (2013) and Lawrence and Maitlis (2012).

Organizational crisis, according to Kahn et al. (2013), require post-crisis repair in the relationships and rebalancing of the relational system. By drawing on the literature of posttraumatic growth (e.g. Joseph 2011; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004), Kahn et al. (2013) argue that crisis can also be transformative for the relations in an organization instead of only repairing past damages. Kahn et al. suggest that the following processes repair and transform the relational system (cf. Janoff-Bulman 1992): emotional processing, constructing of meaning, and envisioning and creating desirable futures. Emotional processing creates holding environments and restructures relational boundaries, as the concerns of system members are heard across prior divides. Kahn et al. argue that compassion and support help manage the pain and frustration stemming from the crisis. With constructing of meaning, Kahn et al. (2013: 390) mean the reconstruction of “one’s sense of reality” (see also Weick 1993) by turning personal narratives to social narratives. According to Kahn et al. joint construction of meaning alter relational boundaries and build collaboration. By envisioning and creating desirable futures Kahn et al. (2013: 390-391) refer to a “discourse of renewal” that empowers and motivates system members to create the future reality of the organization. This discursive practice, Kahn et al. argue, also restructures the relational system by turning the system to an inclusive “we” (see Lewin 1948).

Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) theorize in a recent article how an “ethic of care” can be enacted in organizations through certain discursive practices. According to Lawrence and Maitlis (2012), an ethic of care builds on Gilligan’s feminist ethics, on the premises that care is an ongoing practice in interdependent relationships, and on the “epistemological orientation” (p.648) that persons are “fundamentally relational” (p.645). Ethic of care is juxtaposed with an ethic of justice; the care perspective pays attention to the needs of others and sensitivity to context whereas the ethic of justice underscores universal principles (Lawrence and Maitlis 2012). Lawrence and Maitlis approach the ethic of care in organizations through three themes. First: “An ethic of care rejects an objective perspective on the world, highlighting instead a conception of truth and knowledge as locally situated and produced” (Lawrence & Maitlis 2012: 646). According to Lawrence and Maitlis, truth, through the focus on the particulars and particular others thus become the truth of a situation and of a community. Lawrence and
Maitlis (2012: 646) argue that a key issue for the ethic of care in organizations is the practices through which people “construct their experiences.”

A second key theme is the recognition of vulnerability and that people experience struggles in everyday life. Lawrence and Maitlis argue that how those struggles are constructed as a discourse is of special importance. According to Lawrence and Maitlis (2012), a third key theme is “growth” and a development in self-determined aspirations in those that are cared for. Based on these three themes, Lawrence and Maitlis suggest corresponding narrative practices: constructing histories of sparkling moments, contextualizing people’s struggles, and constructing polyphonic future-oriented stories. Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) theorize, that within teams these narrative practices can increase members’ belief in the team’s capability (potency), increase their sense of collective agency to influence the environment, and create transcendent hope in the form of pathways to desired ends. Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) refer to these three outcomes as a future-oriented “ontology of possibility.” The main claim Lawrence and Maitlis (2012) make is that there is a relationship between an ethic of care and an ontology of possibility, which broadens the focus from members’ current wellbeing to “what can be” (Lawrence & Maitlis 2012: 653).

3.4.3 Collective capabilities of wellbeing

In recent theorizing of how acts and dyadic processes become recurrent and reliable features of an organization (e.g. Dutton et al. 2006; Kanov et al. 2004), especially collective capabilities (Lilius et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002), structuration theory (Giddens 1984), and the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993) have featured as the prominent channel for connecting the dots. Although Orlikowski (2002) is only indirectly related to issues of wellbeing, it may prove to be enlightening to review it as well. This is because it relates to successful “distributed organizing” in the context of global product development (Orlikowski 2002), which is the organizational context for the present study, and it relates to especially successful “cooperation” (Gergen 2009) within such an environment.

In their classic and much cited study, Weick and Roberts (1993: 357) develop the concept of a “collective mind”, which they define as “a pattern of heedful interrelations of actions in a social system.” They illustrate their concept in the “high-reliability” context of flight operations on aircraft carriers (Weick & Roberts 1993: 376). With the collective mind, Weick & Roberts (1993: 357-358) mean an “organizational mind” that “describe collective mental processes in organizations” in the form of “interdependent know-how” that allows them to collectively “do the right thing’ in novel situations.” With regard to mental processes and action, they interestingly reverse the direction and conceptualize “mind as action that constructs mental processes rather than mental processes that construct action” (Weick & Roberts 1993: 374). Weick and Roberts (1993: 359) in the formulation of the organizational mind, build on the idea that “organizations are minds.” They draw together several notions, from connectionism they take the (proto-)idea that mind can be located in connections rather than entities, a second idea is that global structures can emerge from local interactions, and the notion of “mind as activity rather than “mind as entity” (Weick & Roberts 1993: 360).

With the concept of “collective mind” they refer to these ideas and build especially on the work of Ryle (1949/2000) as a disposition to act with heed. They understand heed to mean “a disposition to act with attentiveness, alertness and care” (Weick & Roberts 1993: 374). By drawing on the work of Ryle, Weick and Roberts (1993: 361) argue that “mind is actualized in patterns of behavior than can range from stupid to intelligent”, where the difference is
characterized by “heed concepts” that show if the “behaviors were combined intelligently rather than stupidly.” With intelligent and stupid behavior Weick and Roberts refer to how developed or undeveloped the collective mind is and how it shows in individual actions. According to Weick and Roberts (1993: 361-362), “[h]eedit adverbs attach qualities of mind directly to performances” and when “heed declines, performance is said to be heedless, careless, unmindful, thoughtless, unconcerned, indifferent.” They argue that they diverge from Ryle with the idea that mind can be extended to groups and organizations.

According to Weick and Roberts (1993), interrelated group performances can be described through contributions, representation, and subordination. “Actors in the system construct their actions (contributions), understanding that the system consists of connected actions by themselves and others (representation), and interrelate their actions within the system (subordination)” (Weick & Roberts 1993: 357). Weick and Roberts depict these as concomitant processes. Through interactions within the social system, Weick and Roberts (1993: 366) argue, organizational members “continually extract a changing sense of self-interrelation and then re-enact that sense back into the system.” “To connect is to mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993: 374, italics in original). Weick and Roberts argue that there are many social processes, such as storytelling, that socialize members into an organization’s style of heedful interrelating (cf. Kahn et al. 2013; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012). Accordingly, they argue that much more attention should be paid to social processes and microdynamics of interrelated actions. “Cooperation is imperative for the development of mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993: 378).

Orlikowski (2002: 249) argues that to deal effectively with today’s rapidly changing technological environments across cultures, locales, and markets requires “distributed organizing” – “the capability of operating effectively cross the temporal, geographic, political, and cultural boundaries routinely encountered in global operations.” Orlikowski (2002) suggests that in order to deliver timely, innovative and complex products, what is required is the enactment of the collective capability of distributed organizing. She argues that this capability is constituted in the everyday practices of product development rather than explicit knowledge about organizing. Orlikowski (2002) utilizes a theoretical lens she refers to as “organizational knowing” which focuses especially on practices, “know-how”, and action instead of “knowing-that” (see Ryle 1949/2000; Schon 1984). Orlikowski (2002: 253) argues, by drawing on for example structuration theory (Giddens 1984) and Weick and Roberts (1993), that “knowing how” is an active and recurrent accomplishment in which there is a reciprocal relationship between “ongoing engagement in social practices” and “knowing generated in those practices.”

Through an in-depth study into a multinational corporation she calls Kappa that included 78 interviews, Orlikowski suggests five practices that represent knowing: sharing identity, interacting face to face, aligning effort, learning by doing, and supporting participation. These practices, respectively, constitute knowing the organization, knowing the players in the game, knowing how to coordinate across time and space, knowing how to develop capabilities, and knowing how to innovate. Orlikowski (2002) argues that the importance of these practices lies in that they help “negotiate and navigate” the multiple boundaries that constitute their product development work (cf. cooperation, Gergen 2009; altering relational boundaries, Kahn et al. 2013). Orlikowski (2002: 269) suggests that it is this “collective and distributed competence” understood as an “enacted capability” that endows the organization’s agents with the ability to perform “effective distributed organizing.”

In a relatively recent study on “compassion capability”, which Lilius et al (2011: 874) define “as the reliable capacity of members of a collective to notice, feel and respond to suffering”, the
authors argue that a set of everyday practices give rise to two “relational conditions” that foster compassion capability. Lilius et al. (2011) build on the work of Orlikowski (2002), more specifically, that particular enacted practices can constitute an organizational capability. Lilius et al (2011) suggest two conditions that make compassion into a “reliable collective achievement”: high-quality connections and a norm of dynamic boundary permeability between work and private life (Lilius et al. 2011: 875).

Through an inductive case study of a positively deviant organization, Lilius et al. (2011: 876) suggest seven everyday practices, i.e. “recurrent, situated activities”, that build the relational conditions: orienting, acknowledging, addressing problems directly, help-offering, celebrating, collective decision-making, and bounded playing. According to Lilius et al., these everyday practices foster high-quality connections by increasing positive regard, mutuality and tensility. High-quality connections in turn facilitate interpersonal attunement, identification with the group, and honest conversations (Lilius et al. 2011). The norm of dynamic boundary permeability, according to Lilius et al., reflects a shared understanding of when it is appropriate to relax and constrict sharing of personal information. Lilius et al. argue that this norm increases the likelihood of sharing suffering and legitimizes constriction of non-work-related information when it becomes overwhelming.

In addition to these articles, other related studies have explored topics such as compassion as an organizational capacity (Madden et al. 2012), collective action (Quinn & Worline 2008), the forgiving organization and forgiveness climate (Fehr & Gelfand 2012), prosocial sensemaking process (Grant et al. 2008), how work contexts cultivate employees to make a prosocial difference (Grant 2007), and other forms of helping behaviors within organizations (Croppanzano & Mitchell 2005; Podsakoff & MacKenzie 1997).

To summarize, within organization studies many particular organizational acts, processes and practices that have an impact on collective wellbeing have been uncovered especially within compassion and care literatures. Various narrative practices, relational processes, enacted practices, and discourses have been suggested to, when enacted collectively and reliably, enable a transformation of the organization (Kahn et al. 2013; Lilius et al. 2011). There is a call for further understanding on the relational mechanisms and how they manifest in various relationships within the organization (Dutton et al. 2014; Kroth & Keeler 2009; see also Felin & FOss 2009; Felin et al. 2015), as well as for empirical evidence that would elaborate on how collective acts transform organizations.

The present study contributes to this stream of research in two ways: (1) by laying out particular relational frames and dynamics between the triad comprising of subordinate-supervisor-collective mind that are tied to interactional wellbeing in organizational settings; and (2) by situating this stream of research in the broader context of wellbeing scholarship and outlining its paradigmatic character within this theoretical context with the help of theoretical serviceability analysis. My claim is, then, that on the basis of their linguistic form these reviewed studies exemplify a particular paradigm of wellbeing research.

3.5 Wellbeing as ‘acting well’ within relational settings

Within organization studies there is a very recent interest in practical wisdom, on situational morality, and in the processes that lead to prudent judgement in uncertain situations (Chia & Holt 2008; Nonaka et al. 2014; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2011; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; Shotter &
Tsoukas 2014b; see also Flyvbjerg 2006; Schon 1984; Tsoukas & Cummings 1997; Weick 1993). There are several reasons for this rise in interest for the neo-Aristotelian tradition of theorizing about *phronesis*, often translated as prudence or practical wisdom. With a rapidly developing scene of technology and other changes in circumstances, there is an increasing call for understanding how one could learn to act wisely within such indeterminate situations, to which *phronesis* is one suggested alleyway of research (Nonaka & Toyama 2007; Rowley & Gibbs 2008; see also Kvalnes 2014).

Coming from the point of view of practice theory (Nicolini 2013; Sandberg & Tsoukas 2011), practical wisdom draws attention to acting wisely and morally in order to engage a situation well and with intelligence (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). The circumstances of the situation can play a more significant part in moral reasoning and action in organizations than personal character (Kvalnes 2014). Phronesis is intimately connected to “acting well” within relationally constituted settings in which the agent is in part constructing the situation (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; see also Nussbaum 2001). Considering this notion in connection with the idea that a locally and relationally constituted morality can be enacted in organizations (Hosking 2011; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012), this draws added attention to the possibility that the situated use of *judgement* in one’s relational engagements is likely relevant for the study of interactional well-being in organizational settings (see also Goffman 1974/1986; Oakeshott 1991b).

Contemporary research into wisdom began within psychology in the 1980s (McKenna et al. 2013). Currently there seem to be two traditions within the psychological literature: The Berlin school (e.g. Baltes & Kunzmann 2004; Baltes & Staudinger 2000; Staudinger & Glück 2011; see also Sternberg 1998) and a US empiricist tradition (see McKenna et al. 2013 for references). In a recent review, McKenna et al. (2013) draw together most of the literature on wisdom in organizations. Based on their review, one can conclude that much of wisdom research is scattered in a handful of articles and several relatively recently published books on the subject. Within the literature on wisdom in organizations, the emphasis on *phronesis* is one of many directions of research.

Much of the organizational literature on *phronesis*, wisdom and practical judgement finds itself wrestling with the concept of what is wisdom, how phronetic knowledge differs from other forms of knowledge, and whether it can be cultivated or taught to becoming managers in for instance business schools (e.g. Chia & Holt 2008; Ghoshal 2005; Nonaka et al. 2014; Roca 2008). Aristotle thought of *phronesis* as a developmental characteristic that needs to be practiced in action. He argued that with experience practical wisdom may become dispositional (Aristotle 2005; Annas 2011; Nonaka et al. 2014). Some have consequently accentuated the dispositional character of *phronesis* (Schwartz 2011) and others the developmental and situational (Nonaka et al. 2014; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b).

If the dispositional character is emphasized, instead of *phronesis* characterizing prudent action (Nonaka et al. 2014), it becomes a character trait (Schwartz 2011; see also Mangham 1995). Others have approached the issue of *phronesis* on the organizational level as to explore the idea of a practically wise organization (Rowley & Gibbs 2008). In strategy discourse it has emerged as the need for distributed wisdom in rapidly developing and ambiguous contexts in contrast to the rationalistic approach of ‘finding out the right answer’ (Nonaka & Toyama 2007). Flyvbjerg (2006) has used the concept of “phronetic organization research” to argue that the discipline needs redirecting in order to matter in society. Eikeland (2006) has similarly argued for the importance of *phronesis* to action research and other approaches.
Due to the very recent interest and the philosophical inclination of the literature on wisdom, empirical studies into phronesis are scarce (however see Warhurst & Black 2017; see also Clarke & Holt 2010). There is subsequently a call for empirically grounded answers instead of merely more questions in relation to phronesis in organizations (McKenna et al. 2013), which is also underscored by the special theme issue in Management Learning (Nonaka et al. 2014). For the study of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, the studies that ascribe to relational, situated, processual and experiential characteristics of phronesis are most relevant. It is unfortunate, that so far there are only a few such studies (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b).

Within the literature on judgement and decision-making there are two traditions of research (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). The main tradition emphasizes a rationalistic orientation and thus rational decision-making (e.g. De Cremer & Moore 2020; Kahneman 2011) in the Enlightenment tradition that embraces mathematics as the pinnacle of reason (Nussbaum 2001; Toulmin 1958/2003; 2003). An alternative approach leans “toward embracing a more phenomenologically informed mode of inquiry that privileges experience, process, and relationality” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a: 227; see e.g. Klein 1999). Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a) argue that within the rationalistic tradition emotions are seldom acknowledged, and even when they are, they are treated as an influence on cognitive processing. Moreover, morality is treated as one possible framing of a situation similar to a “business” or “legal frame” (see Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe 2008).

Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a) argue that the rationalistic tradition has not managed to integrate dualisms between rationality and emotions, intuition and deliberation, morality and amorality, and so on. Consequently, Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a: 228) argue that “behavioral ethics researchers do not fully engage with the complexity—the ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict—involved in the exercise of practical reason in real-life contexts.” According to Shotter and Tsoukas, rationalistic research is missing how perceptions, emotions, moral values, and sensemaking are involved in the situation (see also Sandberg & Tsoukas 2011) even though some rationalists acknowledge the influence of context on action (Baltes & Kunzmann 2004; Baltes & Staudinger 2000; Sternberg 1998; see also De Cremer & Moore 2020).

According to Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a) the tradition of scholarship that tried to address this issue have used concepts such as phronesis, wisdom, practical judgement, or plainly judgement to portray context-dependence, uncertainty, and moral conflict within situated action. By drawing on neo-Aristotelian, phenomenological and Wittgensteinian theorizing, Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a) suggest “phronesis” as an integrative hermeneutic framework that overcomes the weaknesses in the rationalistic tradition. Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a: 240) consequently explore “the process involved in coming to a judgment and, by doing so, to bring into clear focus a line of action, which, so to speak, will fit the irregular contours of a particular circumstance, and the inner experiences (feelings) involved in such a process.” Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a: 240) define phronesis as “knowing how to arrive at a judgment, not in relation to general circumstances, but in relation to particulars.” The notion of phronesis is intimately connected to action and to the notion that morality is embedded in action (Annas 2011; Nonaka et al. 2014; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). “Through undertaking action, a human agent does not merely contribute to producing something (some “thing”), but also to acting well — acting in a way that contributes to the fulfillment of a good life” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a: 232, italics in original).
Shotter and Tsoukas follow Aristotle and connect phronesis to moral praxis instead of the production oriented poiesis: “While poiesis (production) aims at going through various steps to make something, praxis (practical action) must aim at achieving eudaimonia (well-being, a fulfilled life)” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a: 233, italics added). According to the Aristotelian tradition, in practical action emotions and judgement are blended (Annas 2011; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). “It should be further noted that, for Aristotle, it is not only that the cognitive and the affective are inextricably linked, but that emotions can be more or less rational, in that they can be more or less appropriate to the situation at hand” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a: 234).

“Aristotle does not offer a general rule as to how to act appropriately but points to exemplary behavior. Since human affairs are so variable, he notes, practical knowledge is concerned with particulars—knowing what to do in a particular situation—not theoretical universals. It therefore cannot be acquired by appealing to general rules but built up through training in the context of social practices, in which practitioners inductively learn, through particular cases and examples, what to feel and how to respond.” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a: 234)

In another paper, Shotter and Tsoukas (2014b) explore the exercise of judgement and practical wisdom within organizational settings with a performative lens. In following Ryle (1949/2000), they argue that a performance can be called careful or skillful when the details of the situation are taken into account. Shotter and Tsoukas (2014b: 381) argue that the “performative aspects” of phronesis, how it is a situated accomplishment, have been “seriously under-explored” as it has mainly been seen as a category of knowledge (see e.g. Nonaka et al. 2014). Shotter and Tsoukas (2014b: 391) argue that the problem with acting wisely in situations is not a technical problem, but orientational and relational in the sense of knowing “ways of going on” (see also Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009). They argue that in such cases it is a difficulty of the will, which they explain thus:

“A difficulty of the will (an orientational or relational difficulty) refers, then, to how we spontaneously respond to features in our surroundings by bringing specific expectations and anticipations to bear in determining how next to ‘go on’ with our activities within them. We experience such difficulties when faced with an indeterminate situation, in which we cannot at first make out what it is that is important to us.” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b: 382, italics in original)

According to Shotter and Tsoukas (2014b) there is a difference between using general concepts and categories to intellectually grasp a situation and to become oriented with it. They argue that “in becoming oriented, namely, when we take a practical attitude to the world, we seek to go out towards a concrete situation in all its richness and particularities” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b: 387, italics in original; see also Burke 1984; Nussbaum 2001). According to Shotter and Tsoukas (2014b), it may be difficult to teach such engaged judgement with traditional methods in a classroom, but accounts that show rich context, many perspectives, temporality and reflexivity preserve some of the complexity which is involved in situated practical wisdom.

In sum, the idea of phronesis seems pregnant and much needed within organization studies. It has since the upsurge of Aristotelian theorizing in organization studies (Tsoukas & Cummings 1997), attracted some attention but is still hatching in the womb or in her early infancy. However, there is a striking lack of empirical studies about phronesis and practical wisdom within organization studies. Given that there are many books and increasing amount of theoretical papers on the subject, one is inclined to draw the conclusion that phronesis may be
Part I: Introduction

The present work contributes to this stream of research in three ways: (1) by providing a path of inquiry that enables empirical research into practical moral judgement in organizations by integrating insights from neo-Aristotelianism (Annas 2008; 2011; Nussbaum 2001), case-based moral reasoning known as casuistry (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), and Goffman’s (1967; 1974; 1981) many insights into the study of everyday civil conduct; (2) by situating this tradition of research within the broad spectrum of wellbeing research through theoretical serviceability analysis; and (3) by suggesting an empirically grounded model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, which builds on practical moral reasoning within organizations.

3.6 Summary

To summarize, the subject matter of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings draws attention to a set of particular philosophical preferences and their accompanying linguistic forms (Burke 1945; Kuhn 1962/2012). Phenomena are understood as emerging in and through interactions and relations – their character is considered fundamentally relational (Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Seligman 2018). An influential interactional model is often used to reason about the interactional and relational process and how it gives rise to more enduring phenomena such as relationships, communication, and language (e.g. Gergen 2009; Watzlawick 1990).

Based on the reviewed literature, the philosophical preferences that concern the study of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings can be described as theorizing about wellbeing generative and degenerative acts, processes, and practices within local relational settings. These preferences direct attention to the constructive capability of acts in unsettling relational circumstances (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b), or conversely, to particularly conducive acts, processes, and practices that construct a wellbeing generative and relationally constituted scene (Kahn et al. 2013; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012). On an empirical level there is an increasing interest in practically wise and moral action (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a), and in the particular relational processes and practices that build or undermine benevolent and dynamic “holding environments” (Kahn 2001; 2019). The theoretical interests, I suggest, lie between the dynamic interplay of particular acts and the kinds of local scenes they create and are enacted within (“act-scene ratio”, Burke 1945). Within organization theory more broadly, this can be understood as part of the general interest in the clarity and explication of the microfoundations of larger collective and organization-level phenomena (Felin & Foss 2009; Felin et al. 2015).

The present work contributes to understanding wellbeing in organizational settings by explicating pertinent relational dynamics that are enacted especially within the act-scene ratio.

This way of theorizing, especially about wellbeing, may go against the grain of current common sense, as it does not load wellbeing onto the agent (one-person theories) or agent-scene interactions (one-and-a-half person theories) neither on a theoretical nor a metatheoretical level, as most of the established wellbeing literature would suggest (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Deci et al. 2017; Haybron 2008). Certainly the “agent” is involved in all cases (Burke 1945; see Goffman 1967), but in interactional and relational theorizing the employed
theoretical prototypes draw attention to especially the “act” and its local “scene” of action. My suggestion is that this literature can be perceived as contributing to an alternative paradigm of wellbeing scholarship, which I later on argue more extensively with the help of Burke’s (1945) dramatic pentad. It might be worth pointing out at this stage that the advocated linguistic form and its concomitant metatheoretical lens in this study, which focuses on especially the act-scene ratio, can be understood as contributing to the relatively recent upsurge in Aristotelian wellbeing scholarship (Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a).
4. Defining wellbeing and arguing for inclusion into wellbeing scholarship

“There is no ‘thinking outside the box’ without risking banishment from the box.” (Gergen 2009: 210)

In this chapter we go into conceptual matters regarding wellbeing by first discussing the definition of wellbeing and then by showing its relation to the topic of metatheories of wellbeing. In connection with the latter issue we will take a first introductory glance at Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad and to its use in connection with metatheories of wellbeing. Then we investigate different ways of arguing that a study contributes to wellbeing scholarship. It is in this connection that I introduce the method of theoretical serviceability analysis. This chapter thus illuminates how the dramatistic pentad and theoretical serviceability analysis are connected. My contention is, to refresh memory, that the dramatistic pentad in the form of theoretical serviceability analysis can be benevolently and beneficently utilized to discern different paradigms of wellbeing scholarship.

4.1 Defining wellbeing by drawing on a metatheory of wellbeing

Positive Psychology was founded on the observation that there is a paucity of research into wellbeing as a positively defined phenomenon (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000). It was argued that wellbeing cannot be defined merely as the absence of negative symptoms and pathology as suggested by the literature on psychiatry and psychotherapy (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Seligman 2002; Seligman 2011; see also Burns 2014). Before Positive Psychology, wellbeing had been defined positively by describing the behavior of individuals who were perceived as high in wellbeing (e.g. Maslow 1968//2011; 1971/1993) or as quality of life or life satisfaction (Dodge et al. 2012). Interestingly, quality of life and life satisfaction were also either defined descriptively of a person high in wellbeing or viewed as constructs rather than definitions (Dodge et al. 2012). Rogers (1951/2003; 1961/2004; 1980) was a forerunner to Humanistic and Positive Psychology and much of his conceptualizations and observations, like “the fully functioning person”, are infused into constructs or supporting metatheory within contemporary wellbeing scholarship (e.g. Deci & Ryan 2000; Keyes & Annas 2009; Ryff 1989).

Several scholars have recently noted that there is, however, a striking lack of discussion on the definition of wellbeing and on theory-based formulations of wellbeing (Dodge et al. 2012; Martela 2012; Ryff & Keyes 1995). There are vast amounts of various operational definitions and thus descriptions of wellbeing related constructs, but rare few studies that deal directly with the issue of defining wellbeing (e.g. Dodge et al. 2012; Seligman 2011). This has led to the widely accepted view that wellbeing is a multi-dimensional construct (Dodge et al. 2012; Seligman 2011). For example, Keyes has in a series of studies explored “flourishing in life” as a
construct combined by hedonic, eudaimonic, and social wellbeing measures (Keyes 2002; 2005; 2007). Dodge et al. (2012) however lament that Seligman (2011), for instance, has gone as far as to postulate that wellbeing is a measurable construct devoid of a definition. According to Seligman (2011), different measures and dimensions of wellbeing tap into something real and concrete, but an aggregate wellbeing does not actually exist. This does not satisfy Dodge et al. (2012), who pursue a simple, universal, measurable, and positive definition of wellbeing. After reviewing several definitions, Dodge et al. (2012) suggest wellbeing as “the balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges faced” (p. 230).

It is worth noting that if one does not define wellbeing as a construct (e.g. presence of positive emotions, life satisfaction, etc.), or describe it through a representative anecdote of a wellbeing blessed individual (e.g. Maslow 1971/1993; Rogers 1961/2004), then one seems to define wellbeing by describing its ‘behavior’ (e.g. Dodge et al. 2012). In this study I refer to these kinds of theories, which are widely accepted background theories that describe how wellbeing ‘behaves’, as metatheories of wellbeing.

According to Dodge et al. (2012: 226), one often referred to theory of wellbeing is “the dynamic equilibrium theory” or “set-point theory” (see also Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Diener et al. 2006; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005b; Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). The dynamic equilibrium theory states that positive and negative life events alter the level of wellbeing, but people before long return to a stable set point (Dodge et al. 2012). An alternative conceptualization of the theory is a “homeostasis” theory, in which fluctuations are described as challenges (Dodge et al. 2012) or as positive and negative life events (Diener et al. 2006).

Dodge et al. (2012) argue that the homeostasis theory features in Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975; 1990; 2003) flow theory, in which flow is conceptualized as the balance between skills and challenges. Dodge et al. furthermore argue that a more general conceptualization of the homeostasis model is a balance between resources and challenges (see also Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Sternberg 1998). Given the wide acceptance of this model, it has garnered some fine-tuning (Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009) and many scholars have theorized and studied how the set point could be enduringly elevated (Carver 1998; Diener et al. 2006). Especially the literature on posttraumatic growth has been keen on capturing this phenomenon of enduring personal growth (Joseph 2011; Seligman 2011; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004; see also Kahn et al. 2013).

The dynamic equilibrium and homeostatic metatheories are arguably founded on quantitative premises, i.e. the ‘behavior’ of wellbeing seems to model a thermometer rather than a person. Dodge et al. (2012), for example, model it as a balance point in a two-armed scale between resources and challenges. This prompts the question if there might be qualitative metatheories to wellbeing? This is a question of some import, because recently, there has been an increasing interest in understanding wellbeing through qualitative methods, exemplified by life stories (McAdams 2001), narrative growth (Bauer & McAdams 2010; McLean et al. 2007; Sonenshein et al. 2013), and narrative identity (Bauer et al. 2008; Dutton et al. 2010). To my knowledge no qualitative metatheories have been explicitly suggested, although such might be in the horizon.

Bauer and colleagues (2008), for instance, have suggested several patterns in narrative identity in association with a move to an enhanced state of wellbeing. These include an emphasis on personal growth, life altering transformations, and a “culturally-shaped script of redemption” (Bauer et al. 2008: 81). Similar results have been found in the study of posttraumatic growth (Janoff-Bulman 2004; Joseph 2011; Maitlis 2020). In addition, some seminal descriptive conceptualizations about wellbeing blessed individuals, e.g. Rogers and Maslow, may have
been elevated to the status of a metatheory. The “fully functioning person” (Rogers 1961/2004) and “self-actualization” (Maslow 1971/1993; 1987) are influential descriptions that help to answer the epistemological question: If you see wellbeing, how would you recognize it?

Bruner’s (2004) influential account of life narratives suggests that there might be a qualitative metatheory which does not stem from similar descriptions but from the use of language and “the organization of experience” (Goffman 1974). According to Bruner, who comes from a constructivist point of view, life-narratives are not only reflections of what has happened in one’s life, but constructions that follow patterns: “Narrative imitates life, life imitates narrative” (Bruner 2004: 692). In drawing forth these patterns, Bruner relies on Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad:

“There is widespread agreement that stories are about the vicissitudes of human intention and that, to paraphrase Kenneth Burke’s classic, The Grammar of Motives, story structure is composed minimally of the pentad of an Agent, an Action, a Goal, a Setting, an Instrument— and Trouble (Burke, 1945). Trouble is what drives the drama, and it is generated by a mismatch between two or more of the five constituents of Burke’s pentad” (Bruner 2004: 697, italics in original).

Bruner (2004) in other words argues that the five coordinates of the pentad and the “Trouble” between two or more coordinates can be found in any narrative account, including descriptions of past experiences, or reasons for why a person experiences his wellbeing as he does. Bruner (2004) notes that with time the linguistic forms of narratives have culturally changed to feature a more empowered and subjectively enriched agent (see also Baumeister 1987; Jaynes 1976/2000). According to Bruner (2004: 698), there is currently both a “landscape of action” and a “landscape of consciousness” in which the agent is submerged. Jaynes (1976/2000) has argued, based on detailed analysis of early cuneiform scripts, that the landscape of consciousness was pre-historically understood as a voice of God instead of an inner landscape, which arguably stems from Cartesian conceptualizations of mind. In investigating reasons for the decline of violence during the past centuries, Pinker (2011) has argued that the inner landscape was fueled by the rise in literacy, the printing press and the novel linguistic form that arose during Romanticism in the form of autobiographies. According to Pinker (2011), these fueled a “moral revolution”:

“The moral revolution was stimulated by first-person accounts of what it was like to be a slave. Some were autobiographies, like The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, the African, Written by Himself (1789) and Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845). Even more influential was a work of fiction, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly (1852). The novel depicted a wrenching episode in which mothers were separated from their children, and another in which the kindly Tom was beaten to death for refusing to flog other slaves. The book sold three hundred thousand copies and was a catalyst for the abolitionist movement. According to legend, when Abraham Lincoln met Stowe in 1862, he said, ‘So you’re the little woman who started this great war.’” (Pinker 2011: 155, italics in original)\footnote{Citations within this and similar quotes are omitted from the references of this study.}
According to Bruner (2004: 208), in life stories “the ways of telling and the ways of conceptualizing that go with them become so habitual that they finally become recipes for structuring experience itself, for laying down routes into memory, for not only guiding the life narrative up to the present but directing it into the future.” The implications of this is that the narrative ways of understanding oneself and one’s life not only structure recollection, but future actions. Bruner thus seems to mimic Burke’s (1954/1984) theorizing that a linguistic form provides “a schema of serviceability” and an “orientation” to the world. At any rate, Bruner (2004) argues that Burke’s dramatistic pentad is a valuable skeleton structure in understanding these narrative accounts.

An important precursor to a qualitative metatheory of wellbeing is arguably found in the Greek tragedies stemming from before Plato and Aristotle (Nussbaum 2001). According to Nussbaum (2001), in ancient Greece the tragedians alongside other dramatists, poets and historians were not seen as separate from scientists and philosophers when it came to prompt insights and study “eudaimonia.” Indeed, it was actually the tragic poets that were most often associated with insights about acting and living well (Nussbaum 2001). The contemporary occupational and categorical delineations came much after, where philosophers are often seen as more important than the poets, historians, and dramatists. Nussbaum (2001) argues that it would however be an incorrect depiction of what the Greeks came to, if one merely draws on the acknowledged philosophers thus omitting the other contributors, like historians and dramatists.

“To the Greeks, eudaimonia means something like ‘living a good life for a human being’ … Aristotle tells us that it is equivalent, in ordinary discourse, to ‘living well and doing well’” (Nussbaum 2001: 22).

Nussbaum (2001) argues that the Greek tragedies were a seminal part of the ancient discussions about the good life. The tragedians’ point of view posits, that human struggles, contradictions, and emotions like fear, pity and anxiety inform about the good life, and thus also about human wellbeing. The tragedies thus come to discuss eudaimonia from a qualitative and dramaturgical angle of how struggles emerge and how one handles struggles and contradictions in the midst of everyday life (for contemporary studies see Kahn 2019 and Maitlis 2020).

The Greek tragedies are often in the form of a dramatic sequence of events in which a “Trouble” (Bruner 2004) takes center stage. The difficulties and concomitant negative emotions tend to trigger instances of novel sensemaking (Maitlis et al. 2013). Typically, despite the best of intentions and efforts, and due to some unfortunate circumstances, the result is a struggle with a tragic end. The tragedies showcase, what could be called a “landscape of action” (Bruner 2004) along with a ‘landscape of moral reasoning’, and how these develop and fair in some particular set of circumstances. Some of the explored themes include incommensurability of goods and values, how caring and many cared-for attachments can lead to impossible choices between two or more goods one cares about, or how the contingencies in a situation can instigate a tragic course of events (Nussbaum 2001).

According to Nussbaum (2001), the tragedies highlight the “vulnerability” of eudaimonia as well as the role of luck and contingency in the good life. The stories and dramatic sequences of events in the tragic dramas show how wellbeing cannot be properly understood without understanding its fragilities in life. Indeed, in ancient Greece and especially in the Hellenic philosophies like Stoicism and Epicureanism, the vulnerability of eudaimonia was a persistent and
prominent backdrop for the philosophies that ensued (Hadot 2004; Nussbaum 2001). A similar vantage point and keen eye on the fragilities in life can be found also in other religions and worldviews like Buddhism and Christianity (Maitlis 2020; Wallace & Shapiro 2006). Philosophies in ancient Greek tradition can be rightfully seen as akin to psychotherapy as a discussion that aimed at the “cure of souls” instead of as, for instance, intellectual system building as philosophy is sometimes seen today (see Hadot 2004; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). In Buddhist traditions and practice, wellbeing has, for example, been approached through “the fundamental goal of reducing suffering” (Wallace & Shapiro 2006: 691; see also Brown et al. 2007), much akin to Stoicism and other Hellenistic philosophies.

According to Nussbaum (2001), against the background of the tragedies, Plato wanted to guard against the vulnerability of wellbeing and consequently argued for ascetic “rational self-sufficiency” as a way of life in order to become immune to the fragilities embedded in the circumstances of practical life. Aristotle however brought many of the insights and values from the tragic dramas back to the discussion about eudaimonia (Nussbaum 2001). Aristotle valued enduring goods like friendship, but also acknowledged the fragilities regarding, for example, a person’s health, wealth and safety. Aristotle, consequently – and similar to the tragedians – highlighted “phronesis” or practical wisdom as “the most important constituent of human good living” (Nussbaum 2001: 52). The tragedies could explore how differences in character, felt emotions, and reasoning could play out in a complicated situation, thus making these differences tangible and significant to the good life (Nussbaum 2001).

Nussbaum (2001: 45) argues that the Greek tragedies are indeed “hard cases”, and “if one allows oneself really to see and to experience them, [this experiencing] may bring progress that comes from an increase in self-knowledge and knowledge about the world.” According to Nussbaum, this type of knowledge is profoundly dissimilar from Platonic universal and intellectual knowledge (see also Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The tragedies “offer us an occasion for an activity of knowing that could not even in principle be had by the intellect alone” (Nussbaum 2001: 46). Nussbaum provides a lengthy and yet illuminating juxtaposition about the profound difference between the two types of knowledge, by comparing Platonic and Sophoclean approaches to the study of eudaimonia:

“The [Sophoclean type of tragedies] both show us and engender in us a process of reflection and (self)-discovery that works through a persistent attention to and a (re)-interpretation of concrete words, images, incidents. We reflect on an incident not by subsuming it under a general rule, not by assimilating its features to the terms of an elegant scientific procedure, but by burrowing down into the depths of the particular, finding images and connections that will permit us to see it more truly, describe it more richly; by combining this burrowing with a horizontal drawing of connections, so that every horizontal link contributes to the depth of our view of the particular, and every new depth creates new horizontal links. The Platonic soul will be directed, in its singleness and purity, to ethical objects that are single-natured and unmixed, themselves by themselves. The Sophoclean soul is more like Heraclitus’s image psuchē: a spider sitting in the middle of its web, able to feel and respond to any tug in any part of the complicated structure. It advances its understanding of life and of itself not by a Platonic movement from the particular to the universal, from the perceived world to a simpler, clearer world, but by hovering in thought and imagination around the enigmatic complexities of the seen

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22 Phronesis has many slightly different translations including “excellence in deliberation”, “prudence”, “practical wisdom”, and “practical rationality” (see Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nonaka et al. 2014; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b).
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In my mind, Nussbaum (2001) manages to give a well-articulated and penetrative description about the value of qualitative case studies that focus on people who in vexing circumstances try to do their best to “live well and do well.” Like in real life, despite best intentions the end-result can be less than ideal. This arguably prompts reflection and a process of self-discovery alongside insights about how one lives wisely in the capricious world we inhabit and amidst its many uncertainties and man-made complexities. Tragedies can be seen as in-depth qualitative case descriptions about the circumstances and thoughts and actions of human beings in times of relatable trouble. The tragic narratives and dramatic plays manage to bring forth complex man-made structures, contradictions and impossible choices between values, uncertainties, everyday choices and reasoning, and they can test the tenability of different rationalities in vexing situations and in familiar everyday circumstances (Nussbaum 2001; see also Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

The dramatistic pentad seems to have the necessary building blocks to capture these important qualitative facets inherent in tragic dramas. The dramatistic pentad, for example, manages to depict complex disharmonies between the coordinates of the pentad and can show the emergence and resolution of different types of troubles. It is therefore a good candidate for a qualitative metatheory of wellbeing. The Greek tragedies moreover suggest that the character of this type of qualitative metatheory is most likely intrigued by the dramatic “Trouble” (Bruner 2004) and “vulnerability” of wellbeing together with how some form of enacted practical wisdom enables a return to experienced harmony (Nussbaum 2001; see also Janoff-Bulman 2004; Maitlis et al. 2013). The backdrop of the complicated situation in which there are no straightforward appropriate courses of action manages to bring forth “excellence in deliberation” and other awe-inspiring performances (Nussbaum 2001). A qualitative metatheory of wellbeing will likely lead to the employment of evaluative concepts, like the good and the bad or blameworthy and praiseworthy in life (Nussbaum 2001), by which the ebbs and flows in context-specific harmony and disharmony is explored.

Burke (1945) used the concepts of agent, act, purpose, scene, and agency as the five coordinates in his dramatistic pentad, a convention I will follow in this study. Burke (1945) in his groundbreaking study on the Grammar of Motives, took issue with the scientific discourse that narrowed down human motives and conduct. According to Burke, this narrowing was being

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23 In contemporary wellbeing literature, the fragility of wellbeing has mostly been omitted as a source of valuable knowledge about wellbeing. Researchers have conversely focused on the positive aspects related to overcoming vulnerability, like “grit” (Duckworth et al. 2007) or “sisu” (Lahti 2019). In a recent article, Lahti (2019) is very insightful to accentuate the importance of vulnerability to understanding “embodied fortitude” or “sisu.” Other scholars have also focused on the positive characteristics that follow after episodes of vulnerability, like in posttraumatic growth (Joseph 2011; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004). It should be noted that similar to the Greek tragedies, even contemporary studies that have a relatively nuanced picture of human vulnerability have also found the issue of practical wisdom to be of import (e.g. Janoff-Bulman 1992; Joseph 2011).
accomplished by putting it in terms of mechanical behavior. With the help of the dramatistic pentad, Burke argues that motives, which he uses in the widest sense of the term equivalent to human action, can be described in a variety of ways. Burke argues that these ways stem from philosophical preferences that cannot be empirically substantiated, and mechanical behavior is just one of many possible alternative forms of description. According to Burke (1945: xv), “any complete statement about motives [i.e. human action in general] will offer some kind of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose).” It is worth pointing out, that in his analysis, Burke draws heavily on Aristotle’s work and follows a similar path of thought, arguing for the essentially non-reductionistic character of human action.

Burke (1945) relies on a low-key and commonsense understanding of the terms in the pentad instead of defining them separately from each other. This allows him to flexibly use these terms and his framework to elucidate alternative linguistic forms for describing human action, which is the main objective of his study. In one set of philosophical preferences the dramatistic coordinates can denote one thing, and they are not necessarily understood similarly in another constellation of the coordinates of the pentad. In the present work I will follow Burke’s lead and focus on using the terms in the pentad instead of giving intricate definitions about them (see Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009).

In the context of metatheories of wellbeing, Burke’s pentad is consequently a prime candidate for a metatheory of wellbeing. Life narratives and descriptions of significant events in life can be analyzed through the use of the pentad (Bruner 2004). There are other points of connection as well. There would seem to be a straightforward connection between the descriptions of a “challenge” (Dodge et al. 2012) and “Trouble” (Bruner 2004), and between a homeostasis theory and balance between coordinates of the pentad. For example, flow theory could be described as the balance between agency (skills) and the requirements of the act (challenge), job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Bakker et al. 2008) as the balance between acts (demands) and scene (resources) which affects the motivation and experienced strain of the agent. In this study, I am however proposing to take Bruner’s and Burke’s insights much further into the realm of wellbeing scholarship.

My suggestion is that Burke’s pentad is not confined to a qualitative metatheory of wellbeing, albeit acknowledging that the pentad can be used in this way would already open up new avenues for wellbeing research. In addition to using the pentad to understand interviewee accounts similar to Greek tragedies or contemporary life narratives, my suggestion is that its application can go beyond the quantitative and qualitative distinction. The pentad can be applied to wellbeing theory as a whole. I think there are five central reasons that support this theoretical position. I claim that a study falls within the framework of the pentad and can be analyzed accordingly, if:

1. It utilizes definitions of wellbeing that build on descriptions of individual behavior (e.g. Rogers 1961/2004)
2. It utilizes definitions of wellbeing that describe it in terms of the ‘behavior’ of a model (e.g. Dodge et al. 2012)
3. It utilizes definitions of wellbeing as a single or multi-dimensional construct (e.g. Seligman 2011), which are traceable to and describable in terms of behavioral correlates
4. It utilizes informant accounts that describe states and fluctuations in wellbeing (e.g. Bauer et al. 2008; Nussbaum 2001)
5. It utilizes a narrative structure to present the findings of the study (see Dyer & Wilkins 1991; Pentland 1999)

I cannot think of a single wellbeing study that would not fall under at least one of these characteristics. Thus, a case can be made for the use of the pentad as an encompassing framework for delineating different paradigms of wellbeing scholarship. If a study on wellbeing at any point boils down to described behavior, in the widest sense of the term, then it should be analyzable in terms of Burke’s pentad. The consequence of this is simple: wellbeing theory can be delineated according to what elements and relations of the pentad take center stage in different wellbeing theories and which are consequently left in supporting roles or altogether neglected. For example, an emphasis on positive emotions can be described as focusing on the agent (Diener 1984), the “holding environment” (Kahn 2001) on the scene, compassionate responding on acts (Kanov et al. 2004), and practical wisdom (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a) more elusively on the relations between several of the coordinates in the pentad. Part II of this study is dedicated to this topic where I elaborate further on the use of Burke’s dramatistic pentad and on theoretical serviceability analysis.

That a field of scholarship can be delineated according to a particular framework does not, of course, automatically mean that it would be beneficial to do so. To make this case we need to turn our gaze toward the issue of “serviceability” (Burke 1954/1984). To understand the potential of theoretical serviceability analysis it is illuminating to contrast it to established ways of arguing inclusion into wellbeing scholarship. This will ultimately lead to why I think there is a need for such a method as theoretical serviceability analysis, especially within wellbeing scholarship.

4.2 How to argue for inclusion into wellbeing scholarship

To my understanding there are at least three common strategies for theorizing that a phenomenon is related to wellbeing:

1. The phenomenon is theoretically argued to be grounded in human nature
2. The connection to wellbeing is constructed by referring to prior wellbeing research
3. The empirical material warrants the assertion that the phenomenon concerns wellbeing

The rhetorical strategy of grounding the phenomenon in human nature is used in much of wellbeing theorizing. Perhaps best-known examples stem from Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) general description of the psyche, Maslow’s (1943; 1987) hierarchy of needs and drive towards self-realization, self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 2000; Martela & Ryan 2016; Ryan & Deci 2000), Rogers’s (1951/2003; 1961/2004) organismic valuing theory, and resource-based theories that focus on the interaction between human nature and the environment (e.g. Fredrickson 2009; Hobfoll 1989; 2002) or mental states generic to human nature (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Haybron 2008). It is a common psychological discourse that adheres to basic tenets of scientific materialism (Burke 1945).

Berne (1964/2010), for example, postulated “stimulus-hunger”, “recognition-hunger” and “structure-hunger” to describe why persons engage in the kinds of plays which give rise to relational pathologies in the form of games. According to Berne (1964/2010: 13), “stimulus-hunger has the same relationship to survival of the human organism as food-hunger. Indeed, not
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only biologically but also psychologically and socially, stimulus-hunger in many ways parallels the hunger for food.” Subsequently these theoretical constructs take a backseat in Berne’s (1964/2010) theory and the focus on games takes over. It is worth noting that a psychobiological grounding is nonetheless put in place at the outset, through an analogy to physical needs. Other well-known theories of wellbeing follow a similar course of argument (e.g. Ryan & Deci 2000). Alternative strategies and yet proximal strategies are to argue for the evolutionary benefits of the phenomenon in question (e.g. Fredrickson 1998) or to show linkages between a human being’s biological or genetic makeup and the phenomenon (e.g. Fredrickson 2013).

Many studies use the second strategy of situating themselves within the wellbeing literature by grounding the study in the language game of previous literature on wellbeing. They in essence bypass the conceptual argument about what is wellbeing, by connecting their study to many concepts and phenomena historically and thus perhaps intuitively associated with how wellbeing is understood today. The utilized vocabulary thus becomes part of the cloud of concepts, that within the cloud link to one another. For example, Edwards (1992) connects his cybernetic theory of organizational stress to individual stress, coping, motivation, absenteeism, positive and negative affect, job satisfaction, depression, and anxiety. Edwards (1992: 252) defines wellbeing through the concepts of psychological and physical health and as ranges of phenomena instead of strict definitions: “Well-being refers to the psychological and physical health of the employee. Psychological well-being may range from subtle variations in mood and affect to substantial changes in mental health, such as chronic anxiety and clinical depression. Similarly, physical well-being may range from minor variations in arousal, such as blood pressure and heart rate, to the development of coronary heart disease (CHD), cancer, and so on.”

One could in other words say that Edwards’s (1992) study is about wellbeing because it utilizes and touches upon a variety of the concepts and empirical phenomena that are often associated with wellbeing. It plays within a familiar language game. To define wellbeing as psychological and physical health without defining these concepts may however end up as a circular or empty definition. And to pinpoint psychological and physical health as a range of phenomena, that is not to pinpoint it at all, may also be a way to not define wellbeing.

As another and yet somewhat similar example, Wright and Cropanzano (2000) in their study on the happy-productive worker hypothesis refer to other studies for their definitions. By referring to past studies they argue that happiness has often been operationalized as self-reported job satisfaction and productivity as the performance rated by one’s immediate supervisor. Wright and Cropanzano expand the concept of happiness in the happy-productive worker hypothesis with the help of psychological wellbeing (Diener 1984; Diener et al. 1999), which includes a broader emphasis on positive and negative affect in addition to a global cognitive evaluation of one’s satisfaction with life. According to their study psychological wellbeing is a better predictor of job performance than the narrower concept of job satisfaction and its typical scales. Moreover, Wright and Cropanzano (2000: 86) argue for the pragmatic understanding of wellbeing by referring to past studies on particular relations and outcomes:

“Like their clinical psychology and public health counterparts, organizational theorists have also long recognized the extensive costs, in both human and financial terms, attributable to employee dysfunctional psychological well-being (George, 1992; Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell, 1997). For instance, depression, loss of self-esteem, hypertension, alcoholism, and drug consumption have all been shown to be related to work-related dysfunctional psychological well-being (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). Because these variables have, in turn, been related
to declines in work outcomes (Quick et al., 1997), it is possible that psychological well-being and employee performance are related (Wright, Bonett, & Sweeney, 1993)."

Ryff (1989) provides a third and yet still similar way of using prior research to validate the construct for wellbeing. According to Ryff (1989: 1070) the operationalizations of subjective and psychological wellbeing have neglected aspects of “positive psychological functioning.” Ryff (1989) argues that the prior conceptualizations of psychological wellbeing as the ratio between positive and negative affect and an assessment of life satisfaction is too narrow and thus does not capture the fundamental features of psychological wellbeing. Interestingly, the omissions are claimed without actually defining wellbeing or psychological wellbeing in general. Ryff’s study was based on a literature review including classics the likes of Maslow, Rogers, Jahoda, Jung, and Erikson and thereby developmental and lifespan theories as well positive theories of mental health. Based on her review Ryff (1989) summarized and operationalized six dimensions of psychological wellbeing: self-acceptance, positive relations to others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Further substantiated by empirical analysis, Ryff (1989) argues that her construct taps into psychological wellbeing more broadly than previous measures.

These three examples show slight variations in how the argument for wellbeing is made based on prior research. One can build a web of connections to a set of familiar concepts and phenomena often associated with wellbeing (Edwards 1992), one can broaden an acknowledged operationalization based on adjacent and available constructs (Wright & Cropanzano 2000) or one can build new constructs based on a literature review of classic and authoritative texts that explore the boundaries of a concept (Ryff 1989). What all these have in common is that they tap into a pre-existing language domain which is accepted as within albeit perhaps at the outskirts of wellbeing theory. Dodge et al. (2012) astutely remark that contributions of this type have added to a messy discussion on the dimensions of wellbeing, but not really to understanding its definition.

The third proposed rhetorical strategy is to rise the empirical material to the level of “warrant-establishing” arguments (Toulmin 1958/2003). For example, if interviewees say that their answers are related to their wellbeing then one might accept that as cash value. Or the descriptions, cases and quotes might allow a rich understanding of the phenomenon, which through associations, common sense, intuition and further theoretical development would allow the reader to come to the conclusion that the researcher is at least not wrong in postulating the phenomenon to be relevant for wellbeing. Perhaps the best-known wellbeing theory that has arisen this way is flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990; 2002; 2003). Flow theory arose originally from the study of optimal experience. It was a phenomenal description of the mental state in which the study subjects experienced complete immersion into their activity, lost their sense of time, experienced a sense of control, concentration focused at the present moment and a loss of self (Csikszentmihalyi 1975). Subsequent theoretical developments built the theory around a holistic information-processing perspective on human nature (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). The connection between wellbeing theory and the phenomenon of optimal experience was however explicitly asserted much after the first seminal study into the phenomenon (Csikszentmihalyi 2002; 2003).

I think there is a strategy missing from this set, which would not argue for inclusion on the basis of similarity of philosophical preferences (strategy 1), or similarity of linguistic form (strategy 2), but complementarity of linguistic form. The acknowledged and continuing separation between positive and humanistic psychology in my mind is apt evidence of the
inexistence of a complementary strategy (Waterman 2013). From the point of view of the dram-
atistic pentad, the first two of the above-mentioned strategies may be unnecessarily and un-
foundedly narrow. The warrant based on “human nature” (Haybron 2008; Waterman 2013) 
arguably focuses the theory on the psychobiological makeup of the individual “agent” (Burke 
1945). Haybron (2008: 19), for example, argues that “inquiry into human nature primarily 
means inquiry into human flourishing or well-being.” The common theoretical prototypes 
about human nature suggest that it is not a fluke that Haybron (2008) subsequently focuses 
on defending an “emotional state” theory of happiness as a foundation for happiness and well-
being (we will return to this in Part II).

The second strategy stays within the boundaries of acknowledged wellbeing theories and thus 
also their preferred conceptualizations, which again focus mostly on the agent. For example, 
in *The Oxford Handbook of Organizational Well-Being* the editors argue that the handbook 
“focuses on organizational well-being, in the widest sense” (Cartwright & Cooper 2009: 2). 
However, even a cursory review shows that it focuses on the individual (agent) and on how the 
work environment (i.e. scene) affects wellbeing. By looking at the agent-scene interaction, 
“well-being is determined by a range of social, psychological, and biological factors and is con-
ceptualized as a resource that allows people to lead individually, socially, and economically 
productive lives” (Cartwright & Cooper 2009: 1). As suggested in the section on group wellbe-
ing, this is a common linguistic form for the study of wellbeing in organizations. Later we will 
show that this sort of conceptual strategy and its theoretical prototype of universalizing every-
thing into resources is a powerful metaphor, but which also includes equally powerful deficits.

Pinker (2002; 2011) is perhaps the most vocal advocate of the study of a “fixed” human nature 
and argues that it comes forth in interactions with the environment. Thus the theoretical pro-
totype that hones in on the agent-scene interactions is actually still within the scope of the 
philosophical preferences of strategy 1. The third strategy of warrant-establishing arguments 
is an inclusive strategy. However, remembering that common conceptualizations guide obser-
vations (e.g. Fleck 1979; Toulmin 1990), there might be a powerful inclination to look at similar 
sort of empirical phenomena on the basis of strategies 1 and 2 (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009). 
This would again, in all likelihood, draw attention mainly to the agent or agent-scene interac-
tions. Thus all three strategies would seem to lead to common already established views about 
wellbeing in organizational settings. My argument is that currently wellbeing is not perceived 
widely enough, even by those who have explicitly attempted to do so (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 

Organization studies have been an inclusive enterprise, which can be argued to be thriving 
on complementarity (e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). My suggestion is 
that wellbeing scholarship would benefit by taking a page out of organization scholarship’s 
playbook. In practical terms, my suggestion is that the previously reviewed organizational lit-
erature including compassion and caregiving can be perceived as wellbeing scholarship (e.g. 
Dutton et al. 2014; Kahn 1993). Such studies however have another linguistic form, one that 
does not focus upon the agent. As suggested earlier, the interest of this stream of scholarship 
can be described as focusing on the relations between especially “act” and “scene” (Burke 
1945).

Gathering all relevant wellbeing scholarship under the same inclusive umbrella is of signifi-
cance, because of their heterogenous and complementary “serviceability” (Burke 1954/1984). 
Burke (1954/1984) has suggested that there is an intimate connection between language use 
and the “orientation” it provides (for similar views see Shotter 2010; Spinosa et al. 1997;
Part I: Introduction

Wittgenstein 1953/2009). The utilized grammar provides service, or has certain serviceability, within the orientation, also referred to by some as a “form of life” (Wittgenstein 1953/2009). The utilized language itself reflects what is important, what is an intelligent question, what does not need to be explicated, what can be hinted, what is superfluous, what is effective language use, and so forth (Burke 1954/1984). Based on the sought-after purposes and interests of a linguistic community, the language will be developed and thus gain serviceability in the direction of those interests (Burke 1984; see also Kuhn 1962/2012).

The idea of serviceability, I submit, suggests a reason for the emergence and proliferation of different “thought collectives” (Fleck 1979) and “communities of practice” (Wenger 1998) and why travelling between thought collectives can be enlightening regarding the systematic blind spots in one’s habitually employed linguistic form (Morgan 1980; Spinosa et al. 1997). One form of language cannot be objectively and thus from a divine perspective said to be better than another, but they can be said, at the very least, to have different focuses for their serviceability (see Waterman 2013 for a similar argument). Observe that I am not talking about the difference between for example English and Spanish, but of the difference between the language of, say, a nuclear engineer and a financial analyst both of whom speak English or similarly, of the difference between Positive and Humanistic psychology (Linley et al. 2006; Resnick et al. 2001).

I am in other words suggesting that in the context of wellbeing research, the linguistic form that focuses on the “agent” has certain serviceability (e.g. Fredrickson 2001; 2009; 2013), the linguistic form that focuses on the “agent-scene ratio” (Burke 1945) has another and complementary focus of serviceability (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009), and the literature that focuses on the “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945) has yet again a complementary focus and serviceability in comparison to the other two linguistic forms (e.g. Kahn 1993; Kahn et al. 2013). Each of these linguistic forms are in their own way better equipped than the others, which comes to the fore when the purpose of its use is in concordance with the serviceability the linguistic form provides. For example, to answer the question of, say, ‘What kinds of work organizations do people thrive in?’ an agent-scene linguistic form will probably prove to be most useful (e.g. Spreitzer et al. 2005). If the question is then followed by another question, for example, ‘How do we build such a work organization?’, then the idea of serviceability suggests that an elaborate and fitting answer to the question is probably of an act-scene character (e.g. Kahn et al. 2013). What kinds of research questions are posed certainly direct the serviceability of a linguistic form (see Waterman 2013), and those questions are intimately connected to philosophical preferences regarding behavior (Burke 1945).

I do not see any a priori reason to limit the forms of serviceability wellbeing scholarship should be able to provide, and thus do not see a reason why wellbeing scholarship should be limited to the linguistic forms that privilege the agent or agent-scene interactions. My suggestion is, then, that the notion of serviceability could be used as a criterion for inclusion of complementary linguistic forms into wellbeing scholarship. Furthermore, that alternative linguistic forms can be mapped with the help of Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad. I call the utilization of serviceability and the dramatistic pentad in unison as theoretical serviceability analysis.

Adding novel linguistic forms into wellbeing scholarship would serve the purpose of explicitly recognizing that wellbeing theory is not only about the agent or agent-scene interactions but about indiscriminately changing people’s lives for the better in a variety of ways. This includes adding and providing serviceability in directions that go beyond the agent, to include
investigations of the other elements of the pentad, i.e. purpose, act, agency, and scene as well as of their ratios. As far as I can see, such recognition does not exist at the moment. A lack of cross-fertilization between different wellbeing disciplines (e.g. Linley et al. 2006), and a lack of exploratory research into complementary linguistic forms within wellbeing scholarship testify as much (see e.g. Cameron & Spreitzer 2011; Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Linley et al. 2010).

Perhaps the present work can serve as an example of the practical relevance for theorizing about wellbeing. The third strategy of showing and arguing one’s case based on the empirical material is a strategy which the empirical parts of this study in part rely on. As I see it, all qualitative empirical studies must rely in part on this strategy. The main problem with this strategy alone is that although the empirical material might warrant the argument that it is wellbeing related, if the language that is used to analyze the material is mostly unfamiliar to many wellbeing scholars by stemming from, for instance, microsociology (Goffman 1974), cybernetics (Bateson 1972), and relational systems theory (Kahn et al. 2013), one might feel uneasy about any claims to wellbeing and how the empirics fit with extant wellbeing theory. This is one possible context in which a fourth complementary strategy and how the notion of paradigms within wellbeing scholarship could be used in a conducive manner. This argument is continued in Part II of this study.
5. A short synopsis of this study

“A philosophy of life can be only a moral philosophy.” (Bakhtin 1993: 56)

Part II of this study answers the second research question pertaining to the use of unconventional linguistic forms when conducting wellbeing scholarship. We more specifically discuss the key ingredients of the metatheoretical method of theoretical serviceability analysis and deepen our understanding of Burke’s dramatistic pentad. Part II comprises of discussions about how language is employed as a tool in connection with involvements and within a world of experience, how linguistic forms tend to behave from a dramatistic point of view, how a linguistic form can incorporate a range of particular and fairly typical conceptual tendencies, how linguistic forms are most likely equipped with different forms of serviceability, and how paradigmatic linguistic forms can be thought of assemblies of concordant proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes. With these understandings at hand we aim to become better aware of the conceptual characteristics, expectations, and tendencies of wellbeing theories on the level of linguistic forms, all of which allow the second research question to be answered to a reasonable extent.

In Part III we continue to answer the first research question, now by focusing on the empirical character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, which is supplemented and finalized in Part V of this study. In Part III we thus take a first glance at empirical method, the empirical context for this study and the empirical material. A main theoretical prototype of Parent, Adult and Child interactions (Berne 1961/2016; 1964/2010) is employed to analyze the empirical material, which is additionally expanded with Goffman’s (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981) well developed vocabulary on interactions. The co-constituted interaction setups become the focus of the analysis, as well has how the joint enactment of the interaction setup gives rise to relational coordination that is wellbeing generative.

It is argued that the main theoretical prototype manages to capture the bulk of wellbeing relevant events in interviewee accounts. When expanded with notions from Goffman and guided by the empirical material, a novel perspective on wellbeing in organizations begins to emerge. However, the analysis also shows that the main theoretical prototype is not in itself sufficient to answer detailed questions about why certain events are wellbeing generative whilst almost similar events can be degenerative. I argue that this is due to lack of contextual sensitivity in the vocabulary itself. Therefore the main theoretical prototype and its grammar is extended to a network of prototypes and proto-ideas in Part IV to be able to discern intimate connections between acts and their respective scenes, which requires a narrower “circumference” that the generic acts and the universal and paradoxically empty environment common in materialist and naturalistic language use (Burke 1945).

In Part IV, we answer the third and finalize our answer to the fourth research question, which concern helpful theoretical prototypes and proto-ideas for this study and the metatheoretical
inclinations of interactional and relational research. The theoretical exploration delves into elaborating and extending our “grammar” (Burke 1945) of interactional wellbeing in organization settings. In the first chapter of Part IV, “Towards the study of history-making”, the scene of the pre-established environment is philosophically substituted for the man-made scene of history. With the help of the notion of history-making, the scene of history is imbued with man-made life instead of being taken as a settled environment. The linguistic form and concomitant tenets of history-making is chosen because it allows for both particularity (e.g. non-universal environment) and a sufficiently general understanding of the phenomenon (a novel grammar with new selections and reductions). This move also transforms key concepts in our general vocabulary, for example, human beings into conscious moral agents.

In the second chapter of Part IV, “A grammar of management”, the coordinates of the dramatistic pentad are connected to the “act.” The discussion shows how, for example, “purpose” and “agency” can be embedded in the “act” and “scene” coordinates as well as how the act and scene are inextricably intertwined in an interactional perspective. This discussion – with the help of notions like performance, speech act, deontic powers, intentionality and relational knots – brings the whole of Burke’s dramatistic pentad into life in the context of management and organizing, which is a key backdrop for our analysis in Part V of this study. Moreover, in this chapter a threefold structure of relationality is presented, the significance of which is elaborated to its full scope in the last Part VI of this study.

In the final conceptual chapter on “Understanding interactional wellbeing”, the relation between act and especially purpose is elaborated. The chapter begins by resisting a common reduction of the agent, agency and act into substantive emotions within the agent (e.g. appetites, tendencies or needs). Emotions are then situated within interactions. They become communication and different kinds of elements in communication between interactants. It is argued that the interactional context is primary to emotions, in accordance with one key tenet of relational research (Seligman 2018). Following this path of thought, other conceptual reductions are then resisted with the help of neo-Aristotelian theorizing about eudaimonia (e.g. Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The big Aristotelian conceptual move is to place wellbeing within the act in an uncontrollable scene instead of pinpointing it within the scene, agent, agency or purpose; where all of the coordinates are nonetheless involved in the act (Burke 1945). This is the phronetic move, instead of the epistemic (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

In Aristotelian virtue ethics wellbeing concerns the achievement of “Edenic harmony” (Burke 1945) between agent, act and scene. The strive for harmony is facilitated by personal mastery and practical wisdom i.e. molding of agency, act, scene, agent and purpose to fit and harmonize the “big three” (Burke 1945) of agent, act and scene. These discussions pave the way to the conclusion that interactional wellbeing is an actively co-created balance in the agent-act-scene triad, where agency and purpose are also embedded. In this study balance between the coordinates in the dramatistic pentad and the kind of “Edenic harmony” it entails is conceptualized as relational balance in organizational settings. This answers our fourth research question.

In Part V and the second encounter with the empirical material, an answer to the first and primary research question concerning the character of interactional wellbeing is finalized. The notion of relational frame is introduced to weave together the insights from prior Parts, especially to blend the empirical results from Part III and the theoretical discussion in Part IV. A model of interactional wellbeing is presented, which builds on a framework of practical moral reasoning (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The prior metatheoretical discussions, the presented model on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, five relational frames and the
empirical cases they stand on, adequately portray the character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. This study ends with Part VI, where I discuss the contributions of this study.
Part I: Introduction
“[O]ur thinking in the West is still infected with Cartesian ideas as to what proper, competent, professional forms of thought should be like. There is thus a major defect in how we conduct and report the nature of all our inquiries in our social and human sciences, not just in psychotherapy research — for our concern as rational professionals always to start our thinking, and to conduct our talking, in terms of generalities rather than in relation to particularities.” (John Shotter 2015: 365, italics in original)

“[R]evolutionary achievements in the arts, in the sciences, and in moral and political thought typically occur when somebody realizes that two or more vocabularies are interfering with each other, and proceeds to invent a new vocabulary to replace both.” (Richard Rorty 1989: 12)

**Foreword**

Part II of this study concerns the metatheoretical level of linguistic forms. Here we primarily finalize our answer on the second research question: **On what basis can one argue that a theory is a wellbeing theory even if it utilizes an unconventional linguistic form?** This question and its answer can be perceived as furthering the “linguistic turn” in organization studies by examining language use as a purpose-oriented tool instead of means to produce and analyze texts (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000). Here we answer the second research question by developing the tool of theoretical serviceability analysis all the while exemplifying its use in connection with wellbeing research.

Several claims emerge out of answering the second research question. My main claims about wellbeing research here in Part II are, first of all, that currently within wellbeing research agent-centric and agent-environment linguistic forms are privileged above others. They are the current stronghold of wellbeing scholarship. Secondly, both privileged and largely overlooked linguistic forms, and therefore alternative paradigms of wellbeing scholarship, can be
discerned and fruitfully analyzed with the help of theoretical serviceability analysis; more specifically, with the help of Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad. From a conceptual point of view paradigms and their linguistic forms are inseparable (Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012). Delineations between paradigms thus emphasize conceptual character above other possible criteria (Kuhn 1962/2012; cf. Seligman & Csíkszentmihalyi 2000). There are other important claims about the conceptual character of wellbeing theories that are, for the sake of clarity, better left to be explicated later in the summary of Part II.

To come to these claims about wellbeing research certain steppingstones about theoretical serviceability analysis need to be put in place. It is suggested that Burke’s (1945; 1954/1984) dramatistic pentad and his analysis of linguistic forms has been left undertheorized in organization and management theory. Moreover, Burke’s notion of “serviceability” is instrumental to understanding the benefits of different linguistic forms (see also Rorty 1989). Put differently, paradigms and their infused linguistic forms are suggested to provide complementary theoretical “serviceability” (Burke 1954/1984).24 This statement essentially offers an answer to why many linguistic forms are needed in an inclusive and thorough theoretical enterprise, such as wellbeing scholarship. Because linguistic forms differ in their conceptual selections, reductions, and mergers they are varyingly equipped to handle and satisfy different theoretical and practical questions and pursuits (Burke 1945). Our analysis suggests that serviceability is most likely maximized when the purposive selections of experience implicated by the linguistic form hit key characteristics of the investigated phenomenon; when the linguistic form illuminatingly, economically and precisely hits its target (see Burke 1984; Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008; Kuhn 1962/2012).

I come to these claims by utilizing theoretical serviceability analysis, which consists of three intertwined ideas: (1) that language use is purposive (Burke 1984; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1958/2003; Wittgenstein 1953), (2) purposive use of language gives rise to alternative linguistic forms with different areas of serviceability (Burke 1984; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Wittgenstein 1953), (3) and that philosophical preferences with their concomitant linguistic forms can be broken down to, and are therefore describable in terms of, employed proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes (see Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012).

As one can most likely notice, these three notions are interrelated. The purposive use of language means that particular theoretical discourses are developed in a direction of interest.25 Directionality of language use suggests linguistic focus and the tendency to develop the language toward particular areas and expectations regarding “serviceability” (Burke 1954/1984). This in turn also leaves unavoidable and often implicitly accepted omissions and shortcuts in the employed linguistic form (Bateson & Bateson 1987; Burke 1945). Directionality is therefore perhaps best understood as the philosophical preferences that particular studies further through systematic linguistic “selections”, “reductions” and “mergers” (Burke 1945). The variety of particular foci of interest and consequent reductions perhaps inevitably engender multiple linguistic forms. The existence of multiple linguistic forms in turn enables their comparative analysis (Burke 1945; Rorty 1989). The third key notion is that these selections,

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24 It is good to take note of the circularity between linguistic form and serviceability. As Kuhn states in connection with the term paradigm and how it reciprocally defines a research community and the community the paradigm: “Not all circularities are vicious” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 175).

25 In this study we treat this direction of interest as synonymous with a “world of experience” (Oakeshott 1933/2015; see also Kuhn 1962/2012) which the linguistic form carves out and within which it provides an “orientation” with some serviceability (Burke 1954/1984).
reductions and mergers can be analyzed in terms of employed proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes (Burke 1945; Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012). As a reminder, theoretical prototypes are herein conceived as clusters of proto-ideas, which can be said to direct how to conceptually treat the phenomenon under investigation.

To be explicit about the origin of the three key ideas underlying theoretical serviceability analysis: It is my suggestion that Burke’s (1954/1984) notion of “serviceability” can be united with his analysis of different linguistic forms (Burke 1945) to form the foundation for theoretical serviceability analysis. Burke had developed the two ideas in two separate studies. In the Grammar of Motives (Burke 1945), Burke analyzed different linguistic forms in a variety of philosophical discourses whereas in Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose (Burke 1954/1984), Burke took a more practical and everyday approach to what different forms of language afford and how they provide alternative “orientations” and concomitantly alternative worlds of experience. The latter study implies that the two ideas can be united in harmony, even though Burke does not explicitly discuss the connection between the two works. To put it concisely, in The Grammar of Motives Burke (1945) treats purpose as a part of language whereas in Permanence and Change he treats language in the service of purposive action. My claim is that the two points of views are complementary and compatible.26

In addition, it is my suggestion that the kinds of typical conceptual pathways Burke (1945) outlines in connection with alternative linguistic forms can be more precisely discerned with the help of Fleck’s (1979) notion of “proto-idea.” That proto-ideas or theoretical simples tend to cluster into larger constellations of particular theoretical prototypes, has by far and large been explored by a number of authors who have immersed themselves in the conceptual development of science and the philosophy of science (Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin 1990; 2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1962/1982; 1965/1977). The clustering of simple ideas parallels the production of novel interpretive frameworks (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) and how complex metaphors can be formed out of primary and atomic metaphoric structures (Cornelissen and Kafouros 2008). The present work and its account on theoretical prototypes differs from similar accounts (e.g. Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008; Oswick et al. 2011), by accentuating and investigating the reasons for conceptual path dependency and thus how the conceptual lineage of a phenomenon can direct subsequent theorizing (e.g. Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012). The history of science teaches us that certain conceptualizations can be sticky and consequently arduous to transform toward novel directions (see e.g. Toulmin 1990; 2003). Therefore, theoretical serviceability analysis is particularly interested in why and how proto-ideas tend to be employed in similar ways and with time tend to cluster into commonly utilized theoretical prototypes.

Part II of this study proceeds in the following manner. We begin by outlining the first key tenet of theoretical serviceability analysis, that language is used purposively. This perspective builds on the position that language is always used by persons within a world of experience, instead of just occurring in some general abstract space outside of lived life (Oakeshott 1933/2015; Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009). Language is in other words used by “goal-directed consciousness” (von Glasersfeld 1984) within an inhabited world (Heidegger 1962/2008). Within a world of experience language is used to further or enable different kinds of purposive

26 To my understanding it is due to the Cartesian heritage that we often assume that thought must proceed action, and analogously language precedes action (see Oakeshott 1991b for a lengthy discussion). In my mind, Burke perceives the relationship between language and action much more intertwined, where action can proceed language and vice versa (cf. Giddens 1984). In the two works Burke (1945; 1984) treats language from both points of view.
involvements implicit to that world of experience (Rorty 1989). According to this view language is a designed and modifiable tool that is often understandable only in its physical surroundings and action-oriented context of usage (Burke 1984; Heidegger 1962/2008; Searle 1995; 2009). Then Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad is presented as an instrumental tool for sketching out different linguistic forms, which can consequently also be used to draw forth different paradigms of wellbeing research. Several notable characteristics of linguistic forms are disclosed. It is for example argued that there is a principle of internal consistency between the elements of the pentad, which makes a linguistic form tightly coupled and why one linguistic transformation can lead to subsequent and perhaps inadvertent linguistic transformations. It is also argued that the choice of linguistic form regarding human conduct relies on an act of faith that the chosen linguistic form and its scenic circumference includes the relevant details of the phenomenon (e.g. Rorty 1989).

In the next chapter we delve into the philosophical preferences of materialism and naturalism and their accompanying conceptual tendencies as well as how those tendencies can be found within well-known wellbeing theories. It is argued that the explanatory power of a theory is increased when the key concepts of a theory can play the parts of agency and purpose. The discussion also shows how the explanatory vocabulary can be made more economic through conceptual circularity between the elements of the pentad. Both tendencies are reductionistic and thus at home in a materialist and naturalist form of thought. Then it is argued that such a vocabulary can provide one sort of serviceability, but there can be complementary linguistic forms as well. In this connection we explore the deflective characteristic of linguistic forms; why they tend to withstand change and why a shift from one schema of serviceability to another can be difficult, and not a matter of merely relinquishing past philosophical assumptions.

In the final chapter it is argued that a paradigm constituted by a linguistic form can be broken down into more specific theoretical prototypes and proto-ideas. In this analysis we draw on Kuhn (1962/2012), Fleck (1979), Burke (1945) and also more contemporary work on metaphors (e.g. Cornelissen 2004; 2005). This discussion adds analytical precision to the analysis of linguistic forms and paves the way for Part III, where we begin to formulate a main theoretical prototype or rudimentary model for interactional wellbeing, before a first encounter with the empirical material.
6. Language as a tool within a world of experience

“Philosophy really is ‘purely descriptive.’” (Wittgenstein 1953/2009: 107, italics in original)

“To have a science ‘of’ phenomena means to grasp its objects in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 59, italics in original)

To talk about language with the help of language is like asking a painter to paint what is art. Any such painting, or analogously description of language use, is most likely bound to be limited and despite best attempts merely one depiction amongst many. General accounts perhaps even lure onlookers into a critical stance merely aimed at spotting possible mistakes between the explicated view on language and the implicit that flows from its use. It therefore is not all too surprising that those who have talked about language in general in a fruitful manner have used metaphors, analogies and “indirect communication” to show the workings of language instead of formally describing it (Janik & Toulmin 1996, see also Heidegger 2011; Wittgenstein 1953). One can consider such accounts as cautious. Instead of trying to capture the entirety of language in general, it may be prudent to think that all accounts are at best disclosures of different facets about language. In what follows I try to pay heed to this legacy, in discussing the purposive use of language.

In the following I foremost make use of Burke’s (1945; 1984), Heidegger’s (1962/2008), Oakeshott’s (1933/2015) and Wittgenstein’s (1953/2009; 2009) views on language use albeit I owe and am informed of supplementary accounts as well (Berlin 1996; 2013a; Bateson 1972; 1979; Rorty 1989; Ryle 1949/2000; Searle 1995; 2009; Shotter 1993; 2015; 2016; Spinosa et al. 1997; Toulmin 1958/2003; 1990; Wilk 2010a). To me it is remarkable how similar accounts Burke, Heidegger, and Oakeshott have given despite their dissimilarities in vocabulary, and how much for example Heidegger’s and Wittgenstein’s views have in common. These connections are however not the focus of this study, but theoretical serviceability analysis and its first facet of purposive use of language. I have little to add to what others have already said about the purposive use of language. Here I merely try to integrate some thoughts into a concise depiction of what has been revealed about language use in the past century. These remarks are of course prioritized and ordered in accordance to what I deem to be pertinent to this account.

In the last century there has been a couple of seminal revelations about language. One was the separation of language from being a scenic and logically ordered means of description or a medium to being an instrument of action (e.g. Burke 1945; Janik & Toulmin 1996; Rorty 1989), something to be used; something one can do things with (Berlin 2013a). The revelation can be understood as language suddenly becoming viewed as “a mode of action” (Burke 1945). It can
therefore be analyzed in terms of its usage in the form of for instance “speech acts” (Searle 1995; 2009) or “self-expression” (Berlin 2013a) instead of presuming language to merely serve the purpose of being a “mirror of nature” (Rorty 1979/2009).

That language can be perceived as a mode of action has brought into sight two particular facets about understanding meaning and communication: the significance of the situation (scene), and the purpose of the action. It might already be general knowledge that the meaning of a sentence may not be intelligible without understanding the situation or context of its usage (Burke 1984; Searle 1995; Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009). This led to one of many revelations, that language is radically underdetermined (Searle 1995; 2009). According to Burke (1945), the “scene” is constitutive for human conduct. In Burke’s (1945) terms, the “act” can only be properly understood within a “scene”, or vice versa, the “scene” can be made plain by knowing the “act” that belongs within it. This seems to be true also for linguistic acts. A linguistic act can thus serve as a “definition of the situation” (Goffman 1974).

“Piaget, in studying the language of children, noted that frequently the meaning of their sentences was entirely lost unless his investigators recorded along with the sentences the circumstances under which they were said. In a more complex way, the terms by which we communicate are always thus circumstantially founded.” (Burke 1984: 183, italics in original)

Another facet that came with the revelatory turn towards action, was that speech acts and other uses of language are performed with some intent, directionality or purpose in mind (Burke 1945; Heidegger 1962/2008; Searle 1995; 2009). Several scholars have during the past century attested to the idea that action is partly determined by its purpose (e.g. Dewey 2012; James 1912/2003). An example of this would be two workmen digging a ditch. One of the workmen is earning money to take his family on a vacation whereas the other is digging the ditch because he was ordered to by his foreman. Although both workmen are digging the ditch in exactly the same way, the notion of action being infused with purpose suggests that their actions are distinct even though both are digging the ditch with similar physical movements. That is to say, action is more than mere movement. The construction of meaning through language would seem to follow suit, and intentionality would seem to be an inherent part of meaning-making and communication (e.g. Fauconnier & Turner 2002). For example, if a workman says ‘Shovel’ to another workman his purpose may, for example, be to ask for the workman to hand him a shovel or it can be to encourage the other to continue shoveling. To fully grasp the meaning of the action, including linguistic acts, both the scene and the purpose of the action are most likely needed (Searle 1995; 2009; Wittgenstein 1953; 2009).

A second grand revelation about language in the past century is connected to the first and was that action, objects in the world, language and thus also words and signs can be thought of as purposively designed tools (Heidegger 1962/2008; Rorty 1989; Wittgenstein 1953). Heidegger (1962/2008) thought that language emerged from its connection with the world. That the way persons ‘read’ their immediate physical surroundings is similar to how language is used and understood. According to Heidegger, in a primitive society objects and the signs that allowed those objects to be recognized could be the same object. In more developed cultures the object and the sign that signifies the object have become more detached and the relation between signs and what they indicate consequently all the more complex. In his masterpiece Being and Time, Heidegger’s (1962/2008) main theoretical prototype for understanding language and thus for his ontological analysis of the worldly character of the world is the
relation between a sign and the world, similar but not equal to correspondence theory of truth. Concordant with this view human beings can be understood as “symbol-making, symbol-using, and symbol-misusing animals” (Burke 1984: 299). According to this view, purpose is not only infused with action, but purpose can be infused with objects, signs, words, and the entire world a person inhabits (Heidegger 1962/2008). Heidegger’s assertion is that the world is understood through its equipmentality, which is infused with what the equipment is used for. For example, a word is not understood merely through a detailed description of what the word stands for, but through examples of its use in sentences and in different involvements. In this way it is similar to any tool, which is understood by what it does and what can be accomplished with its use. This was one of Heidegger’s (1962/2008) many seminal insights, to argue that function and purpose are not in a person’s head, but they are already out there in the world which a person recognizes and lives in. I will shortly give a simplified and abbreviated depiction of Heidegger’s account, many of the intricate details Heidegger provides are however beyond the scope of this study.

According to Heidegger (1962/2008), signs and thus also words are understood through their usage, which he delineated into two characteristics: “assignment” and “reference.” Assignment is what the tool does, and in the case of signs, what the sign “indicates” about other forms of “serviceability” inherent to any equipment (Heidegger 1962/2008). The reference is constituted by the “involvement” in which it is used (Heidegger 1962/2008). Similar to how Goffman (1974) argues that primary frames provide all meaning to everything within the frame, Heidegger argues that it is the reference which provides the word with its significance. Heidegger argues that an involvement does not have a certain significance in itself but gets its significance only in relation to the “totality of involvements”, that is, in relation to everything that a person does in his life. The reference, in other words, puts words and that which they indicate into a reference with a person’s totality of involvements (Heidegger 1962/2008; see also Oakeshott 1933/2015). For example, if a word is in no way in reference to the involvements or purposes a person is or could imagine himself engaged with, then it may be impossible for the word to have any significance for that person.

The point that Heidegger (1962/2008) to my understanding makes, is that nothing is understood as such, but through a person’s directedness towards the world of experience. To somewhat simplify Heidegger’s path of thought, within one’s unique world of experience the questions ‘What does it do?’ (assignment) and ‘What is it used for?’ (reference) are constitutive of everyday intelligibility regarding tools and thus also of the use of language (Heidegger 1962/2008). This suggests that to understand language one needs to understand the world and involvements within which the signs are used. For example, a “cup” to be understood as to its everyday intelligibility is to understand it having the form of a cup which can hold water (assignment) and to be able to hold water is useful in order to drink (reference). These ‘properties’ are not in the material nor in the design of the material, but something that is assigned to the cup and understandable only in relation to how and for what the cup is used within a way of life. To understand a word as signifying something in its use is thus to recognize its assignment and reference. One should probably note that this is not significantly different from recognizing objects, not as objects with ‘properties’, but as part of some involvement which is constitutive for what that object ‘is’ in its use.

It is, for example, possible to highlight many aspects of an airplane, but its everyday understandability is easy to convey: An airplane carries people from one place to another across vast distances very fast, so airplanes are used for travel. This understanding of an airplane is
sufficient and matches the world of travelers but is of course insufficient for a pilot or an airplane mechanic. Their involvements with the airplane differ from the traveler. Consequently, how the pilot or mechanic talks of the airplane as a matter of course is most likely not recognizable by the traveler because one is not necessarily familiar with the world of experience of the pilot or the mechanic. It is conceivable that language communities are thus formed on the basis of the involvement and how a world of experience is ordered in a concordant fashion (Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Shotter 1993; 2015). To my understanding this is what Wittgenstein (1953/2009; 2009) meant with a “language game” (see also Rorty 1989).

It is worth noting that to say that the significance of a word or an act of language use stems from its involvement, which in turn gets its significance from its relation to the totality of involvements in a person’s life, is a much more precise depiction that to say that the meaning of an utterance stems from the scene of its use. As far as I can see, there are at least two notable consequences of the above described view of language use: (1) a form of language is directly interconnected with a “form of life” (Wittgenstein 1953), that is, the culturally established actions and involvements the language enables and is used in (see also Dewey 2011; Oakeshott 1933/2015); and second, (2) words and language use has its assignments and intelligibility (Heidegger 1962/2008), or more generally speaking a certain “serviceability” (Burke 1954/1984), in connection with those particular involvements (see also Rorty 1989). A form of language is intelligible and of use primarily in the primary “selection” (Burke 1945) of experience, the involvement in which it has been developed (see the territory-as-mapped epistemology in Wilk 1999; 2010a).

It may be of relevance to notice that this way of thinking is in line with recent theorizing that it is a creative accomplishment when a word or linguistic frame is as a metaphor transported from one semantic domain to another (Cornelissen 2004; 2005; 2006; Fauconnier & Turner 1998; 2002; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Oswick et al. 2011). As Cornelissen (2005; 2006) has suggested, it may be that by transporting a word or linguistic frame from one semantic domain to another in the form of a metaphor, or equally from one involvement to another involvement, it may employ emergent elements from the experiences associated with the new involvement, thus imbuing the interpretive frame with some measure of novelty. This line of inquiry into creative language use is not incompatible with the presented views herein, that language is used purposively or that alternative linguistic forms have their own primary areas of serviceability. On the contrary, I would suggest that the notions that language is used purposively and that different linguistic forms may have varying serviceability based on their coherence with the involvements, are important and complementary lines of inquiry.

On another note, Oakeshott (1933/2015) has argued that different kinds of involvements and their concomitant usages of language can cluster and thus give rise to multiple distinct, general and in their own way deficient “modes of experience”, none of which represent the totality of experience. A mode of experience can be thought of as an “orientation” (Burke 1954/1984), a way of inhabiting a world of experience. A similar thought has been relatively recently suggested by Cornelissen and Kafouros (2008). According to Cornelissen and Kafouros (2008), complex metaphors can be built out of simple primary metaphors, which are often grounded in their own strips of embodied experience.

This way of understanding builds on the realization that language is full of persistent ambiguities and holes, which are also the sources if its efficiency and creativity (Bateson & Bateson 1987; Burke 1945; Toulmin 1958/2003). Adding or withdrawing a dimension from a
vocabulary can make the language more accurate or efficient (Burke 1945). It is however also possible to unite two incompatible strips of experience or unite language in a way that suggests realities that do not actually exist, as phlogiston theory, embodied principles of motion and arrest, and the breath of life have been suggested in the history of science (Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1962/1982; 1965/1977). And some of the great achievements in arts and science have been accomplished by forming novel vocabularies that in some way surpass the limits of prior vocabularies (Rorty 1989; Toulmin 1990; 2003).

In the present work this stream of thought that connects the ordering and selection of experience with efficient use of language – which has been tackled from many angles and with many different vocabularies in the past century (e.g. Kuhn 1962/2012; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Rorty 1989; Toulmin 1990) – is analyzed in terms of different “linguistic forms” (Burke 1945) and the conceptually defined paradigms they are able to distinguish. Later it will be shown that a linguistic form tends to exhibit similar conceptual tendencies, i.e. they tend to depict and follow a similar conceptual path of thought and deflect alternative conceptualizations (Burke 1945).
Part II: Theoretical Serviceability Analysis

7. Burke’s dramatistic pentad

“Language is a process of indicating certain stimuli and changing the response to them in the system of behavior. Language as a social process has made it possible for us to pick out responses and hold them in the organism of the individual, so that they are there in relation to that which we indicate. [...] Out of language emerges the field of mind.” (George Herbert Mead 1934/2015: 97, 133)

“When a philosopher invents a new a new approach to reality, he promptly finds that his predecessors saw something as a unit which he can subdivide, or that they accepted distinctions which his system can name as unities. The universe would appear to be something like a cheese; it can be sliced in an infinite number of ways – and when one has chosen his own pattern of slicing, he finds that other men’s cuts fall at the wrong places.” (Burke 1984: 103)

In organization theory Kenneth Burke is often credited as the originator of the dramaturgical approach, which can be described as employing drama as a metaphor to understand organizing (Oswick et al. 2001; see also Morgan 1980). Some scholars attribute to Burke a literal stance toward drama, that “organizing-is-theatre”, which is purported to be distinct from other dramaturgical approaches (Boje et al. 2003). In this study we adopt the position that by focusing on drama as a metaphor, past studies have not intended nor managed to capture the full resourcefulness of Burke’s views on language and action. I submit that especially Burke’s astute analysis of different linguistic forms and their differences in serviceability have not been adequately explored in organization and management theory.

In this section we will focus on how the coordinates in Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad are interconnected, especially the “big three” of “scene”, “act”, and “agent.” It is argued that the systematicity and inherent consistency give rise to alternative and steadfast linguistic forms. Many linguistic forms such as naturalism and materialism have been utilized and developed during the course of several centuries (Burke 1945; Burtt 1932/2003), which makes them attractive for communication purposes. However, such linguistic forms have due to their inherent consistency also been found to be rigid by resisting conceptual changes and at times perhaps even dogmatic by deflecting alternative conceptualizations (e.g. Berlin 1997; Shotter 2015; Toulmin 1990; 2003). I will present several lengthy quotes from The Grammar of Motives to make Burke’s (1945) original argument as accessible as possible even though our interest in the pentad is chiefly in its use for the benefit of wellbeing scholarship.

Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad comprises of five coordinates: Scene, Act, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. Burke (1945: 252) argues that the “dramatist coordinates provide the most direct way into the understanding of linguistic forms” (italics added). Burke’s pentad is

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27 I here use capitalized letters to designate the five coordinates of the dramatistic pentad. Later on when these concepts have become familiar, and for the sake of readability, I refer to the same concepts with lowercase letters.
simultaneously the most inclusive, systematic, and yet adequately concise vocabulary regard-
ing alternative linguistic forms I have come across. Due to its scope and simplicity it is in my
mind the best available choice for the purpose of delineating alternative conceptual paradigms
in the multifarious literature on wellbeing. Burke (1945: 227) identifies his pentad with Aris-
totle’s four causes (material cause=Scene; efficient cause=Agent; final cause=Purpose, formal
cause=Act) and with the centuries old scholastic hexameter: Who (Agent), what (Act), where,
when (Scene), how, by what means, (Agency), and why (Purpose) (see also Jonsen & Toulmin
1988). The literary devices Burke draws upon have in other words been around and found to
be useful analytical tools for scrutinizing conduct for over two millennia (Jonsen & Toulmin
1988). In a historic light, Burke does not seem to be overzealous in asserting the helpfulness of
the pentad in analyzing and comparing descriptions of human action (see also Bruner 2004).

In his groundbreaking book *The Grammar of Motives*, Burke (1945) analyzes with the help
of his dramatistic pentad the linguistic form of an astounding array of philosophical doctrines
such as materialism and pragmatism and philosophers including Aristotle, Santayana, Marx,
William James, Descartes, Hume and Kant as well as literary masters such as Keats, Ibsen, and
Shakespeare. One should probably take note that the scope and richness of Burke’s material
vastly exceeds that of what, for example, Burrell and Morgan (1979) drew upon in their analysis
of alternative sociological paradigms. This speaks for the scope of Burke’s pentad.

With dramatism and the dramatistic pentad Burke (1945: xxii) means that he “treats lan-
guage and thought primarily as modes of action.” Burke’s (1945) purpose with his study was to
highlight the inherent ambiguity and also resourcefulness of language in connection with hu-
man conduct. Burke (1945) argues that one can approach human motives, in the broadest sense
of the term, from multiple philosophical angles none of which can be empirically substantiated
as the one true and final perspective for analyzing human conduct. His objective was to “show
that the subject of motivation is a philosophic one, not ultimately to be solved [unambiguously]
in terms of empirical science” (Burke 1945: xxii). And secondly, to “express towards language
an attitude embodied in a method. This attitude is one of linguistic skepticism, which we syn-
onymize with linguistic appreciation, on the grounds that an attitude of methodical quizzicality
towards language may best equip us to perceive the full scope of its resourcefulness” (ibid.: 441-442, italics in original).

With the “grammar of motives” Burke means the kinds of philosophies and concomitant lin-
guistic forms about human conduct that can be construed or analyzed with the help of the
dramatistic pentad. Burke argues that the philosophical doctrines of for instance materialism,
pragmatism, idealism, and mysticism are foremostly different in their linguistic expression in
which differing coordinates of the pentad are highlighted. According to Burke (1945), material-
ism for example is focused on the scene, mysticism on purpose and pragmatism on agency.
Burke argues that the differing foci of interest make the linguistic forms and philosophical doc-
trines systematically dissimilar from one another.

These differences in focus bring forth a broader aspect of language in general. According to
Burke, there are inherent ambiguities that go hand-in-hand with implicit choices within lan-
guage (see Bateson & Bateson 1987 and Oakeshott 1933/2015 for similar arguments), that al-
low multiple dissimilar and yet equally accurate descriptions of human conduct. Despite their
dissimilar descriptions they can all be equally correct at the same time. This point of view can
be considered postmodern, because modernism and the early Enlightenment doctrine was
partly built on the assumption that only one description can be a correct reflection of reality
and other descriptions are thus inevitably false (see Berlin 1998; 2013a; Toulmin 1958/2003;
The selective use of language can be understood as giving rise to separate philosophies and their corresponding linguistic forms. Burke illustrates this phenomenon by showing the scope of how differently the “scene” of conduct can be described:

“For example, we may examine the term Scene simply as a blanket term for concept of background or setting in general, a name for any situation in which acts or agents are placed. In our usage, this concern would be ‘grammatical.’ And we move into matters of ‘philosophy’ when we note that one thinker uses ‘God’ as his term for the ultimate ground or scene of human action, another uses ‘nature’, a third uses ‘environment’, or ‘history’ or ‘means of production’, etc. And whereas a statement about the grammatical principles of motivation might lay claim to a universal validity, or complete certainty, the choice of any one philosophic idiom embodying these principles is much more open to question. Even before we know what act is to be discussed, we can say with confidence that a rounded discussion of its motives must contain a reference to some kind of background [i.e. scene]. But since each philosophic idiom will characterize this background differently, there will remain the question as to which characterization is ‘right’ or ‘more nearly correct’” (Burke 1945: xvi-xvii).

Burke uses situation, setting, surrounding, background, and scene interchangeably. Similar to Toulmin (2003), Burke prefers to use the term situation or scene rather than “context” (cf. Johns 2001; 2006) to underscore that the setting can be actively constructed and is reciprocally connected to the other coordinates of the pentad. The situation is not passive in Burke’s view. In this study, instead of using concepts like behavior or motives in reference to human action or a person’s acts, I employ the broad and inclusive concept of “conduct” (Oakeshott 1991a) in order to keep in mind that action and acts can be variously described in terms of all of the five coordinates of the pentad, and that especially the scene of action can be construed in a variety of ways thus affecting the interpretation of conduct itself.

The utility of the pentad comes forth especially through comparison between linguistic forms, because by way of comparison the linguistic “selections”, “reductions”, and “deflections” become apparent (Burke 1945; see also Rorty 1989). The five coordinates of the pentad provide an illuminating framework because it can show which coordinates are emphasized or selectively employed in a description and which are consequently merged into or reduced out of the picture:

“Men seek for vocabularies that will be faithful reflections of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are selections of reality. And any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a deflection of reality. Insofar as the vocabulary meets the needs of reflection, we can say that it has the necessary scope. In its selectivity, it is a reduction. Its scope and reduction become a deflection when the given terminology, or calculus, is not suited for the subject matter which it is designed to calculate.” (Burke 1945: 59, italics in original)

In other words, Burke argues that a linguistic form is constituted by a common form of expression, which is used for conceptualizing and connecting matters in a particular way (see also Kuhn 1962/2012). The linguistic form is formed by the “selection” of experience that the linguistic form highlights, which is simultaneously a “reduction” of experience (Burke 1945). Burke in other words argues that all linguistic forms are “reductions” as the totality of experience is always reduced and thus selected into some particular concepts and sentences instead
of others. The selections suggest that the linguistic forms have their systematic foci and con-
joint omissions. Burke suggests that there are systematic patterns to how a linguistic form con-
nects experiences, which tend to deflect the omitted experiences and thus cause conceptual
and epistemological blind spots (for similar arguments see Bateson & Bateson 1987; Fleck
1979; Oakeshott 1933/2015). The point is that a linguistic form, in systematically highlighting
certain experiences, with equal systematicity leaves others unattended.

Kuhn (1962/2012) provides several examples of paradigm shifts where the focus of attention
shifts along with how experiences are conceptualized and put together. Seminal examples from
the history of science would be the shift from Aristotelian to Galilean study of motion, the dis-
covery of oxygen in replacing the phlogiston theory, and electromagnetism replacing effluvium
theory (Kuhn 1962/2012 111 ff). Kuhn describes the shift in paradigm and the pattern of con-
necting experiences thus:

“Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places. Even more
important, during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with famil-
iar instruments in places they have looked before. It is rather as if the professional community
had been suddenly transported to another planet where familiar objects are seen in a different
light and are joined by unfamiliar ones as well. Of course, nothing of quite that sort does occur:
there is no geographical transplantation; outside the laboratory everyday affairs usually con-
inue as before. Nevertheless, paradigm changes do cause scientists to see the world of their
research-engagement differently. In so far as their only recourse to that world is through what
they see and do, we may want to say that after a revolution scientists are responding to a dif-
ferent world.” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 111)

Our argument regarding linguistic forms is perhaps best understood through examples rather
than general statements. Remembering from the previous chapter that the situation is instru-
mental to understanding an act or speech acts, Burke is especially vigilant in his analysis on
the use of different “scenes” in alternative linguistic forms. According to Burke, conceptual
reductions put in place a particular scene. There are in other words different “circumferences”
depending on what is talked about and with what sort of vocabulary (Burke 1945; see also “cir-

“To select a set of terms is...to select a circumference” (Burke 1945: 90). “The word reminds us
that ‘defining by location’, one may place the object of one’s definition in contexts of varying
scope. ... the choice of circumference for the scene in terms of which a given act is to be located
will have a corresponding effect upon the interpretation of the act itself” (Burke 1945: 77).

Here Burke’s argument can be understood as twofold: for one, he means that in selecting a
scene the vocabulary gains its intelligibility within that scope, or equally, that particular cir-
cumference. If the scene changes it is questionable if the vocabulary is equally useful and how
the other elements of the pentad hang together within the new scene. Second, he means that
within any linguistic form there are dramatistic “principles of consistency” that bind together
at least “the big three” of “scene”, “act” and “agent” (Burke 1945). Burke argues that there is an
expectation that the scene, act and agent are in alignment, or where there is a tension between
them then the act or agent should relieve the tension and bring alignment between the coordi-
nates in the pentad. “It is a principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be
consistent with the nature of the scene” (Burke 1945: 3). This in other words suggests that in choosing a scene, one is also choosing an aligned agent and form of act within the scene. This is one example of how the choice of linguistic form can direct subsequent conceptual choices.

To give some examples of this alignment, a human being (agent) is often connected with the concept of environment (scene), an employee (agent) with the organization (scene), an organization (agent) with an industry (scene), behavior (act) with nature (scene), moral action (act) with moral communities (scene), and so forth.

Burke argues that the scope and location of the scene is a matter of philosophical choice, which, if Burke is correct, guides the interpretation of how to understand the agent and the act. As Burke’s focus is on scrutinizing conduct in the largest imaginable scope, he is especially keen on analyzing the relationship between the act and the scene, which he refers to as the “act-scene”, or equivalently, the “scene-act ratio” (Burke 1945; cf. agency-structure dialectic in Giddens 1984). In Burke’s (1945: 84) mind the choice of circumference, i.e. the choice of scene, is an “act of faith” that the interpretation of the scene and the act within it is the appropriate one. “Most circumferences are felt to be, not so much wider or narrower than one another, as merely different. We might say that they mark out a circumference by spotlight, while the rest of the stage is left dark” (Burke 1945: 87).

Put differently, Burke (1945: 84) argues that “one has a great variety of circumferences to select as characterizations of a given agent’s scene. For a man is not only in a situation peculiar to his era or to his particular place in that era (even if we could agree on the traits that characterize his era). He is also in a situation extending through centuries; he is in a ‘generally human’ situation; and he is in a ‘universal’ situation. Who is to say, once and for all, which of these circumferences is to be selected as the motivation of his act, insofar as the act is to be defined in scenic terms?” (see Berlin 1997 and Collingwood 1946 for similar arguments).

To give a second example of linguistic forms, Burke’s analysis of the historic development of naturalistic language use is particularly illuminating. This is also true because of our interest in wellbeing and its linguistic forms, which can be described as ingrained with natural scientific philosophical preferences. Burke (1945: 138) uses a particular historic change in naturalistic thought, “the great watershed moment in Western thought”, as a seminal example. According to Burke (1945: 79), “the sharpest instance of the way in which the altering of the scenic scope affects the interpretation of the act is to be found in the shift from teleological to mechanistic philosophies.” Burke argues that especially Spinoza’s language use epitomizes this shift in circumference. According to Burke, naturalism developed first from a divine view where nature was a part of God, to a perspective of man and nature apart from God and onwards to a technological vista.

Burke (1945: 53) states, “whereas naturalism in its beginnings was a consistent title, referring to man in nature, it gradually became transformed into a surreptitiously compensatory title, referring to technological methods and ideals that are almost the antithesis of nature, with nature itself seen in terms of technology and the monetary.” Nature was previously apprehended as the animated and lively scene of human action, but then technology altered the perception about the environment and the scene of nature became consequently understood as a mechanical contraption of various resources (see also Burtt 1932/2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). This several centuries old linguistic move is still alive and well in wellbeing research.

It is well known that centuries ago even natural laws were perceived as of divine origin and references to God were ubiquitous and could for example be found even in scientific and
philosophical writings (e.g. Descartes 1637/2006; see also Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). The Creation of God was referred to as the ultimate ground (scene). “But when the circumference was narrowed to naturalistic limits, the ‘Creator’ was left out of account, and only the ‘Creation’ remained” (Burke 1945: 79). Since then the narrowing of circumference has become one of the hallmarks of science, to narrow the scene to the particular experiment or case study (Burke 1945; 1984; Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). The narrowing of the scene from the divine ground to mechanical nature epitomized the Occamite principle of parsimony that “entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity” (cited from Burke 1945). According to Burke, this change of scene had a tremendous effect as it also shifted the circumference from the final cause to the proximal efficient cause or from the “prime mover” to the “last mover” of a stone (Burke 1945: 79-81). God was dropped out of descriptions and the scene narrowed, not because of anti-religious sentiments that arose later during the Enlightenment period (Berlin 1997; Berlin 2013a), but because it was unnecessary to keep reiterating the then obvious ground for all action. At first God was dropped in most cases to make the language more efficient. Subsequently, God was dropped entirely. “In naturalism there is no Creator; and nature is not an act, but simply ‘the given’” (Burke 1945: 79).

“Theologically, this amounted to the narrowing of the circumference from a scene comprising both creation and creator to a scene comprising creation alone. And since the creation had already been enacted, such narrowing of the scenic frame meant in turn simply an examination of the world’s constitution, a constitution which was just what it was, regardless of whether it had originally been enacted by a divine superagent or was the result of cosmic accident, or was a mere set of relations without substance. In other words, even if one still chose to think of it as having originally enacted, it was now to be studied, from without, as a regular concatenation of events. Dramatically this narrowing meant the shift from a poetic or moral vocabulary of action and passion to a scientific or mechanical vocabulary of motion” (Burke 1945: 138).

This example is illuminating because it shows how Occam’s razor can be used to make language more efficient and parsimonious, but it can also change the form of thought as well (see also Wittgenstein 2009). The example also shows how and why linguistic reductions are made, to make the language more efficient. Such reductions lead to a narrowing of circumference, which can equally be described as tightening the focus of the description. As Burke points out, when God is treated as an invariant, it can be omitted from the description which makes the description more efficient, but at the same time it narrows the circumference. Because of the principle of consistency, when the scene is altered it also changes the employed motivational vocabulary about acts and agents to fit the newly narrowed scene. The agent and the act are kept in alignment with the new scene even though these conceptual shifts might not have been intended.

One way to understand Burke’s argument is to liken circumference with “semantic domain” (Cornelissen 2005) and its conceptually constituted “paradigm” (Kuhn 1962/2012). In Burke’s view semantic domains are not so apart or “incommensurable” (Feyerabend 1975/2010; Kuhn 1962/2012) as the distinction and implicit assertion of uniqueness of giving an identity label to a domain might suggest. They nonetheless share and draw from a common source of experience called lived life, to which we can compare descriptions to and thus notice the deficiencies, selections and blind spots in our habitually used language (for similar accounts see Dewey 1958; 1910/2012; James 1912/2003; Oakeshott 1933/2015). This means that strips of experience from lived life can be put together also in ways that cross prior circumferences and...
semantic domains. Burke is explicit in that one can move about and alter the emphasis between the coordinates of the pentad. According to Burke (1945), such shifts in focus can however result in inadvertently altering the linguistic form, at times leading to “embarrassing” inconsistencies (Burke 1945). The inattentive use of occam’s razor to increase efficiency and parsimony of the linguistic form is often involved. Burke provides an illuminating example of how the philosophical preferences and concomitant linguistic form can change in only a few steps, where the preferences in the beginning are contradicted rather quickly:

“For instance, because of the fact that an invariant term can readily be omitted from one’s calculus, we can begin like the eighteenth-century philosophes by postulating certain ‘constant and universal principles of human nature.’ Then, precisely because they are everywhere the same, we can drop them from our discussion, and devote ourselves instead to a search for the ways in which these ‘unchanging principles of human nature’ reacted under changing historical conditions. Thereupon, lo! We shall find that we have subtly crossed from one realm into another, in having reduced our universal man to terms of the endlessly shifting historical situations that determine his behavior.” (Burke 1945: 99)

According to Burke (1945: 32), scientific studies tend to use behaviorist terminology and thereby “reduce mental states to materialistic terms” and thus “treat motion as motive.” Such studies, according to the principle of consistency, tend to expand the scene to a universal. According to Burke (1945: 87), encompassing all situations and circumferences into a universal scene paradoxically leads to the emptiest and narrowest of all scenes. This grammatical strategy thus reduces the act into motion, and the scene most often into the materialistic impulses of the agent within a universal and therefore empty environment. According to Burke this linguistic form is often taken as scientific because it underscores the tangible reality of the scene through materialism and naturalism. It also follows a particular path of thought, when conduct is reduced to material terms:

“The search for the intrinsic frequently leads to the selection of calculi postulating various assortments of ‘instincts’, ‘drives’, ‘urges’, etc. as the motivational springs of biologic organisms in general and of human organisms in particular. Materialistic science prefers this style of vocabulary because it assigns scenic terms to motives situated in the [generic] agent; and scenic words generally seem so much more ‘real’ that other words, even though such lists can be expanded or contracted ad lib., quite as suits one’s dialectical preferences” (Burke 1945: 49, italics in original).

Freud’s synoptic language is an apt example of Burke’s argument. At a time when the study of the mental was controversial and by some considered an impossibility, Freud created a new linguistic form through synthesis that opened the mental realm for scientific investigation (Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008; see also Rorty 1989). Freud created a mental or internal scenery of three layers – the unconscious, the subconscious and the conscious mind – and theorized of conduct in the form of mental disorders as material substances in the three layers of mind (see also Schafer 1976; Szasz 1975; Wachtel 2003). One can argue that Freud opened up the mental for scientific investigation by utilizing a common and acknowledged linguistic form of science, namely, naturalistic and materialistic language. This made its use compelling in connection with the mind (Makari 2008).
Makari (2008: 123) summarizes the merits of Freud’s groundbreaking theory: “Psychosexuality situated a full range of studies of the human heart and mind, so that they made sense in a Newtonian universe, in Darwinian biology, and in a world where truth was decided by the epistemological demands of science.” As Makari (2008) has noted, Freud’s accomplishment stands arguably as one of the great theoretical integrations in the history of science. Based on Burke’s work, and following Rorty (1989), I would suggest that Freud’s accomplishment was not merely a theoretical integration, but a partly familiar and partly novel formulation of a new linguistic form to be employed in the semantic domain of mind. Freud thus made a lasting impact on the Western world by creating a scenic and materialistic language for the study of the mind, a language that became hugely influential also beyond academic and mental health circles (Ellenberger 1971; Moscovici 2008). As a result, “we [nowadays] live within a psychoanalytic culture” (Safran & Kriss 2014: 45).

To summarize, the five coordinates of the pentad are tightly coupled. Burke’s pentad and the principle of consistency suggests that the conceptual choice of for example scene, act or agent most likely directs the subsequent conceptual choices regarding the other elements of the pentad. Due to the tight interrelations between the coordinates in the pentad, Burke argues that it is at times better to talk of particular “ratios” (Burke 1945) – e.g. scene-purpose, agent-act, agency-scene ratios – instead of separate coordinates. The consistent couplings between the coordinates gives rise to alternative linguistic forms, which can equally well be described as alternative philosophical preferences with concordant conceptual foci regarding human conduct.

In a naturalistic scene, the scene is universalized, the agent is generic and act is often reduced into mechanical and instinctive motion (Burke 1945), which for example omits and perhaps even deflects the notion that human beings can act purposively based on the particular circumstances of the situation (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). If the scene is on the other hand interpreted for instance as a locally constituted historical scene (Collingwood 1946/2014; Oakeshott 1999), then purpose is conversely often included, and the act becomes much more instrumental in the description of events. In our current day and age a particular linguistic form, one that theorizes of conduct in materialistic and naturalistic terms is by far and large privileged and is consequently in many quarters recognized as the only proper linguistic form for a scientific description of human conduct (Burke 1945; Burtt 1932/2003; Shotter 2015; Toulmin 1990; 2003). According to Burke (1945), such conceptual preferences cannot however be empirically substantiated and therefore merely rely of an “act of faith” that the linguistic form fits and does not omit pertinent experiences regarding the investigated phenomenon.
Part II: Theoretical Serviceability Analysis

8. The serviceability of linguistic forms in wellbeing theory

“Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home.” (Heidegger 2011: 147)

“The usefulness of such a [philosophical] system – as opposed to its power or beauty – depends, of course, not on its logical scope and coherence, but on its applicability to matters of fact. This in its turn depends not merely on the skill with which we construct the system, but on the actual behaviour of things and persons in the world, to which the system is applied, or from which the system is generalised or idealised.” (Berlin 1996)

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part we dig deeper into authoritative linguistic forms in wellbeing theory. Our interest is in the common linguistic foundation of materialism and naturalism that arguably underpins most agent-centric and agent-environment interactionist accounts of human conduct (Burke 1945), and therefore also much of present-day wellbeing theory. The main point of this analysis is to show that the conceptual character of wellbeing scholarship can be fruitfully analyzed by utilizing Burke’s dramatistic pentad, and that there is much to be said about wellbeing theory by scrutinizing its conceptual foundations and tendencies. With the help of the dramatistic pentad one can consequently dig into the conceptual character of different paradigms instead of merely differentiating them from each other.

We have in Part I preliminarily shown that much of wellbeing research can be delineated into different paradigms according to which coordinate or ratio of the pentad a particular wellbeing theory tends to emphasize. We have also in the previous chapter discussed that such conceptual focus is most likely gained at the cost of equally significant omissions. Herein, we develop both ideas further, which ultimately leads to the conclusion that wellbeing theory has much to benefit if it were to include several linguistic forms.

In order to expand on the utility of the pentad in connection with wellbeing theory, our primary method is to show several pertinent and general features of present-day wellbeing theories by disclosing certain conceptual tendencies that can be said to stem from their linguistic form or the topic of wellbeing itself. These conceptual tendencies are:

1. Particular conceptual paths of thought associated with materialism and naturalism, the philosophical preferences that are often adhered to in agent-centric and agent-environment interactionist accounts of wellbeing
2. The use of vast conceptual reductions like god-terms to increase the generality of the employed vocabulary
3. The use of conceptual transformations in order to use the same vocabulary to represent several coordinates of the pentad, especially the kinds of transitional devices that
are used to transform scenic and material entities to means and ends, i.e., into agency and purpose in the dramatistic pentad.

4. And how conceptual circularity is used to theorize and explain very succinctly most likely any dramatic sequence of events.

By delving into these conceptual tendencies within wellbeing scholarship we garner support for the following arguments: that the choice regarding linguistic form can direct subsequent conceptual choices beyond simple alignment between coordinates. One can therefore anticipate certain theoretical developments, because there would seem to be common conceptual paths of thought based in the initial choice of linguistic form. Here we show this with the help of Burke’s (1945) analysis of materialism and naturalism and by connecting those conceptual tendencies to a select set of well-known theories within wellbeing literature.

One of these tendencies is the use of vast conceptual reductions as theoretical “god-terms” to increase the generality of the vocabulary (Burke 1945). Burke’s analysis of the reduction of motives into the singular motive of money – which we herein liken with the common tendency to reduce descriptions of wellbeing into various resources (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Hobfoll 2002) – exemplifies how a single god-term can be used to play the parts of agency and purpose. This conceptual transformation increases the versatility of the vocabulary by allowing an agentic or scenic object to also be describable in terms of circumstantial needs (agency) and the overarching aspirations of human beings (purpose).

By leaning on Burke’s analysis, we can suggest that to be able to theorize about agency and purpose would seem to be key conceptual requirements of wellbeing theories, and that it is not a coincidence that the concept of wellbeing tends to hone in on the agent and his psychobiological functioning. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the ability to theorize of agency and purpose might be an implicit conceptual expectation of wellbeing theories. Consequently, the linguistic devices that are used in such conceptual transformations from an agentic or scenic coordinate into agency and purpose are most likely pertinent for the whole of wellbeing research. Conceptual transformations lead to increased versatility of a vocabulary, which in turn enables conceptual circularity between elements of the pentad. I argue that this conceptual feature is instrumental to theorizing about wellbeing in a frugal manner, because it allows describing the opening and closing of dramatic sequences of events with the same succinct vocabulary. By putting these conceptual tendencies in the limelight, it becomes increasingly clear that there may very likely be alternative conceptual pathways that are worth exploring in connection with wellbeing research.

The second part of this chapter concerns the serviceability of different linguistic forms. Once we have come to accept the conclusion that there are particular conceptual pathways associated with different linguistic forms, it becomes all the more obvious that in privileging some conceptualizations other become omitted. Pathways imply omissions and untrodden paths of thought. These inherent limitations and the deflective characteristic of linguistic forms pave the way for the understanding that different linguistic forms probably provide divergent kinds of serviceability. For example, one linguistic form can in a precise and economic manner theorize about the generic agent, but the same linguistic form might not be as insightful and frugal in theorizing about other elements of the dramatistic pentad. Another more suitably designed linguistic form might be more fitting for the purpose. This is the thrust of theoretical serviceability analysis.
8.1 Common conceptual tendencies within wellbeing theory

Following the footsteps of Freud and given the dominance of the psychoanalytic vocabulary in understanding mental health during large parts of the 20th century (Moscovici 2008; Safran & Kriss 2014), and given the same individual-centric focus in Positive Psychology (e.g. Waterman 2013), there is reason to believe that wellbeing theory is still colored by the metaphysical spectacles of modern science (Becker 1932/2003; Burtt 1932/2003), which can be said to be the philosophical ideals of naturalism and materialism (Burke 1945). Burke’s (1945) pentad suggests that such philosophical preferences direct explanations to focus upon the properties of the material scene or the constitution of the individual agent. Based on our prior review on individual wellbeing, much of Positive Psychology would seem to follow this pattern of underscoring connections to biology (e.g. Fredrickson 2014; Ryff & Singer 2000), agent-environment interactions (Deci et al. 2017), and explicitly researches wellbeing through the study of “human nature” (Haybron 2008; Waterman 2013).

If it is true that naturalism and materialism are still the philosophical favorites in wellbeing theory, then there is by far and large a preferred way of conceptualizing human conduct. The post-Freudian analysis of psychoanalytic theorizing suggests that the principal pathway to conceptualize conduct is to situate motivation as an active and structureless ‘motor’ within the generic agent (see Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Schafer 1976). A contemporary example of this is the “basic psychological needs” of autonomy, competence and relatedness in self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan 2000; Ryan & Deci 2000). Burke’s analysis would suggest that these particular philosophical preferences conceptualize differences in wellbeing through the “agent-scene ratio” (Burke 1945), where changes in the scene, in a Newtonian and Darwinian sense (see Burtt 1932/2003; Makari 2008), cause changes in the psychobiological person. For example, in a recent review the main proponents of SDT argue that “SDT researchers have regularly hypothesized and consistently found that social settings such as workplaces that support satisfaction of the basic psychological needs facilitate autonomous motivation, psychological and physical wellness, and enhanced performance” (Deci et al. 2017). One implicit assumption in this statement is that wellbeing can be fruitfully theorized about in terms of the agent-scene ratio, and that other coordinates and ratios can be given less prominence.

The language of basic psychological needs is reminiscent of Freud’s use of internal “urges” and “drives” as directional and powerful, but structureless (e.g. Freud 1995 ed. Gay). To posit that such urges or drives are structureless is to assert that the analysis should not go “deeper” within the substance and landscape of mind (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Wachtel 2003) but should instead be accepted as final “rationalizing ground for action” (Burke 1945). Schafer (1976) has made an interesting observation in that the materialistic language creates a philosophical problem because it implies that everything consists of some form of substance, meaning one can go deeper and deeper ad infinitum into what the substance on a lower (or higher) level consists of (see also Wachtel 2003).28 This can however be brought to an end by postulating a foundational ground or “explanatory principle – like ‘gravity’ or ‘instinct’” – by assuming a silent and “conventional agreement between scientists to stop trying to explain things at a certain point” (Bateson 1972: 39).

Burke (1945: 152) argues that the line of thought about an inherent and materially founded human nature originates from Rousseau’s Emile “where ‘nature’ itself is transformed from a

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28 For an example of going toward a higher level see Wilber (2000).
scene word to an agent word...referring to the principles of growth inherent in human nature.” Subsequently, biology was no longer outside of the agent, but also within an “agent-minus”, who was turned into an organism with an inherent or biological human nature (ibid.: 155). In this manner a plethora of possible human motives and a gamut of individual acts were reduced to a few internal substances and accompanied causes of motivation, as exemplified by Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) theorizing. This line of thought became fully formed in Freud’s postulation of three anthropomorphic agencies within the mind: id, ego, and superego. The interactions between these agencies could thereafter be used to explain more or less any form of behavior (Makari 2008; Schafer 1976).

Even though there is much that could be said about the naturalist and materialist linguistic preferences concerning human motivation and mental health that predate Freud (e.g. Ellenberger 1971; Foucault 1965), one can simplify the conceptual development by saying that in the 20th century motivation and also motives became highly reduced into something active, general and directional in the newly theorized landscape of mind (see Bruner 2004; Burke 1945), and often thought to be located within the brain of the generic agent. The postulation of basic psychological needs as a rationalizing ground for wellbeing arguably parallels Freud’s reductionistic theorizing of internal agencies in the mind.

There would in other words seem to be a conceptual tendency within materialism and especially in connection with agent-centricity. It leads to hypothesizing of the internal constitution of the agent as the reason for conduct (Burke 1945). Burke (1945) has however argued that there is a “paradox of substance” in this form of thought, because, as Burke argues, matter is principally a scenic word. By going inwards into the agent, the vocabulary turns into a scenic landscape of various substances and entities as exemplified by Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) theory of different layers of consciousness. Burke (1945) argues that the reduction of a set of experiences about conduct into internal entities becomes at some point accepted as part of nature, and the internal entities become assumed to exist in nature instead of being representations for certain forms of conduct.

Burke (1945) refers to this form of thought as the “paradox of substance.” This conceptual move makes materialism compatible with scenic naturalism (Burke 1945). A linguistic form that centers on the properties of the agent is therefore highly compatible, perhaps even Siamese twins, with a linguistic form that deals with agent-environment interactions (agent-scene ratio, Burke 1945). At this point it is worth remembering that we have previously argued that the linguistic forms that focus on the agent and agent-environment interactions are the principal linguistic forms in wellbeing theory (see Part I).

As shown with the examples of Freud and psychological needs, there is a conceptual tendency within materialism and naturalism to reduce conduct into a handful of substances or entities (Burke 1945; 1984). In terms of empirical psychology, to a handful of “constructs” (e.g. Ryff 1989; Seligman 2011). The reduction of conduct into inherent substances or, for example, needs in the mind (e.g. Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Ryan & Deci 2000) can be thought of as similar to the linguistic reduction of wellbeing into a handful of different resources (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Hobfoll 1989; 2002), be they in the mind or in the environment. Indeed, many wellbeing theories utilize this facet in the term resource, that it can be in the agent or the environment (e.g. Fredrickson 2001; Hobfoll 2002). We noted earlier that in our current day and age wellbeing in organizations is often discussed in terms of resources (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti 2007; Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Dutton et al. 2006). We have also remarked that resource is a powerful metaphor because more or less everything can be reduced and thus
thought of as a resource (e.g. Hobfoll 1989; 2002). However, such vast reductions have their benefits and shortcomings.

Burke (1945) analyzes vast conceptual reductions of conduct through an in-depth analysis of the reduction of a gamut of particular motives into the singular motive of money. For the purpose of our analysis, money can be understood as a subcategory of resources, because resources can be thought of as linguistically even more versatile than money, as will soon be shown. An analysis of the conceptual transformation of motives into money sheds light on the kinds of linguistic reductions and conceptual transformations that are used to add explanatory power to a linguistic form. Vast reductions enable the vocabulary to be used in many different kinds of situations, but as several scholars have noted, often also lose the uniqueness of each situation (see Bakhtin 1993; Berlin 1996; 2013a; 2013b; Shotter 2015).

Burke’s (1945) analysis suggests that such vast reductions are often accompanied with a conceptual transformation into a purpose. Money, for example, is often accepted as an overarching motive, regardless of the situation. A concept like money can be thought of as extremely versatile and thus useful within its characteristic language game by being able to play different coordinates of the pentad. Materialism and naturalism exhibit both conceptual characteristics – vast reductionism and conceptual transformations into agency and purpose – which is probably one major reason why this particular vocabulary and linguistic form is so compelling (Burke 1945).

Money and thus also the concept of resource are powerful metaphors for explaining conduct because they are versatile; the concept can play the part of multiple coordinates of the pentad. Burke (1945: 92) argues that money was originally a medium or “agency of economic actions” but was quickly transformed “into a function as the ground or purpose of economic action. That is, instead of using money as a medium to facilitate the production and distribution of goods, men were moved to produce and distribute goods in response to money as motive.” (italics in original) Money in other words became transformed from an agency or instrument into an all-encompassing purpose for action. Money could subsequently be thought of as a singular reason for action regardless of the other elements in the pentad (Burke 1945).

The concept of resources is probably even more versatile than the concept of money. Resources can be part of the environment (scene) (e.g. Deci et al. 2017), they can be found within the agent’s mind (Luthans et al. 2007), acts can build resources (Fredrickson 2014), and as with money, resources can be thought of as both means (agency) and ends (purpose) for conduct (e.g. Fredrickson 2001; Hobfoll 2002; Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). The term resource also implies that the resources are commensurate, they can be accumulated, exchanged and transformed to fit different situations in life (see Nussbaum 2001). It would seem that the entire dramatistic pentad can be set to revolve around resources, which shows the efficiency and encompassing character of this particular vocabulary.

The strong metaphorical connection between wellbeing and resources, a connection that seems to be ubiquitous in wellbeing theory (Cartwright & Cooper 2009), probably allows the concept of wellbeing to be used with equal versatility. It can be argued that wellbeing is not left as a positive description of conduct (see Part I) but is often and especially in organizational wellbeing research used in relation to purpose and agency (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Page & Vella-Brodrick 2009). Wellbeing has thus most likely become, similarly to money, a ubiquitous “rationalizing ground for action” (Burke 1945: 113; see also Moscovici 2008). The influential Aristotelian legacy where happiness and wellbeing form the highest good would seem to support this conclusion, that wellbeing is used to theorize of especially about the dramatistic
coordinates of purpose and agency (Aristotle 2005). Burke’s (1945) analysis of money as motive and how the teleological vocabulary was by far and large transformed into a technological one, underscores the linkages between means and ends, or agency and purpose in Burke’s terminology.

The conceptual transformation between agency and purpose is instrumental for the versatility of a vocabulary. Many problematic situations at work can for example be solved with money, which shows the use of this concept as an instrument of agency. The transformation into agency allows the presence or absence of some particular resource, for example, to be theorized of as an explanation to almost any unique situation (e.g. Hackman & Oldham 1980; Hobfoll 2002). In addition to these commonsense examples, it should be noted that agency and purpose have recently been theorized of as highly significant to wellbeing. For example, both loss of purpose and loss of agency have in themselves have been argued to lead to diminished wellbeing (Bandura 1977; 1982; 1989; Frankl 1946/2006; Janoff-Bulman 1992; Seligman 1990/2006). This shows the strong connections between wellbeing, agency and purpose, although here we come to this conclusion through a conceptual analysis of what might be expected of a concept that is used as a “rationalizing ground for action” (Burke 1945).

There is in other words reason to believe that in our current day and age vast linguistic reductions into a handful of physical or psychological entities such as resources would seem to be accompanied by a conceptual transformation, that those entities can play the part of both means and ends (Burke 1945). Burke (1945: 110) refers to these kinds of highly general concepts as “god-terms”, into which the other elements of the pentad can be reduced or merged into. God-terms are used to merge especially agency and purpose into the already reduced vocabulary. This makes it simultaneously more general and descriptively more economic. The god-term can variously function as a rationalizing ground for action; it can function as a generic purpose or agency, which together manage to explain almost any how and why of conduct. From this point of view, it is not a coincidence that within organizational wellbeing literature there is a dual concern for both performance (purpose) and wellbeing (agency) (e.g. Cropaanzano & Wright 2001; Deci et al. 2017). Note the transformation of wellbeing into agency and economic performance into purpose in this discourse.

As Deci et al. (2017: 38-39) put it, “the traditional goal of organizational psychologists” is to “facilitate profitability – and at the same time support the well-being of the employees.” The means and ends overlap can easily be noticed in such statements. Wellbeing can be an end from an employee point of view, but also a means from an economic standpoint. Wellbeing thus plays a dual role of both means and ends. According to Deci et al. (2017), this would seem to be an implicit presupposition within organizational wellbeing research. Burke’s (1945) analysis of linguistic shifts suggests that this conceptual transformation between means and ends was given birth to when the environment and its scenic objects became perceived as technology. According to Burke 1945: 276), with the great watershed moment in Western thought, when final cause was downplayed and the last mover was emphasized, there was a “reversal of causal ancestry – and whereas means were treated in terms of ends, ends became treated in terms of means.” Burke analysis thus suggests that with the Newtonian transformation of science (see Burtt 1932/2003) even wellbeing became thought of as means, instead of being an Aristotelian end in itself.

Our analysis suggests that wellbeing theories, due to the combination of the Aristotelian and Newtonian lineages, tend to include linguistic transformations into agency and purpose. Maslow’s (1971/1993; 1987) hierarchical theory of motivation that underscores self-
actualization as the highest form of wellbeing is a case in point of a theory where purpose and agency are almost completely merged into the individual-centric and generic act of self-fulfillment. One could argue that in much of contemporary wellbeing theorizing purpose has been merged into the generic agent as for example a tendency, an appetite, passion, or need of for example self-fulfillment, self-actualization or autonomy (e.g. Haybron 2008; Maslow 1987; Ryan & Deci 2000). To recollect, this is a common linguistic move to materialism and naturalism (Burke 1945), which either omits or merges other elements of the pentad such as scene, act and agency into the agent.

The reduction can be said to have gone so far, that no longer even unique agents are present in the theories, but merely the generic internal mental landscape of particular constructs and their relations to conduct in a general environment (e.g. Deci et al. 2017; Freud 1995 ed. Gay). The presence of purpose is especially salient in concepts such as self-actualization and its familial variants (e.g. self-fulfillment, self-determination, self-realization, etc.), which are often described as “autotelic” actions (Csíkszentmihalyi 1990). Following Aristotle’s (2005) theorizing of virtuous acts, autotelic acts are theorized to be performed for their own sake. Such concepts in effect merge agency and purpose into the selfsame concept, often portrayed as a property or tendency within the agent. Autonomy, as another example, on the other hand can be easily thought of as an agency concept, that which is needed to accomplish for instance “nature-fulfillment” (Haybron 2008) within some generic scene.

The language of self-actualization, nature-fulfillment, and autonomy, for example, can be applauded for being a highly efficient language, paralleling money and resources (Burke 1945), or power (Bourdieu 1991; Foucault 1977) as a rationalizing ground for action, and thus also as the ultimate remedy to any ailment. Most likely any situation can be analyzed to include or exclude some such god-term, which due to its conceptual versatility encompasses both purpose and agency, and thus most likely manages to explain (i.e. “redescribe”, see Rorty 1989) the how and why in the situation, and the needed remedies.29

Burke (1945: 26) however cautions against abstracting human beings and motivational matters to a too “high level of generalization”, because such theories tend to “dissolve’ man into nature”; and consequently “the more thorough one is carrying out his enterprise [of studying a generic human nature], the more surely he opens himself to the charge of failing to discuss man ‘in himself.’” The vast reduction of unique situations and motives into god-terms in other words lose the particulars of the situation and other elements of the pentad (see also Nussbaum 2001). As I understand Burke, he argues that the dramatistic pentad gives the full scope of possible motives for action. Vast reductions of those motives manage to lose sight of the pentad and the full range of motives in “man in himself.” The use of vast conceptual reductions in the form of god-terms very likely increase the explanatory power of a vocabulary, but may not necessarily offer the kind of serviceability that the persons in those unique situations would require in order to ‘go on’ with the involvement and the situation (see Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b; Shotter 2016).

Burke (1945) argues that the conceptual transformation between agency and purpose is not entirely complete with only merged concepts such as singular god-terms. Burke’s analysis of linguistic forms suggests that additional linguistic resources are needed to be able to smoothly theorize of the circularity between agency and purpose. Burke (1945: 279) has noticed a

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29 See Wittgenstein’s (2009) discussion about the difference between description and explanation. A short description of the difference is that explanations, as I understand Wittgenstein, tend to be imaginative answers that nullify or settle the need for the explanation whereas description is much more exact and arduous, and does not have the purpose of creating philosophical harmony.
“transitional device” that allows shifts between agency to purpose, namely, “biologic functioning” (italics added; cf. positive psychological functioning, Ryff 1989, mental flourishing, Keyes 2002).

Burke explains the rationale for the transitional device thus: “the bodily organs are means towards ends; each, insofar as it is functioning properly, carries out the kind of ‘purpose’ for which it is designed; and it serves a use in furthering the survival of the organism” (Burke 1945: 279). Burke’s analysis in other words suggests that in the linguistic form associated with materialism, there is an established conceptual pathway for theorizing fluently about both means and ends, which is to emphasize biologic functioning. It can be argued that the same emphasis can be found in many wellbeing theories (for examples see Deci et al. 2017; Fredrickson 2014; Ryff 1989). From a conceptual point of view, one can perhaps go as was as to say that within the tradition of materialism and naturalism the term wellbeing might be a linguistic device similar to biologic functioning; its conceptual merit in everyday speech perhaps lies in enabling smooth conceptual transformations between agency and purpose in any given situation.

Be that as it may, one can notice a neat and effective circularity to this vocabulary, when a scenic word can also be used to represent agency and purpose, which can again be turned back into a scenic description of a state of affairs. For example, general resources can be turned into needed resources that transform the nature of the scene (Hobfoll 1989; 2002); or similarly, money or resources can be used to fulfill one’s individual needs and desires at any given point in time, which through need-satisfaction alter the state of affairs of the human organism (e.g. Deci et al. 2017). There is reason to believe that this kind of conceptual circularity between elements of the pentad, where a single word can play several parts of the pentad, is a conceptual invention that increases the explanatory power and scope of the vocabulary. The utility of conceptual circularity becomes salient especially in connection with explanations to dramatic sequences of events (Burke 1945).

The conceptual circularity is similar to what is possible between the “big three” (Burke 1945: 274) of the scene-act, scene-agent, and act-agent ratios and how their circularity can be utilized to harmonize a state of affairs. Burke explains it thus:

“If an agent acts in keeping with his nature as an agent (act-agent ratio), he may change the nature of the scene accordingly (scene-act ratio), and thereby establish a state of unity between himself and his world (scene-agent ratio). Or the scene may call for a certain kind of act, which makes for a corresponding kind of agent, thereby likening agent to scene. Or our act may change us and our scene, producing a mutual conformity. Such would be the Edenic paradigm, applicable if we were capable of total acts that produce total transformations. In reality, we are capable of but partial acts, acts that but partially represent us and that produce but partial transformations. Indeed, if all the ratios were adjusted to one another with perfect Edenic symmetry, they would be immutable in one unending ‘moment.’” (Burke 1945: 19)

Burke in so many words argues that there is a dramatistic circularity between the big three. Once a “Trouble” (Bruner 2004) has manifested as an incongruence between at least two coordinates of the pentad, it can be resolved with the help of the circularity, where the coordinates are brought to harmony (Burke 1945). According to Burke’s analysis, this reharmonization can occur through several pathways because the coordinates of the pentad are tightly coupled and there is a principle of consistency at least between the big three. The Trouble thus becomes resolved when the pentadic coordinates are brought to alignment by an act, a change
in scene or a change in the agent. For example, recovery from trauma would indeed seem to follow this pattern (see Janoff-Bulman 1992). Bruner (2004) and Burke (1945) argue that this pattern of a transition from disharmony to harmony is a general feature of any narrative account or dramatic sequence of events.

Drama, according to Burke, often follows a common path of “poiema, pathema, mathema (the act, the sufferance or state, the thing learned)” (Burke 1945: 41). “The action organizes the resistant factors, which call forth the passion; and the moment of transcendence arise when the sufferer (who had originally seen things in unenlightened terms) is enabled to see in more comprehensive terms, modified by his suffering” (Burke 1945: 264). The drama in wellbeing related sequences of events by far and large could be characterized in a similar way (see Bruner 2004; Nussbaum 2001).

A common drama that affects wellbeing can be described as follows: the drama is often instigated when there occurs a tension between dramatistic elements like between a scene and the agent as in depression (Joiner & Coyne 1999), or agency and purpose, between what the person is capable of and what the person is required to accomplish (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990). The consequences on wellbeing are noted, for example as an increase in negative emotions and decrease in positive emotions and a corresponding change in arousal (Diener et al. 1999; Russell 1980; 2003). The negative state of affairs prompts action. Then there is reharmonization or enlightenment of some sort (e.g. Janoff-Bulman 1992; Joseph 2011), which releases the emotional load and returns a harmony or balance of resources to the situation (e.g. Dodge et al. 2012; Shain & Kramer 2004). The particular dramatic remedy depends on what other dramatistic coordinates are employed and consequently the circumspection of the drama in question. But the drama arguably ends when wellbeing is revived and thus the symmetry between, for instance, agency and purpose is restored.

If a concept like resource or other similar vast reductions can be used in a versatile manner and play several different coordinates of the dramatistic pentad through conceptual circularity, it would then seem to be able to describe perhaps any dramatic sequence of events in a highly effective and economic manner (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Hobfoll 2002). Conceptual circularity thus makes this materialist and naturalist language in connection with conduct and thus also with wellbeing very general and economic. It most likely becomes very compelling to those who seek these features in a theory (see e.g. Weick 1999).

Burke (1945: 82) accordingly argues that when there is perfect harmony between the different coordinates in the pentad and thus between all of the ratios (act-agent, agent-purpose, purpose-agency, agency-scene, etc.) drama ceases in a “perfect Edenic symmetry”:

“That is, the quality of scene, act, agent, agency, and purpose would be all the same, all of one piece; hence there would be no opportunity for a new ‘beginning’ whereby the agent would undertake a different quality of act that might change the quality of himself or of his scene, etc.

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30 In the context of psychotherapeutic practice, O’Hanlon and Wilk (1987) refer to the grammatical dilemma in wellbeing enhancement as the practice of negotiating the therapeutic problem with the patient so that the problem is of the kind that it can actually be solved in real life. That is, so that the problem is not a problem of linguistic form but one that can be solved through action. Burke (1954/1984) portrays psychoanalysis as a replacement of linguistic form in which the prior problem not so much is solved but dissolves in the new vocabulary.

31 It might be of interest to note that Heidegger’s (1962/2008) shifts between “ready-to-hand”, “unready-to-hand” and “presence-at-hand” follow the same pattern between beginning a drama (presence-at-hand or unready-to-hand dependent on context and ending it (ready-to-hand) (see e.g. Chia & Holt 2006).

32 These features however break down upon close scrutiny of the premises or when the vocabulary is mirrored onto a full range of human experiences and situations (e.g. Nussbaum 2001).
Thus, there could be no becoming, but only unending being; there could be no ‘alloiosis’, or qualitative change, no development, no origin and destination, no whence and whither, for all terms would contain what all the other terms contained.” (Burke 1945: 82-83)

Burke is however quick to add that in reality the perfect symmetry is never actually accomplished, because “total transformations” are impossible and the drama of lived life never ends in an unending and immutable moment with nothing to aspire towards. Such total merger between the coordinates of the pentad and the aspired Edenic symmetry never actually occur in real-life, according to Burke (1984: xlix), because “only angels communicate absolutely” and thus achieve complete transformations whereas mankind must settle with only “partial acts” (Burke 1945).

To summarize, we have argued that there are some common conceptual tendencies within the linguistic tradition of materialism and naturalism that most likely underpin much of present-day wellbeing theory: reductionism into god-terms, the tendency to theorize of agency and purpose in association with wellbeing, the use of linguistic devices and conceptual transformations to increase conceptual versatility and the explanatory power of the vocabulary, and conceptual circularity as frugal means to explain in very general terms perhaps any dramatic sequence of events. These conceptual tendencies exemplify what kinds of conceptual pathways can be found as part of a well-developed linguistic form. Our analysis suggests that once such tendencies are in place, they may direct subsequent conceptualizations similar to “paradigms” (Kuhn 1962/2012).

Our discussion also suggests that many prominent theories within wellbeing scholarship exhibit conceptual tendencies that are associated with materialism and naturalism. These conceptual tendencies provide additional support for the conclusion that wellbeing scholarship can be analyzed in terms of linguistic forms and that the authoritative linguistic forms in wellbeing theory are most likely agent and agent-environment interactionist accounts of wellbeing. We will subsequently refer to the kinds of conceptual tendencies described herein as a network of refined theoretical prototypes, each consisting of theoretical simples called proto-ideas (see Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008). The idea of interlinked theoretical prototypes underscores one noteworthy idea often associated the concept of a paradigm (Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012), that theoretical conceptualizations tend to exhibit similar linguistic principles that undergird theoretical constructions. And that these constructions often cluster and form into common conceptual paths of thought. My suggestion is, then, that eye-opening clusters in wellbeing scholarship can be discerned and brought forth with the help of theoretical serviceability analysis.

8.2 To expand serviceability in contemporary wellbeing theory

At this stage – now that we have discussed that language is used in connection with involvements, the interconnectedness of the elements in the dramaticistic pentad has been discussed, and the clustering of conceptualizations into theoretical prototypes has been investigated – it is possible to lay out Burke’s (1984: 9 ff) approach to “serviceability” in a relatively concise manner.

We have thus far concluded that there are most likely typical conceptual reductions and mergers at play in wellbeing theory due to its predominant form of thought that focuses on the
agent and agent-environment interactions. One should note the alignment between overarch-
ing purpose of the investigation vis-a-vis the choice of linguistic form. The reductions arguably
fit the intentionality or purpose of the vocabulary (Burke 1984; Heidegger 1962/2008; Witt-
genstein 1953). That is to say, there is reason to believe that much of present-day wellbeing
theory quite consciously study wellbeing as a universal, timeless and thus innate and “fixed”
(Pinker 2011) characteristic of human nature (Haybron 2008; Waterman 2013). Considering
that the study of wellbeing as a property of the agent is by far and large considered unproblem-
atic or even commonsensical, one can infer that this linguistic form has been found to be useful
and thus equipped with adequate “serviceability” in its chosen area of investigation.

To my knowledge none have argued that wellbeing could not be studied as something else
than human nature. Indeed, explicit accounts about the benefits of alternative linguistic forms
are scarce in wellbeing theory. This observation in my mind highlights the deflective charac-
teristic in linguistic forms (Burke 1945). The serviceability of alternative linguistic forms can
be approached from several vantage points, one way is to show what other linguistic forms
have to offer, as we have already synoptically discussed in Part I. Serviceability can also be
understood by what is deflected and how, and to avoid being repetitive, here we approach the
topic through this characteristic.

Several authors have argued that past conceptualizations tend to become a set of steadfast
conceptual binoculars in the form of blindly accepted dogma that directs how a phenomenon
should be conceptualized (see Elias 1998; Kuhn 1962/2012; Saarinen 2013; Toulmin 1990).
Burke (1945;1984) makes the same point about linguistic forms. Once a linguistic form has
shown serviceability in one domain, it is typical that it is transported to other domains with the
expectation of similar serviceability. The materialist and naturalist language, which has been
shown to be highly useful in the physical sciences, has disseminated into other domains with
equivocal results (e.g. Bateson 1972; Berlin 1997; 2013b; Boas 1928/1986; Elias 1998; Shotter
2015).

In order to become an established linguistic form, scholars have in all likelihood experienced
success and gained proficiency in its use; how to dissect experiences and connect conceptions
about a phenomenon according to the implicit rules in the linguistic form (Burke 1954/1984).
Through past successes, conceptual inventions and implicit agreements in a language commu-
nity about how to conceptualize matters, scholars have thus gained an “orientation” (Burke
1954/1984). That is to say, gained a “bundle of judgements as to how things were, how they
are, and how they may be” (Burke 1984: 14; see also Kuhn 1962/2012).

An orientation can be thought of as employing a commonsensical linguistic form in connec-
tion with one’s typical involvements such as a particular topic for scientific investigations. In
those involvements one expects to find the linguistic form useful. In the context of science, one
most likely expects the linguistic form to provide a set of services such as being concise, easily
communicated, and enabling insightful future discoveries. To put it in Burke’s words: “An ori-
tentation is a schema of serviceability” (Burke 1984: 21). An orientation is a way of “putting
together of experiences” (Burke 1984: 76), and in this sense it in practice equals the use of a
linguistic form. An orientation can therefore be understood as a paradigmatic or metatheoret-

The problem with an orientation is that it can “guide or misguide” (Burke 1984: 76). It is the
success of an orientation and its corresponding linguistic form which is the origin to resistance
to its subsequent transformation (see Schein (1992) for a similar argument regarding culture
change, see also Ford & Ford 2008). There is an act of faith or equivalently an element of
“foretelling” (Burke 1984: 80) in the that the linguistic form is proper for the subject of study (see also Toulmin 1990; 2003). The employed linguistic form with its selections of experience and conceptual linkages can however become a “deflection of reality” (Burke 1945: 59). To use Veblen’s concept, it can become a “trained incapacity” by which is meant “that state of affairs one’s very abilities can function as blindnesses” (Burke 1984: 7). When the linguistic form is misaligned with the topic of investigation the established schema of serviceability can become an “occupational psychosis” (Burke 1984: 37).

This trained occupational blindness is often steadfast and self-reinforcing comparable to a belief-system. According to Burke (1984: 262), “an orientation, or Weltanschauung, tends to become a self-perpetuating structure, creating the measures by which it shall be measured.” According to Rorty (1989) this is typical of different vocabularies, that they create the measures by which they should be assessed. Interestingly, all established linguistic forms that have become common sense do not, according to Burke, actually accomplish what they were intended for, but have inconspicuously created their own sets of measures regarding the ‘correct style’ of reasoning. According to Burke (1984: 63), the difficulty with supplying a philosophical correction in these cases is that the subsequent “attacks upon the corrective philosophy of science are rarely based on a careful scrutiny of the author’s reasoning, but generally justify themselves by appeal to the authority of the scientific rationalization itself [of the established orientation].” (italics in original)

Toulmin (1958/2003; 2003) has, similarly to Burke, argued that there is no objective or pure rationality, but instead, proper reasoning is determined against its historical backdrop; how faithful it is to the kind of reasoning that should be used in an engagement of its kind. Toulmin in other words argues that to consider a study as rational is another way of saying that it is aligned with past conceptualizations regarding the subject matter. Alternative conceptual pathways can be actively avoided. The history of science and philosophy testify to this development (Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1982; 1962/1999; 1965). Accordingly, established schemas of serviceability often comprise an entire logic of “rationalization” that is internally consistent and upholds itself against alternative ways of thought (Burke 1984; Kuhn 1962/2012; Rorty 1989). Burke gives the example of magic as a rationalization:

“The magician’s ability to bring about the orderly progression of the seasons, assure the fertility of seeds, and promote the conception of children was on the whole astonishingly successful. And if a plague or drought resisted him for a time, the assumption that a counter-spell was at work served to keep the rationalization beyond attack. As with the modern scientist when the manipulation of causal laws goes amiss, he could humbly admit that we still do not know enough.” (Burke 1984: 61)

Burke in other words argues that an orientation is often equipped with different commonly accepted rationalizations for why it has not been able to foretell events or why it cannot explain a phenomenon in accordance with the expectations associated with the linguistic form. Several scholars have in the past century argued that a change in orientation is exceedingly difficult to accomplish; in part due to the act of faith associated with a choice of linguistic form and in part

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33 The term is borrowed from Dewey. Burke uses occupational psychosis and trained incapacity interchangeably.

34 In this study I understand “common sense” (Toulmin 1990; 2003) as the established, predominant or privileged “orientation” (Burke 1984; Shotter 2010), “clime of opinion” (Becker 1932/2003), “thought style” (Fleck 1979), or “paradigm” (Kuhn 1962/2012) based on the context of use.
because of how they tend to deflect alternative conceptualizations (e.g. Burke 1984; Bateson & Bateson 1987; Toulmin 2003). To change an orientation entails a “different way of linkage” (Burke 1984: 16). These new linkages are difficult to accomplish, because it entails acknowledging a new set of beliefs about what is known and not known. “Knowledge is all sort of knitted together, or woven, like cloth, and each piece of knowledge is only meaningful or useful because of the other pieces” (Bateson 1972: 21-22). The intertwinement of knowledge with the linguistic form tends to become “a self-perpetuating system” because “each part tends to corroborate the other parts” (Burke 1984: 169). This makes changes of orientation and corresponding linguistic forms difficult:

“As soon as one tries to carry his [new] pattern of [conceptual] cuts beyond the classifications recognized in common speech, one strains at the limits of ‘good taste’, since good taste is manifested through our adherence to the kinds of relationships already indicated by the terminology of common sense” (Burke 1984: 103; see also Toulmin 1990; 2003).

In the context of wellbeing theory, take for example a change from a resource view (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009) to a view about moral action in unsettling circumstances (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). The resource view can be said to have a very generic schema of serviceability in that it can analyze almost any situation in terms of presence and absence of particular resources. Such a schema of serviceability might not however be very useful in understanding what to do next in a morally vexing situation where there are multiple possible actions, with some expected probabilities for the different outcomes. When in the midst of a moral crisis (see e.g. Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b), a helpful schema of serviceability probably analyzes the situation and perceives acts differently than in the resource view. According to Burke and others, one problem in such shifts in orientation is that they may be difficult to accomplish; even though a schema of serviceability is found wanting another may not be immediately available.

Burke argues that when the orientation and its schema of serviceability is not adequate for handling a situation or despite best efforts does not seem to lead to the kind of outcomes one expects or aims at, then an alternative orientation and linguistic form can be sought. According to Burke (1954/1984), the change in orientation and the serviceability of the linguistic form begins by introducing a “philosophic corrective” (1984: 61, italics in original) or “perspective by incongruity” (Burke 1984: 69). “Any attempt to offer two concepts where the language of common sense had had one, or to offer a merger where the language of common sense had discriminated, naturally requires an artificial manipulation of the linguistic properties” (Burke 1984: 110). A philosophic corrective makes the argument for, for example, de-merging and reintroducing what was previously reduced from the explanatory model such as reintroducing an omitted element from the dramatistic pentad. A philosophic corrective thus puts the established linguistic form to “tests of prosperity” (Burke 1984: 169). This can be done by showing that the original vocabulary does not attain what it was intended to accomplish, that there are those who do not prosper by its use, or that it does not fit all intelligible purposes associated with the subject matter (Burke 1954/1984). Burke (1984: 162) argues that “the essentials of purpose and gratification will not change” when it comes to the ultimate motives for shifts in orientation; that is, linguistic forms change only if the purpose of the investigation or use changes.

Planned incongruity can be accomplished in several ways, and Burke does not give a thorough program on it but instead several illustrations. According to Burke, the philosophic
corrective commonly includes some sort of dethroning or “conversion downward” (Burke 1984: 133). A deified linguistic form is thus brought to a levelled playing field, where it can be shown to have shortcomings. Burke gives the example of psychoanalysis as a way of introducing a novel vocabulary to a problem of orientation that subsequently does not solve the patient’s problem, but rather dissolves it (see Wittgenstein 1953 for a similar point of view):

“By selecting a vocabulary which specifically violates the dictates of style and taboo, it changes the entire nature of [the] problem, rephrasing it in a form for which there is a solution. Insofar as it is curative, its effects seem due to the fact that it exorcises the painful influences of a vestigial religious orientation by appeal to the prestige of the newer scientific orientation. [...] Essentially, it is at the very roots of incongruity, bringing a professional, dispassionate, detached point of view to bear upon a subject matter which has been surrounded with the pieties of intense personal devotion, awe, and silence” (Burke 1984: 125, 128).

This study can, for example, be understood as including a philosophical corrective by first arguing for the inclusion and later to focus upon acts and the act-scene ratio instead of limiting wellbeing scholarship to the agent and agent-scene ratio (see Part I). With the help of the dramatistic pentad and Burke’s insights into the use of linguistic forms it can be argued that the linguistic forms that focus on the agent or agent-scene interactions do not adequately take acts into account in wellbeing theory (conversion downwards). Our argument is that current wellbeing theory is not as prosperous as it could be in terms of acts due to the prevalent and unargued philosophical limitations in linguistic form in contemporary wellbeing theory. Moreover, here it is argued that the privileged linguistic forms do not allow adequate serviceability to answer research questions pertaining to wellbeing related acts and the act-scene ratio (test of prosperity).

Another often mentioned path into a change in orientation can be accomplished through intense focus on a detail that the predominant linguistic form would traditionally omit or downplay. Several scholars have noted that revisionary accounts that take a novel look into a phenomenon often begin from small, insignificant but disharmonious details which the established vocabulary cannot put together and reconcile (Feyerabend 1975/2010; Kuhn 1962/2012; Spinosa et al. 1997). For example, in SDT one could argue that all intrinsic motives are not reducible to the postulated basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Martela & Ryan 2016). Such observations can lead to incremental changes in the framework, but they can also serve as a pivot point for a revisionary shift in the overarching orientation (Burke 1945; see Shotter 2015; Spinosa et al. 1997). According to Burke, it is subsequently up to the reader if a prior omission serves as an extension of the original theory or as a deviation from it:

“And since these modifications of [a] thesis are like adjectives attached to a noun, you can with some justice adopt here a policy of either goodwill or illwill. For it is always a matter of casuistry to decide whether you will treat the modification of a principle as an ‘extension of’ the principle or a ‘deviation from’ it – and so you may decide to treat the modifiers as either ‘constitutional’ or ‘unconstitutional’ variants of the nouns.” (Burke 1945: 104, italics in original)

35 See O’Hanlon & Wilk (1987) and Seikkula & Amkili (2006) for similar accounts on shifts in orientation by changing the form of the questions or the setting where they are posed.
It is probably due to such ambiguity that it is difficult to draw the exact limits of serviceability for any linguistic form. There are several ways and purposes to which one can use a hammer, and all those ways are not predictable when the hammer is designed (Heidegger 1962/2008; Wittgenstein 1953). Burke accordingly argues that the characteristics of novel serviceability and the possible contribution in different problem formulations are difficult to predict beforehand. Burke (1984: 81) puts it thus:

“a new orientation, a new system of meanings, an altered conception as to how the world is put together; [...] it is insisted that, if we change our ways of acting to bring them more into accord with the new meanings (rejecting old means and selecting new means as a better solution for the problem as now rephrased), we shall bring ourselves and our group nearer to the good life.”

Consequently, an improvement in one’s orientation and its schema of serviceability can perhaps be articulated only after a change in orientation and from that newly acquired vantage point (Burke 1984; Rorty 1989). Burke (1954/1984) thus, paralleling his contemporary Wittgenstein (1953/2009; 2009), comes to the conclusion that the serviceability of a newly proposed thought style should be proof enough of the appropriateness of the employed linguistic form. Put more precisely, if it passes the test of prosperity by serving the clarified interests, preferences and purposes; provides gratification where other linguistic forms have failed; or provides an altered and improved “implement of action” (Burke 1984: 173) in situations where others have failed, then it has proven itself. The new orientation and its linguistic form become an improved measure of reality. “Reality is what things will do to us or for us” (Burke 1984: 22). One valuable characteristic in the dramatistic pentad is how it allows one to make an informed guess from which direction a novel linguistic form might arise.

To summarize, novel serviceability in an area of research can be gained in several ways, but tend to require clarifying the philosophical aims and preferences of the investigation and thus of the vocabulary, and scrutinizing the vocabulary for how well it actually includes and discerns the kinds of experiences that fit the intended purpose of the investigation (for a seminal example see Bateson 1972). It is likely that in some cases the serviceability of an extant linguistic form may suffice and in other instances an alternative schema of serviceability is in order. A deliberate change in linguistic form can be difficult to accomplish as it would seem to incorporate a change in how extant knowledge is knitted together, one’s sense of reality, a change in what experiences are highlighted, and a change in what experiences and conceptualizations become deflected and rationalized away as impertinent or acceptable omissions (Bateson & Bateson 1987; Burke 1945; 1984; Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin 1958/2003).

Our discussion suggests that in contemporary wellbeing theory there can be severe limits to serviceability in discussing acts within scenes that are not just universal and thus implicitly assuming a metaphysics where there is “one underlying situation common to all men” (Burke 1984: 221). Arguably, there are numerous wellbeing theories that omit act altogether (see e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Dodge et al 2012; Haybron 2008), which perhaps unexpectedly, may leave them at a disadvantage in discussing and suggesting tangible acts to improve wellbeing within narrower scenes than the unvarying cosmos (Berlin 1998; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999).
9. The formation and analysis of theoretical prototypes

The final aspect of theoretical serviceability analysis concerns the notion that the conceptual treatment of a subject matter can be broken down to employed “proto-ideas” (Fleck 1979) and larger networks of theoretical prototypes. We have hitherto argued that there are common conceptual tendencies within wellbeing scholarship that are linked with the philosophical preferences of materialism and naturalism. Additionally, we have shown that such conceptual tendencies can be brought forth and analyzed with the help of the dramatistic pentad. Here we systematize the argument even further. In this argument I rely chiefly on Kuhn’s (1962/2012) erudition and insights, many of which to my understanding are supported by other scholars as well (e.g. Burke 1984; Fleck 1979; Toulmin 1990). However, before we turn to the notions of proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes as means to model a phenomenon, it may be conducive to provide a contrastive backdrop by discussing recent developments in how language is utilized in theory-building. In organization studies the crossing of language between two linguistic domains by way of analogous comparison or domain-interaction is commonly considered to play on the use of tropes like metaphor (Cornelissen 2006; Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Morgan 1997; Oswick et al. 2002) or conceptual blending (Cornelissen 2005; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Oswick et al. 2011).

9.1 Domain crossing and conceptual blending

The common view of language crossover between two linguistic domains – the “source” and the “target” domains (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) – has been introduced at length by others (Cornelissen 2006; Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008; Oswick et al. 2002; Oswick et al. 2004; Tsoukas 1991) as well as its recent advancement as “conceptual blending” (Cornelissen 2005; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Oswick et al. 2011), and therefore need not be reiterated here in depth. A short review may therefore suffice.

Tropes are an “ubiquitous linguistic necessity” (Oswick et al. 2002: 295) used to concisely convey meaning. There are many kinds of tropes including anomaly, paradox, synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor. Especially metaphors, or the “master trope” as it is sometimes referred to, are often used to elucidate or to bring forth key characteristics in a topic of interest (Oswick et al. 2002). In organization theory metaphors have been introduced as alternative “images of organization” like organization as machine, a psychic prison or organism (Cornelissen 2004; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Morgan 1997). The generative possibilities of tropes and especially metaphors for organization theory and especially theory-building have been emphasized by numerous scholars. Accordingly, relatively recently several scholars have argued for a “more reflexive and disciplined approach” to the use of tropes in general and metaphors in particular (Oswick et al. 2002: 301).
According to Oswick et al. (2002) tropes can be divided into two categories, those that underscore similarity (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche) and those that highlight dissimilarity (irony, anomaly, and paradox). Furthermore, they can be categorized according to how many semantic domains they operate with, how complex or simple they are, if they operate within or outside the cognitive comfort zone, how much novel structure is produced, and so forth (Cornelissen 2005; Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008; Oswick et al. 2002). Synecdoche and metonymy, for example, operate within a single domain whereas metaphor mostly functions across domains. Metonymy usually functions as a part-whole substitution within a single domain like ‘crown’ stand for ‘government’ or a ‘suit’ for a ‘businessman.’

Turning to metaphor, consider the metaphor “love is a journey” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Here love is the target domain and journey is the source domain. With the use of a familiar metaphor of journey, its elements are brought into the target domain to highlight (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) or perhaps even create (Cornelissen 2005) aspects of love that share a commonality with a journey (see also O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987). For example, there are ups and downs in love, love changes as does the scenery in a journey, it is as adventurous as a journey and so on. Some aspects are in other words recruited with the metaphor while others are left untouched. For example, with the journey metaphor journeys usually have a destination, they take a limited time, they concern physical movement from one place to another, and so forth. These are not usually used as resources with the topic of love, although humor often plays on such unconventional resources. Nonetheless, usually a familiar conceptual structure is brought from the source domain into the target domain, thus elucidating the target with the help of the familiar metaphor.

Relatively recently the target and source domain model has been extended towards a “domain-interaction model” (Cornelissen 2005) where the two domains interact with one another instead of it being a one-way transfer of conceptual structure.

According to Cornelissen (2005: 751, 757) metaphor “involves the conjunction of whole semantic domains in which correspondence between terms of concepts is constructed, rather than deciphered, and the resulting image and meaning is creative … A semantic domain refers to a vast organization of knowledge such as our knowledge of travel, life, work, or organizations. A semantic domain has a basic structure of entities and relations at a high level of generality (e.g. the semantic domain for travel has roles for the traveler, starting point, route, destination, and so on). Within metaphor, this structure becomes correlated and mapped from one domain (the source) onto another (the target).” (italics in original).

Fauconnier and Turner (2002), whose work Cornelissen chiefly relies upon, have developed an intricate analysis of how conceptual structure can be melted together through “conceptual integration networks.” They call the act of construing even complex conceptual blends with an amazing ease as the innate capacity to form and enact “conceptual blending” (ibid.). Their theory of conceptual blending is masterful in elucidating the ways in which a finite language and past conceptual structure can be imaginatively fitted to enlighten an infinite set of unique situations. The creatively constructed “mental spaces” are “small conceptual pockets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 40). In Fauconnier and Turner’s (2002) model, instead of there being only two semantic domains a source and a target domain, they visualize integration networks as functioning through four spaces: a generic space, two input spaces and a blended space. According to Fauconnier and Turner, in integration networks there is always a generic space that functions as an organizing frame and provides the topology for the blended space and how two conceptual
input spaces are combined in the emergent blend. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) note that there can be emergent structure within the blend which the imputed structure gives rise to, but which is independently elaborated and completed into a logical whole.

“Building an integration network involves setting up mental spaces, matching across spaces, projecting selectively to a blend, locating shared structures, projecting backward into inputs, recruiting new structure to the inputs or the blend, and running various operations in the blend itself.” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 44)

In sum, metaphors and other tropes are mostly referred to in the melting of two concepts or mental spaces in the construction of novel conceptual structure. It is still only prescriptively theorized that the disciplined use of metaphors and other tropes would be generative in theory-building. To my knowledge no studies have yet purposively utilized insights on tropes in their theorizing to construe conceptually novel theory the likes of which Oswick et al. (2011) and Cornelissen (2005) have argued to be possible.

9.2 Proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes

After the publication of Kuhn’s (1962/2012) groundbreaking work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, where he introduced the concept of paradigm that has since become widely known and to some extent even been diluted in meaning, he received some criticism on his many different uses of the word. It is not widely known that Kuhn responded to the criticism in a 1969 postscript included in subsequent printings of the book. In the postscript Kuhn (1962/2012: 173 ff) argues that once all common grammatical transformations are excluded only two different ways in which he used the concept are left. One was a global and the other a local sense of the term. According to Kuhn, it was the latter notion of “exemplar” that in his mind was “the most novel and least understood aspect” of his book (Kuhn 1962/2012: 186).

With the global notion of a paradigm Kuhn meant the kinds of convictions and conceptual commitments a community of scholars adhere to in their professional judgements and in mutual communication. In the postscript he explains the global use of the word with the notion of a “disciplinary matrix” to underscore that it is a wider notion than a theory, but not as nebulous as the word paradigm has been accused of:

“[D]isciplinary’ because it refers to the common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline; ‘matrix’ because it is composed of ordered elements of various sorts, each requiring further specification. All or most of the objects of group commitment that my original text makes paradigms, parts of paradigms, or paradigmatic are constituents of the disciplinary matrix, and as such they form a whole and function together. They are, however, no longer to be discussed as though they were all in one piece.” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 181-182)

Kuhn (1962/2012) exemplifies the disciplinary matrix with multiple formulas from physics (e.g. F=ma) and how the different components in the formulas as well as the formulas themselves often circularly define one another. According to Kuhn and based on examples from the history of science, a change in one of the formulas or in the understanding of the components will result in a cascade in altering the understandings in the other formulas and components. Kuhn is specific in that the disciplinary matrix is not confined to formulas and symbols alone, but much is also in the form of sentences. All in all, these notions or “ordered elements” as Kuhn calls them, form what Kuhn in the original text referred to as a global world view. That
global paradigm is drawn upon in choosing problems to be solved, in forming expectations of the kinds of problems one should be able to solve, and in the “constellation of facts, theories, and methods” that are accepted as past achievements and commonly relied upon in subsequent research.

The second way he utilized the term paradigm was in a local sense, which Kuhn in the postscript describes as models or “exemplars” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 186). With the overlooked and yet invaluable notion of exemplar, Kuhn meant a rudimentary descriptive model how a phenomenon is approached. For example, in mathematics, the pendulum is difficult to model in a Cartesian orthogonal coordinate system, but when replaced by polar coordinates, then the model is astoundingly simple. When the theoretical fabric is cut another way then the issues may become more straightforward and economic to grasp (see also Watzlawick et al. 1967; Wilk 2010a).

According to Kuhn, when a scientist learns his trade, he learns a set of problems and models that solve those problems. The problems and their model solutions form the common set of exemplars that the research community draws upon. According to Kuhn, when a new phenomenon is investigated it is approached through assessment of similarity; what already known problem and model solution is the phenomenon most similar to, as a starting point for the investigation. According to Kuhn, the starting point is crucial for the investigation and its choice is reflected in subsequent theorizing.

Kuhn (1962/2012: 119-124) exemplifies this with how different basic exemplars Aristotle and Galileo chose and how those choices lead to very different outcomes. Aristotle took a falling stone as the basic example for motion whereas Galileo chose the pendulum. Aristotle’s exemplar led him to conclude that the weight of the stone, height of release and the time to standstill as means to calculate the resistance of the medium. The basic example of the pendulum lead Galileo to exclude interest in the medium and instead measure weight, radius, angular displacement, and time per swing to model the pendulum. Galileo’s exemplar basically led to insights about motion that could not be reached from an exemplar of a falling body.

Several eminent scholars have argued for the importance of generating and choosing well the first and most rudimentary coordinate system or “exemplar” (Kuhn 1962/2012) to model the phenomenon. In connection with analyzing human action, Burke talks of the paramount importance of choice regarding the “representative anecdote” (Burke 1945). Because the fabric of action can be cut in so many different ways, to talk of action in an intelligible way, Burke argues, one needs to be clear about the representative anecdote for what is meant by action. In the context of moral reasoning Jonsen and Toulmin (1988) talk about the choice of “paradigm case” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) as a foundation for comparison. According to Jonsen and Toulmin (1988) paradigm cases have been shown to be helpful and of seminal significance in the education and practice of reasoning based on actual and imagined case descriptions. Due to the simplicity and significance of the paradigm case, it can be used to reason about a great variety of cases, even complicated and nuanced ones that perhaps only barely fit the paradigm case. They have been instrumental in the education of prudence and reasonableness whilst taking into account the uncertainties, probabilities and facts of life, alas, without sliding towards rigorous beliefs about the universal and timeless certainty of the paradigm case (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

As a trained physicist Kuhn exemplifies the use of exemplars by drawing upon similarity with Newton’s Second Law of Motion (F=ma). A scientist can take the law to be the basic exemplar but in adapting it to different problems, for example, a falling stone, harmonic oscillation or in
the case of a pendulum the equation is subsequently fitted and transformed to better and more economically reflect the key variables in each model. Consequently, the formula of F=ma is represented by three very different equations in the three models (see Kuhn 1962/2012: 188).

Cornelissen (2005) has relatively recently described in three steps the process of how metaphors are used in theory-building. Here Cornelissen draws heavily on the work of Fauconnier and Turner (2002) and their explicated process for conceptual blending: identity, integration, and imagination. Although the suggested steps by Cornelissen were postulated in the context of metaphors, the similarity of Cornelissen’s account with both Fleck (1979) and Kuhn (1962/2012) suggests that the same process can be expanded into other contexts as well. The three main differences between Cornelissen’s and for instance Kuhn’s view on exemplars are: (1) that exemplars are based on notable past achievements that are subsequently relied upon models for solving problems whereas in Cornelissen’s account the source domain can be more or less freely selected as long as it is enlightening about the phenomenon. Secondly, (2) in Cornelissen’s account similarity is only one simple transference of structure from a source domain and the transference can take much more complicated forms through domain-interaction (see Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Kuhn on the other hand accentuates the importance of simple similarity in the beginning for choosing the basic exemplar from which to continue the refinement of the theory. Thirdly (3), Cornelissen perceives the process to comprise three equally important steps whereas Kuhn accentuates the significance of the first step. One could say that the two accounts are complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

According to Cornelissen, a novel theory should begin from a simple “generic structure” (Cornelissen 2005: 758) when the metaphor is encoded and relevant domains, structures and parallels are selected to the ensuing model. The generic structure can for our purposes be taken to be analogous with an exemplar. The main point is that the exemplar provides a suitable “organizing frame” for the investigated phenomenon (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Cornelissen (2005: 758) posits that the second step is the “development and elaboration of the blend” where particularities of the phenomenon are ascribed to the model. “After a generic structure is constructed, further instance-specific information is transferred from the target and source concepts and is elaborated upon. ... [this] leads the comprehender (i.e. the theorist) to complete and elaborate on the composition made” (Cornelissen 2005: 758). Burke (1945) in reference to the representative anecdote refers to this stage as development of a coherent vocabulary consistent with the representative anecdote. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) refer to this stage as integration. The third step, according to Cornelissen (2005), is to compare the emergent meanings in the blend to the target and source domains and thus gain an appreciation of the novelty and insight in the new blend. In Kuhn’s terms if the emergent model is shown to be better – “‘neater’, ‘more suitable’, or ‘simpler’ than the old” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 154) theory – then it becomes the new paradigm for understanding the phenomenon. In the vocabulary developed herein, it is shown to have in some sense better serviceability than prior theories.

In this study we use the concept of main theoretical prototype as a concept that incorporates Kuhn’s notion of exemplar and the notion of a generic structure from conceptual blending theory (Cornelissen 2005; Fauconnier & Turner 2002). We use the term theoretical prototype and in the plural theoretical prototypes to signify Kuhn’s notion of paradigm as a disciplinary matrix where several theoretical prototypes are intertwined and thus like paradigms “determine large areas of experience at the same time” (Kuhn 1962/2012: 128). To signify the theoretical simples that constitute a theoretical prototype we use the term "proto-idea" (Fleck 1979).
Fleck (1979: 23 ff) used the term proto-idea and proto-ideas to signify hazy ideas and prescientific conceptualizations that are initially seldom either right or wrong but establish a first conceptual steppingstone that with subsequent research often becomes refined into a more precise conceptualization of the phenomenon. Fleck’s notion of proto-idea fits well with Burke’s insights about linguistic forms that are neither right or wrong but accentuate different philosophical preferences. In the context of metaphors, Cornelissen and Kafouros (2008) have referred to theoretical simples such as proto-ideas as “primary metaphors” than are combined to form “complex metaphors.” Analogously and drawing on Fleck and Kuhn, it can be posited that with theoretical development several proto-ideas are refined, combined and formed into more complex theoretical prototypes. One could say that the difference between a proto-idea and a theoretical prototype is that the latter employs more conceptual structure by being an organized amalgam of theoretical simples. This process is perhaps most vividly exemplified by the process of conceptual blending, more specifically, how elaborate blends are selectively formed out of simpler schemas (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). In a similar vein, the history of science has many examples of gradual conceptual changes where an idea is refined and altered during the course of time and in the hands of subsequent scholars (e.g. Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1982; 1962/1999; 1965/1977). This process of gradual conceptual change can be understood as an alteration in what proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes are associated with the concept (see also Wootton 2015).

Previously we discussed different kinds of prescientific conceptual tendencies that derive from philosophical preferences in connection with materialism and naturalism. We showed how such proto-ideas tend to cluster around the choice of linguistic form. The clustering of ideas exemplifies the process of how proto-ideas are combined to serve as a theoretical prototype for how to conceptually grasp a subject matter. Those conceptual choices are seldom right or wrong, merely different and, as discussed, ultimately build into different schemas of serviceability. In Part IV of this study we continue on this discussion by showing how theoretical prototypes tend to be connected to others and thus form a network of ideas that allow for a more refined and even complex conceptual model of the phenomenon.
Summary

Herein we have hitherto indirectly answered the second research question and elucidated on the key terms of the question and its answer. The question was: **On what basis can one argue that a theory is a wellbeing theory even if it utilizes an unconventional linguistic form?**

Based on our discussion about theoretical serviceability analysis we can provide the following explicit answer: I suggest that a theory can be argued to merit inclusion into wellbeing scholarship if the theory advances its overarching purposes and furthers the kinds of involvements that might be expected of wellbeing research. For example, by providing action-oriented knowledge about “life-giving dynamics” in organizations (Cameron & Caza 2004), and thus broadening and complementing the extant scope of serviceability beyond currently dominant agent-centricity (e.g. Haybron 2008) and its siamese twin of agent-environment interactions (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009). To focus on the act-scene ratio instead of the agent or agent-scene ratio is not a violation of wellbeing scholarship. Instead, to do so broadens the scope of questions and answers that wellbeing scholarship is already interested in posing. I submit that there are no viable reasons to limit wellbeing research into the currently prescribed linguistic forms and their accompanied serviceability. On the contrary, there are good reasons to expand into using different linguistic forms in order to add more forms of serviceability to wellbeing scholarship as a whole. To be explicit, I argue that wellbeing research is not defined by its linguistic forms. On the contrary, the linguistic forms are means to wellbeing-relevant purposes and ends. Those ends, often summarized broadly as increasing flourishing in life, can and do extend beyond what can be accomplished with the linguistic forms that, to simplify matters, focus mainly on the study of human nature or study generic humans in a universal environment (e.g. Aristotle 2005; Cameron & Caza 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000).

Our discussions here have also touched upon the fourth research question, which is not surprising because the research questions are to some extent interrelated. The fourth research question was: **What metatheoretical understandings of wellbeing is one inclined to commit to by using the theoretical prototypes stemming from the interactional and relational perspective?** Our conceptual analysis here in Part II suggests that regardless of what kinds of theoretical prototypes one is inclined to employ, there seems to be particular conceptual expectations afoot in relation to wellbeing theories. More specifically, theoretical serviceability analysis suggests that there might be an implicit expectation that wellbeing theories are able to theorize of agency and purpose. In addition, to enable economic conceptual transformations between the two. This implicit expectation provides a quantitative and descriptive metatheory of wellbeing with qualities that enable the theory to be fitted to a variety
of contexts through concise “redescription” (Rorty 1989) or “explanation” (Wittgenstein 2009).

In order for a theory to be instructive in a range of dramatic sequences of events, “agency” and “purpose” would seem to be key elements to describe harmony or disharmony between the tightly coupled big three of “agent”, “act” and “scene” (Burke 1945). That is to say, a descriptive state of affairs of the wellbeing blessed individual might not be enough of a definition of wellbeing as suggested in Part I. When a definition is employed in a theory, the theory may be expected to be able to explain real life ups and down in wellbeing in a way that connects the theory with what is generally sought after and how it is attained in a dramatic sequence of events. It would be logical to conclude that if a theory is not equipped to explain dramatic sequences of events then it may not have any real-world application in relation to human conduct.

Based on the dramatistic pentad, we can say that the lows in wellbeing are most likely represented by a dramatistic “Trouble” (Bruner 2004) or mismatch between one or more coordinates of the pentad (see e.g. Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Dodge et al. 2012; Hobfoll 2002; Nussbaum 2001). A blissful and harmonic state of affairs is conversely described as a balance between the elements of the pentad (e.g. Aristotle 2005; see also Deci et al. 2017). A wellbeing theory, based on our conceptual analysis, is then expected to be able to explain fluctuations between dramatistic mismatches and Edenic harmony. Our analysis of the concept of resource as a god-term suggests that the more general, economic and versatile terms one uses for agency, purpose and to describe states of affairs the more likely they are able to explain any dramatic sequence of events. However, to be able to explain or “redescribe” (Rorty 1989) a situation and to be able to act intelligently or “go on” within it are most likely two different aims that consequently lead to two different kinds of schemas of serviceability (Shotter 2016; Toulmin 1958/2003; Wittgenstein 1953). Based on the dramatistic pentad it can be argued that the more general, frugal and universally applicable a theory becomes in explicating any human situation (scene) the less likely it is to provide action-oriented and circumstantially intelligent knowledge about suitable acts in those situations (Berlin 1996; 1997; 2013b). The dramatistic pentad thus provides another way to conceptualize and understand the well-known tradeoffs between accuracy, generality, and simplicity of a theory (Weick 1999).

In the last chapter we described the notion of how proto-ideas form theoretical prototypes and how several theoretical prototypes build into a disciplinary matrix or “form of thought” (Burke 1945) circling around a common linguistic form, thus paralleling a conceptually founded paradigm of a thought community (Kuhn 1962/2012). The significance of an “exemplar” (Kuhn 1962/2012) or main theoretical prototype as we call it here was highlighted. As we have on several occasions brought forth, initial conceptualizations direct subsequent ones. The insight that conceptualizations in science and in life (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) would seem to be path dependent, highlights the importance of choosing with care one’s initial conceptualizations or main theoretical prototype for a phenomenon.36 This is what is done next in Part III of this study for the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

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“It seems clear that in trying to acquire knowledge about the world, external or internal, physical or mental, we inevitably notice and describe only certain characteristics of it.” (Berlin 1996, chapter 1)

In this study there are two reported encounters with the empirical material, a bit like a qualitative study 1 and study 2, where study 2 builds onwards from study 1 (cf. Mantere 2003). The first encounter establishes the theoretical contours of the core relational and interactional phenomenon that the empirical material directed me towards. I refer to this core as the relational structure, that is coaxed forth with a particular interactional vocabulary. The reader should note that the empirical observations and theoretical discussions here in Part III build and elaborate further on the general interactional model (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Watzlawick 1990) that has already been introduced and discussed at some length in Part I. The purpose of the theoretical discussions (Theory I and Theory II) in this section is to elaborate and be more precise about the employed main theoretical prototype, which can be considered a particular subset of the general interactional model.

Here I also describe the academic tradition to which I principally adhere to in writing a method section or conducting qualitative research, describe the studied knowledge-intensive organization, what practical research methods I used, and the process of data gathering and analysis. For reasons already described in the Preface, here I describe my reasoning mainly with my own words. In the second encounter with the empirical material in Part V, I build on these findings and observations by adding more contextual “richness” (Weick 2007; see also Geertz 1973) to the theoretical circumference. For those solely interested in the empirical phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, it can be recommended to read Parts III and V consecutively.
10. First encounter with the empirical material

“In logic as in morals, the problem of rational assessment – telling sound arguments from untrustworthy ones, rather than consistent from inconsistent ones – requires experience, insight, and judgement.” (Toulmin 1958/2003: 173)

“The ground, the authority of a belief in an historical event, is neither that it is recorded by an historian, nor that it is asserted by a contemporary, nor that it is attested by an eyewitness, but is an independent judgment we make, based upon and guaranteed by our entire world of experience, about the capacity of the event to enhance or decrease the coherence of our world of experience as a whole.” (Oakeshott 1933/2015: 89)

10.1 A general introduction to method in this account

The content of this chapter is focused upon describing how the initial empirical investigation was conducted. The style of this chapter is however also of consequence. The style of how one expounds a method section derives from what question(s) the section tries to answer and in what manner (Cornelissen 2017; Mantere & Ketokivi 2013). If the question would be, for instance: ‘what makes this study scientific?’, then the style would be assertive and of the kind ‘This is science because I did all that is required according to these criteria.’ It would be utilizing established normative “warrants” for claims to science (Toulmin 1958/2003). I do not however believe that such universal and timeless warrants or criteria exist (Berlín 2013a; 2013b; Feyerabend 1975; Kuhn 1962/2012; Oakeshott 1933/2015). As eternal and universal warrants to science are most likely out of reach, it is common to adhere to currently accepted methodological criteria (Mantere & Ketokivi 2013). If the question would however be of another kind, for example, ‘What did you do?’, then the answer would be of a wholly different style and have a more descriptive emphasis (Mantere & Ketokivi 2013). What, then, is the appropriate question that should be answered by a method section? Let us begin from the famous syllogism,

All men are mortal
Socrates is a man
Therefore Socrates is mortal.

The third line, the conclusion, does not have additional information but analytically combines all the information in the two premises. Statements that are more informative than such tautological truths are called “substantive” arguments (Toulmin 1958/2003). Empirical studies than make conclusions or at all theorize from data put the end product forth as substantive arguments (ibid.). The conclusions cannot be deductively derived from premises and data nor from data and warrants that substantiate the conclusions (ibid.; see also Ketokivi & Mantere
There are in other words jumps between “logical types” (Toulmin 1958/2003); the conclusions contain more information than is in the data and warrants. Analogously, there is an inevitable epistemological crevice between data and theory. Many well-known methods such as the case study strategy and grounded theory aim to bridge this unbridgeable crevice either through impeccable research design (Yin 1994) or an audit friendly and elaborate coding-scheme (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 1990). More recently it has been suggested that such logical leaps could be warranted through reasoning in the broadest sense of the term (Mantere & Ketokivi 2013; Ketokivi & Mantere 2010; Ketokivi et al. 2017). Alternatively, a variety of explanatory styles could be invoked instead of reverting to pre-established warrants and pre-fixed forms of methodological rigor (Cornelissen 2017).

In moving between data and a more theoretical description of a phenomenon, it is sensible to want to ask the researcher: ‘How do you know?’ This is the question that I would like to preemptively answer in this chapter. In answering this everyday epistemological question, it is worth noting the style how it is commonly answered. It is answered through reasonable justifications and biographical accounts of the history of how the person came to the understandings he holds (Toulmin 1958/2003: 1990; 2003). For example, if one were asked how one knows that there is a Chinese restaurant nearby, the answer is probably of the kind that one has been there before or talked to someone who has described the restaurant and its location. How one knows something is in more general terms answered by describing past experiences, doings, and use of judgement (Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 2003). In this study I principally adhere to this form and tradition of reasoning in a method section. In this chapter I consequently give a biographical account of the first encounter with the empirical material and thereby answer many possible questions related to: ‘how do you know?’ To give such an account is familiar practice in especially qualitative research (e.g. Charmaz 2006; Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1994).

At this point one should note that the kind of logical gulfs or descriptive holes in between language are inherent to most if not all forms of language use (Bateson & Bateson 1987; Searle 1995); “the fact that they do not conform to analytic criteria [formal logic]: this is nothing to regret, or to apologise for, or to try and change” (Toulmin 1958/2003: 231). Transparency and systematicity in the use of methods and reasoning is of course commendable, but such methodological rigor can come at a cost which is not always worth paying (Cornelissen 2017). Instead of trying to plug inevitable logical holes, I believe, a more appropriate endeavor in the context of a scientific inquiry of this kind would be to describe and refine one’s epistemology-in-use. That is, how one at particular instances justifies belief or disbelief. What is sensible to believe and disbelieve is a matter of “rational assessment” (Toulmin 1958/2003: 173). Both belief and disbelief may have the burden of proof, depending on the circumstances (Locke et al. 2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1958/2003; Wittgenstein 2009).

10.2 The case context as understood by the researcher

To study interactional wellbeing in its everyday form I chose as my in-depth case a knowledge-intensive organization that was involved in manufacturing, had a history of investing heavily in research and development (R&D), and was in a sense a generic multinational organization.

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37 In truly groundbreaking research it is not necessarily the conclusions that are novel, but much scientific progress hinges on establishing novel warrants between data and conclusions (Toulmin 1958/2003). For example, Darwin’s theory of evolution and Newton’s mechanics have become partly warrants for science, instead of remaining as isolated conclusions.
It was regulated by multitude of national and international officials and laws and by the everyday institutional and customary practices of a multinational corporation. To echo Tolstoy, in some sense it was very typical like most organizations and like most organizations it’s way of being typical had its peculiarities.

Techcorp38 aspired to be an industry leader and an attractive employer for talented individuals. New employees and managers of Techcorp had in many cases come from very similar companies within the same knowledge-intensive industry. Techcorp manufactured both consumables and technology solutions for a variety of customers within a handful of industries. In manufacturing employees’ educational and professional backgrounds varied more than in R&D or sales, in which a master’s or doctorate from a Finnish university was the norm. Many had been working for decades in the original Finnish companies that had later been acquired by the transnational conglomerate Techcorp. The four original companies that had been acquired and years before fused into a single legal entity under the name Techcorp Finland had around a thousand employees in Finland, roughly equally divided between three functions: sales and product management, manufacturing including other operations associated with material handling, and R&D. The departments and duties in Finland were organized according to the international divisions and business units of Techcorp transnational. It meant that the four original companies and to some extent their different work practices were being upheld because they belonged to four different divisions. Techcorp Finland did not have a dedicated CEO responsible for all operations in Finland, but several business units with separate business directors. The Finnish site was a center of excellence in cross-functional R&D within Techcorp transnational, which meant that some of the most high-risk, high-yield R&D endeavors were being conducted in Finland. This was a source of pride within Techcorp Finland.

A recent development in the Finnish organization was that all manufacturing and logistics had been integrated under a single leadership structure within the site although manufacturing served several businesses within Techcorp. A second major change was that a new senior manager responsible for HR had recently replaced a much-liked veteran, which had been taken as a signal that many changes were to ensue. This was taken by some to be part of a pattern which began much earlier when the former CEO of Techcorp Finland had been replaced and the entire Finnish organization had been restructured more closely according to the divisions and business units of Techcorp transnational. Some commented that the Finnish organization had recently been put under tighter reigns by the “bosses abroad” or “Yankees” or “Yankeeland” where the decisions were made, as it was called at times. Senior managers in Finland had however seen the change as normal and long-awaited integration into the normal transnational structure of the company. In other words, the studied company was Finnish but also international and it had a distinct and yet mosaic history.

Recently the Finnish site had experienced a decline in their company-wide metrics on workplace wellbeing. A senior manager described that there was considerable resistance to change. Any recommendations on overcoming or facilitating it in my part would be welcome. This was my introduction into Techcorp Finland. My first impression was that the organization of the company was very complicated. How the day-to-day operations were managed could not be deduced from the various organization charts and hierarchies. What people actually did, how

38 Pseudonym. Some of the facts about Techcorp have been altered in scope and scale to allow for anonymity. The precise industry is withheld for the same reason. As a typical international corporation Techcorp and its senior management was wary of the possibility that this research might not show the company in only a positive light. Therefore, we early on came to the agreement that the company would be anonymous so that it would be clear that various pressures have not affected this research. For this I am grateful to the senior managers at Techcorp.
they communicated and how people collaborated was infinitely more complicated than what
the charts suggested. In some ways it was one Finnish company, in other ways it was several
companies in Finland, and yet again in other ways it was one transnational company. Initially
I did not understand how the company was at all managed, in part due to so many overlapping
structures. As an example, when I first asked a HR-manager about the organization I received
a long monologue about official, unofficial, practical, local and international structures and
practices. Another HR-representative who had relatively recently been hired told me that it
took her about a year to understand whom to seek out with what kinds of issues.

This approach, ‘problem X, seek out person Y’ seemed to be the main approach how manag-
ers saw their everyday work and organization instead of a hierarchy structure. The complicated
nature of the beast was something managers could in fact become proficient in. With problem
X, whom to contact so that it can be dealt with in a speedy and proficient manner? Employees
often appreciated this kind of proficiency and knowhow in managers who could get inform-
ation and things done within the organization. With many new rules, changes in practices,
exceptions, new projects and initiatives, new internal data management systems, ever-chang-
ing acronyms and reorganizations both within the transnational and national organizations
there was a recurring practical difficulty with change: people often did not know if some piece
of information concerned them or not. Several interviewed managers saw this as one of their
main responsibilities. To decipher and at times investigate the backgrounds and meanings to
company-wide circulated emails, so that they could keep their employees in the know on what
actually concerned them.

For me and for this research the workplace wellbeing metrics that the transnational organi-
zation administered annually were unhelpful in understanding what was going on in the or-
ganization. It did not provide adequate answers to the senior managers and so was the case for
me as well. A numeric question of, for example, “role model leadership” did not specify the
criteria for what the role model should be, what the deficits were, nor if the question concerned
one’s own immediate supervisor or the company more broadly. In a word, they were imprecise
and de-situated especially in contrast to the aims of this study. The metrics were taken seri-
ously by upper management both in Finland and abroad as general indicators, but the reasons
for why a particular metric had gone up or down was always a puzzle and required investigative
work by middle managers.

Most of the time when I asked managers what they thought of the reasons for particular
changes in the metrics, they were either forced to speculate or admit that they had no idea.
Many times, the answer seemed to be a misunderstanding of the question if not the entire
questionnaire, as the name of the questionnaire had been translated into Finnish as a ques-
tionnaire about workplace commitment instead of workplace satisfaction. Some employees re-
marked that they had deliberately left the questionnaire unanswered because they were wor-
rried the answers could be traced to them. Some employees showed an overt lack of trust to-
wards the questionnaire as a trustworthy feedback system. At any rate, it would be an under-
statement to say that the speculations and interpretations about the reasons varied for any and
all answers, comparative changes and the low response rate. Without more precise and direct
contextual knowledge, the answers could be interpreted in a variety of ways, none better than
the other.

The uncertainties stemming from abstract questions and simplifying numeric scores were
not specific enough so that managers would know what kinds of actions to undertake if any.
This is one reason I felt that senior management appreciated additional and more in-depth
input from my side and coming out of this research. A second reason was, as a senior manager admitted upfront in an interview, that they did not have all that much time on their hands to actually attend to issues that are not directly related to business outcomes. It was not that senior managers were indifferent to workplace satisfaction, but the issues were apprehended as most of the time too ephemeral and abstract for concrete action. They considered themselves to have little influence on apprehensions, culture and dissatisfactions arising from past actions. Instead, they wanted to focus on the future. A senior manager summarized his own actions as always taking all feedback and particular cases seriously and attending to them if possible, but in the long-term the best he could do for the people in the company was to see that they have jobs by making sure that the company was doing well and that there was a viable strategy for growing the business in Finland. For senior managers it was clear that business came first, but that did not mean that people came second. It was more complicated than that.

The company was customer and finance driven. One R&D-manager put it like this: “This company is run by accountants.” The point being that according to him, all business decisions were based on numbers and little else. This was however balanced by having senior managers who liked to make fast and authoritative decisions, which at times cut through difficult agreements between multiple parties. At times such decisions were welcome and on other occasions they caused confusion and setbacks as complicated issues were too hastily simplified beyond recognition.

Another R&D-manager who had recently joined the company from a competing multinational corporation had been surprised how much pull the sales organization had within the company. Within Techcorp the sales organization was the spokesperson for the customers, and they had no trouble using the ‘customer first’-ace card, which was one of the overt strategic directives of the company, as is nowadays common in many companies. This was however only one of the four main divisions represented within Techcorp Finland. In another division the business unit was very much run based on long-term strategic decisions and risky investments instead of short-term financial optimization as was the case in another division. Interestingly, people in the separate divisions thought that the entire company was more or less like theirs, although based on the interviews it was division and business unit specific. Middle and upper managers knew about the dissimilarities and there was ambiguity to it was a source of richness and innovation or trouble and inconsistency. Plausibly both.

Within a company with at least R&D, manufacturing, logistics, and sales concerns, targets and metrics – not to mention personal development plans and bonuses – and with all affecting each other, priorities and mutual agreements between functional divides were difficult but mundane. It was part of everyday life within the company. In such circumstances some joint decisions came easily, others were more difficult, and in some cases, it seemed a mystery in beforehand when an agreement would be difficult to reach and when not. What was widely known was that official collaboration between divisions and business units was difficult, because there were separate budgets and financial accountability was personified. Business outcomes and results were directly related to managerial bonuses, evaluations and thus also to career advancement. It was well-known that intimate collaboration between two business units with separate profit and loss accounts could only be achieved if it was prioritized and supported at the highest level by the CEO of Techcorp transnational. Cost-intensive R&D projects with good financial prospects, which required knowledge and people sharing across business units, were given this level of attention by the board and CEO of Techcorp transnational. More than
one of these kinds of demanding and high-risk projects were worked on in Finland, hence the center of excellence status.

Most persons outright portrayed the company as “American” or “yankee”, expressions which are in Finland commonly used to indicate that the headquarters are located in the United States and more importantly, that upper management were U.S. nationals cultivated in U.S. business culture. This was apprehended as a common challenge in day-to-day communications for management. And as a generally disliked annual code of conduct-training for employees, or as having portraits of “fancy” or “phony” values on the walls, which according to those interviewees who brought the issue up on their own accord had very little to do with what was actually done and how. Some employees for example felt that the code of conduct-training was a waste of time and condescending due to its simplistic nature. And then again, most didn’t mind nor think much of it.

Most managers on the other hand told me that they had to think a lot about their communication with the yankees: to accentuate the positive, downplay the negative, engage in issue selling, be more optimistic than what the facts of the matter would allow but to be forthcoming and open about all facts, and so on. They felt that this was distinctly different from a Finnish culture of communication, where they would only mention what needed to be said, i.e. the problems and what they needed to solve the issues. The problem was that the yankees could overreact and overinterpret traditional Finnish communication as the balance of what you say and how you say it was abnormally blunt and negative to them although for a Finn it would be quite normal, direct and solution focused. An R&D manager said, most likely somewhat exaggeratedly, that in a presentation he had to add fifteen minutes of positive comments before actually saying what he wanted to say so that he could get the message across with its intended meaning. Other managers referred to this as “sugarcoating” or merely by the practice that one should not let blunt engineers talk directly to the yankees as miscommunication was likely. A senior manager asserted that a key talent to get promoted was the ability to talk and get along with the yankees and “play the game on their terms” while having a foothold in the Finnish culture and context. In sum, communication was an overt and everyday issue in Techcorp Finland.

A third common characteristic that was brought up was the fact that Finnish legislation differed from the U.S., meaning employee rights and lawful employer actions. This seemed to be an issue always when a top-level executive needed to be informed about Finnish legislation and what is and is not legal and thus possible in Finland. What was at times mentioned as a positive characteristic of Techcorp transnational was that due to its size and scope the opportunities for career advancement, interesting work and the possibility to work with cutting edge technology in an international atmosphere were in principle endless. Moreover, that the salaries in more demanding positions were quite good such as in management or R&D. In contrast, in manufacturing one of the chief complaints was low salaries and they thus felt unappreciated by the yankees whom they correctly understood as having the final word over pay raises and bonuses. In manufacturing and other operations safety and ergonomics was taken very seriously, which was contributed to the U.S. work culture (see Danna & Griffin 1999). For employee representatives it was one of the main lines of argument for workplace improvements and apparently often taken seriously by upper echelons of management.

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39 The pronunciation of “yankee” is in Finnish much easier and fits the tongue better than “American” or other alternatives and is a relatively common practice amongst Finnish companies. Nothing above and beyond nationality and national culture is meant by the expression. At times it was also used to indicate that a person did not really understand “how things work around here” much akin to the more generally known expression “tourist” but imbued with decision power.
Finnish managers moreover often commented that upper management in the U.S. worked very long hours and with few vacations, which for them meant that they did not necessarily have understanding for issues concerning work-life balance. Roughly half of the managers who worked directly with U.S. managers abroad said that stress, burnout and being overworked could not be talked about. Needless to say, the employees and managers who felt they had an understanding and frank line manager were according to their own accounts often more satisfied with their situation in the company.

10.3 The practical research approach for the first encounter with the empirical material

Off all well-known qualitative research methods I have acquainted myself with, I have found the various case study strategies (Eisenhardt 1989; Silverman 2000; Yin 1994) and grounded theory (Charmaz 2006; Locke 2001; Corbin & Strauss 1990) closest to heart. How case studies and grounded theory are conducted can however vary to a considerable degree (Charmaz 2006; Yin 1994). I have nonetheless found case studies often illuminating through their interest in descriptive accuracy, for revelatory insights and concern for historical situatedness. Case studies do not perceive a priori problems with the use of multiple methods and sources and forms of evidence (also see Eisenhardt 1989; Silverman 1993). Their focus of interest is in ongoing affairs (Yin 1994). Yin’s (1994: 13) definition of a case study is to the point: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined.” This is how I by far and large initially began to study interactional wellbeing.

I have utmost respect for the tenet that research methods should be subjugated to the research questions (Silverman 1993; 2000; Yin 1994). One in other words should not use methods that are incapable of answering one’s questions, which on the other hand should be posed with due care. Consequently, the intelligibility or scientific merits of a study are not determined by adherence to a particular method and through conformity to a technique (Cunliffe 2011; see also Mantere & Ketokivi 2013). Case studies have seldom relied on adherence to precise procedures, which aptly shows that their merits lie elsewhere. I have also come to think highly of the quality of open-endedness within the research design (Eisenhardt 1989). Open-endedness in my mind allow in elements such as surprise, novelty, and thickness. Through such qualities and concomitant iteration between empirical material and literature a thorough understanding and “thick description” (Geertz 1973) of the subject matter can co-evolve throughout the study. The investigated phenomenon can through such studies become thick concepts that illustrate the concept in practice without simplifying matters into atomistic rules or analytically consistent propositions (Weick 1995b; cf. eudaimonia in Annas 2011). Towards this end grounded theory, as a somewhat more conceptually oriented strategy, complements the case study method in some crucial ways.

According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory has lately taken several different paths, which has subsequently left the arena somewhat open for interpretation on what constitutes “the grounded theory” (GT) methodology. For Charmaz (2006: 2) GT is a set of “systematic, yet flexible guidelines” to construct or “craft” theories from the data. She identifies seven original principles in GT: concurrent analysis and data collection; analytic coding from data; constant comparative method; increasing abstraction with each iteration of analysis; memoing; theoretical sampling; and conducting a literature review after analysis. O’Reilly et al. (2011) on
the other hand argue against an “a la carte” approach to GT. According to them, the “fundamental tenets” of GT are: (1) the constant comparative method, (2) theoretical coding, (3) theoretical sampling, (4) theoretical saturation, and (5) theoretical sensitivity. O’Reilly et al. argue that grounded theory must comprise all of these five tenets in order to amount to the “holistic methodology” of what GT can be at its best. In addition to consisting of a set of tenets of which one either may or may not choose freely from, GT has an interest in what persons do and thus amounts to “substantive theory” that is “closely linked to the practice domain” (Locke 2001: 35).

There is much in GT that I appreciate. For example, that a literature review is conducted at a late stage in the study, concurrent analysis with data collection, constant reasoning about appropriate concepts and phenomena, and the closeness to the practice domain. For this reason, it might be more illuminating to discuss the issues I am at odds with both with the case study method and GT. Yin (1994) unfortunately omits any philosophical discussions about the case study method and its intellectual roots. He on the other hand concentrates his efforts on discussing reliable research design which is inspired by criteria from quantitative research. Yin in my mind is keen on making a distinction between the case study method and history in order to bolster the traditional scientific merits of case studies according to objectivistic norms. This is most visible in Yin’s (1994) claim that case studies produce generalizable conclusions and should conform to criteria of validity and reliability. Although general conclusions have been shown through illuminative cases, generalizability has become an issue of rhetorical argument. According to Yin (1994) the case is to be argued to be a typical case, or an extreme case or a multiple case study which through comparison brings forth generalizable findings. By this point presuppositions of an objective and stable naturalistic setting have set in, which is contradictory with the presupposition of history, that history is made by free and yet not unconstrained moral agents.

The initial method used herein is in some details different from that of grounded theory (e.g. Charmaz 2006; Locke 2001; Corbin & Strauss 1990) by being grounded in the understanding of the phenomenon instead of claiming to be grounded in the data. By being grounded in the phenomenon it becomes possible to read between the lines and their intimate world instead of focusing of what is explicitly said. The latter would, for example if interested in the topic of identity, attempt to produce an interview protocol in order to ascertain as many sentences as possible where ‘identity’ is explicitly mentioned so that the assertions can be shown to be grounded in the data. This in essence means that grounded theory does not acknowledge the existence and usage of ‘background knowledge’ in the method.

In fact, it is explicitly stated that grounded theory should be conducted with or at least the aspiration of an empty mind so that data gathering is not corrupted (Glaser & Strauss 1967/2017). I cannot conceive of conducting proper research with an empty mind. I would argue that all researchers use their prior experience in their scholarly engagements and scientific reasoning. In my mind such knowledge does not as a foregone conclusion bias the study, but can contrariwise bestow coherence, suppleness and intelligibility to the research. Prior knowledge allows one to focus upon the investigated phenomenon, by having some clue as to what to look for. Another divergence stemming from being grounded in the phenomenon
instead of the data is that the warrant for the logical leaps between data and theory do not stem from a rigorous coding-scheme but based on sound reasoning and argumentation.

In case studies the gulf between data and theory is said to be united by a rigorous research design whereas in GT the logical leaks are argued to be plugged by exact procedures of theoretical coding. Albeit the approach in GT is more refined and detailed about the process of analysis and theorizing – being ‘grounded in the data’ or ‘emerged from the data’ – I find both wanting in their de-emphasis of plain reasoning. For example, GT relies on established warrants from within a particular methodology. Mantere & Ketokivi (2013) make a helpful distinction in distinguishing methodological rigor from descriptive and epistemological rigor. In doing so, they show what one in principle omits if one draws on methodological rigor alone instead of the other two. In this account I have united the descriptive and epistemological accounts by abandoning the 18th century idea of perfect knowledge (Toulmin 2003). In doing so I have relied on descriptive rigor on the epistemological question of ‘how do you know?’. In my mind neither research design nor a coding-scheme are sufficient warrants for the logical leaps in one’s analysis. At least in this study, the warrants arguably rest on prudent reasoning (Toulmin 1958/2003), a fit with the researcher’s totality of experience (Oakeshott 1933/2015), descriptive accuracy (Weick 1999), and the “territory-as-mapped” epistemology (Wilk 2010a).

In sum, my practical research approach could be described as a case study with some sensitizing elements from GT and additional philosophical elements from other sources (e.g. Feyerabend 1975/2010; Mills 1959/2000). I consequently began this study with an open-ended research design with semi-structured interviews. My original interest was in a thick understanding of persons and their wellbeing. I had already judged a relational and interactional worldview to be a prudent one concerning phenomena in work settings and consequently had paralleling concerns about the use of language (Bateson 1972; Cunliffe 2008; Hosking 2011; Lakoff & Johnson 1980). The reason was that I was not interested in making elusive interpretations of others’ interpretations, as is commonly associated with social constructionism. I was interested in wellbeing as something personal, relational and yet concrete. I never saw any a priori reason why such a study would not be possible. I did not however consider it to be easy. Nor did I have a well-defined plan in advance as how to conduct or argue my case for such a study.

I decided to conduct interviews and to supplement the study with other methods and material if needed. The interviews enabled me to understand wellbeing from a personal point of view and consequently make the claim that the findings are indeed significant for experienced wellbeing in work settings. In addition, interviews allowed me to explore issues that Techcorp senior management were interested to find out, and thus help them understand reasons behind recent results obtained through an in-house workplace satisfaction questionnaire. On numerous occasions I asked myself should I add observation, shadowing, or other anthropological methods to the study design, which I never did.

There were multiple reasons behind this choice. One reason was that the interviewees frequently pinpointed particular situations and social exchanges as notably important for their wellbeing. These situations were loaded with personal meanings, which one could not penetrate with other methods than direct questions in the after-the-fact interviews. Secondly, the interviews showed that persons had histories and their sense of their relational history was intimately part of the interactions that took place. Thirdly, stemming from my readings in psychotherapy (e.g. Seikkula & Arnkil 2006) and philosophy (e.g. Annas 2011; Kant 1784/2009) I had reason to believe that a person has much authority over his wellbeing albeit was not in full
control over it. This meant that omitting the interviews and thus the personal aspect of wellbeing was never a real option for this study. Consequently, doing an ethnographic study alone was not within the scope of possibility. Also, the problem with doing an ethnographic study about interactional wellbeing was that I did not have any clarity about what one should be observant about in observing wellbeing at work. The individualistically attuned wellbeing literature would suggest, for example, immersion (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) or show of positive emotions (Fredrickson 2013), but for interactional wellbeing there were no concrete suggestions from where to begin. In a sense this first encounter with the empirical material answers the questions of what one should try to observe in a future ethnographic study into interactional wellbeing.

Indeed, the gathered insights from the interviews later sensitized me towards the topics of relational accounting, the “frame” surrounding interactions (Goffman 1974), and “history-making” (Spinosa et al. 1997). History, I believe, is difficult to observe with the naked eye although it is right there as all that one has learned and experienced (Boas 1928/1986; Dewey 2011; Oakeshott 1999). I did not in beforehand rule out the use of quantitative data from my case study but was skeptical as how they could be used in this study considering the interest in enlivened and enacted reality.

After purposive and snowball sampling of data, as shall soon be discussed in more detail, I ended this study with sampling that is reminiscent of theoretical sampling. I interviewed a few persons from some of the to that point untouched units and functions of the organization for hypothesis testing. I discussed my tentative conclusions with interviewees and informants to gain clarity and feedback. When the ideas had become clear enough, I presented the findings to several groups consisting of both interviewees and non-participants. I wanted to know if my tentative conceptualization of the phenomenon was conducive of understanding for them. I also presented my findings to a few informed senior managers and discussed a theoretically developed version with them as well.

These discussions and presentations have led me to believe that this study has provided useful knowledge to not only participants but also to employees, managers, and non-participants as well. This I believe to be a testimony that the first encounter had reached its objective of pinpointing a relevant phenomenon about wellbeing and describing it in a way that made sense to different stakeholders. These understandings have of course subsequently been developed further and with more precision than what had been accomplished during or immediately after the interviews.

10.4 The research process and sampling

The interviews were conducted between autumn of 2014 and spring 2015 and in all comprised 42 interviews with 41 informants. Of the 42 semi-structured interviews the first interviews with the 41 interviewees formed the main empirical material for this study. In addition to these official interviews there were many unofficial discussions with some key informants during and after collecting the empirical material. During the study I had access to Techcorp’s intranet including their personnel directory, organizational charts and newsletters. The interviews nonetheless form the analyzed “empirical material” (Alvesson & Kärreman 2007). They allowed a window into understanding interactions and showed their intimate connections to

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41 The one additional interview had the intention of testing tentative hypothesis with a key informant, most of which were found to be too simple at the time.
interviewees’ sensemaking about their wellbeing. The other material provided context and support for the interviews to gain a holistic understanding of what occurred inside the company.

For practical reasons I have labelled the interviews and quotes in the cases with a generic title of the person and numbered the interviews between 10 and 53. The empirical material amounted to 75h and 46 min, or 1h and 48 min on average per interview. The interviews were chosen first through purposive sampling suggested by senior managers and then through snowball sampling and theoretical sampling in the sense that I wanted to get direct and substantive answers to questions that had arisen during the interviews. Senior management suggested ten interviewees including managers and employees alike whom could help elucidate key wellbeing related phenomena within the organization. From these ten I interviewed eight and continued through snowball sampling, that is, by asking previous interviewees for new informants who could provide additional insights about particular topics.

I kept interviewing until a sense of empirical saturation arose. In this study it was in more practical terms a diminishing insight and decreasing sense of payback per interview, which arouse when I began to get suggestions to interview people I had already interviewed, and when I had the sense that what I was looking for was already in the interviews but I did not exactly know what it was. By this time my understanding had developed through the interviews, but it was more implicit than explicit. I had begun to understand the context and why things were the way they were. At this point I continued with a type of theoretical sampling. In practice, I asked senior managers to suggest some additional interviews outside the possible “bubbles” that might have developed from my previous sampling. These final interviews provided little new material and no new directions for the research thus confirming my suspicion of empirical saturation. The sense of empirical saturation became all the more obvious when many small issues were closed through direct and insightful answers in the final interviews. In other words, I felt I had learned something of significance without knowing exactly what or how to convey it to others. Much of that insight I have tried to purify of irrelevancies and to show the systemic and familiar character in the descriptions.

To go into the details of the interviews, in Techcorp Finland headquarters I was allowed to ask anyone to participate in a by senior management approved research. The interviews were voluntary and only a handful rejected my request for an interview. The theme of the interview was formulated very broadly as concerning organizational culture, workplace wellbeing, and daily work practices. In the interviews I had the goal to try to understand the daily life of the interviewees from their particular and unique point of view. That meant that I asked about and was interested in hearing what they had to say, about their work and work history, what they dealt with and found problematic in their daily life and what they wanted to highlight instead of focusing on a very specific topic or phenomenon from the outset.

In the beginning of this research I took it as a significant problem as to how at all write about wellbeing in the context of organizations. This worry stemmed from the well-indoctrinated practice of scientific publishing. If a scientific contribution does not bear the hallmarks of organization theory and instead looks and sounds more like psychology, then it would not get published in the esteemed journals in my chosen academic community. Be that as it may, my initial thoughts were that identity theory as a contemporary and established discussion was closest to the issues I had in mind, namely understanding themselves, their actions, the actions

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42 To emphasize that no interview is more important than the next I have avoided the use of single digits and the number 53 stems from the fact that there were two recordings with one person and two interviews with a second, therefore 43 recordings with 41 interviewees. The numbering in other words is for archival purposes and shows the chronology in the interviews.
of others and interactions in the context of the organization (e.g. Kreiner et al. 2009; Roberts et al. 2005; Sonenshein et al. 2013). I also thought that information flows and the like had an important impact on how things were apprehended in the organization (Bartunek 1984; Orlikowski 2002; Watzlawick 1990). With these thoughts in mind I formulated broad and open-ended questions to form the basis of the interview protocol. In formulating the questions, I also looked at protocols from much cited qualitative identity studies to get some insight about scope and specificity for the questions (e.g. Ashforth et al. 2007; Isabella 1990; Lilius et al. 2011). Appendix A consists of the original questions, which I then approximately halfway through the interviewees refined and complemented with questions from Appendix B. The new protocol focused a bit more on a set of phenomena that had come up during the interviews but which I felt I did not yet at that time understand sufficiently well.

During the course of the interviews and especially in the beginning I was astounded about the answers. Almost nothing had to do with identity as I understand the academic subject matter (e.g. Dutton et al. 2010). Most remarks were very simple issues related to what someone did, did not do or what had happened and prompted them to evaluate the incident in some way. They often talked about encounters and incidents. The depictions were in many ways sensible and had a character of everyday understandability to them. No advanced studies in psychology or anything of the kind were necessary to understand what was done, why and why people reacted the way they did. This was the kind of everyday problems and examples of which people reported as significant to them and their wellbeing in the organization. Moreover, the issues were most often intimately related to work, organizing and management instead of being an add-on on top of or beside work.

The descriptions and opinions varied in detail so much that it was difficult to gain any handle on what was collective and what personal. Some reported that “all think so” and later it turned out that in those cases mostly a handful close to the interviewee thought so. It seemed that most interviewees talked or worked with about 4-10 persons daily, which was roughly the extent of their views of the general sentiment in the company. Some were honest about this while others reported their opinions as the general sentiment, which could not be corroborated by subsequent interviews, on the contrary. The cases are polyphonic and contradictory to some extent, which merely points to there being a gamut of small communities within the company instead of there truly being unequivocal understandings of the company as a whole (Schein 1992; 2006). To my understanding nobody had an understanding of the company as a whole, merely about their personal dealings within its confines. Informed by the data I consequently decided to focus my interests on the personal level or the microfoundations (e.g. Felin et al. 2015) instead of aggregating understandings to an organizational level.

The everyday accounts interviewees described, and which were very easy to understand, became the focus of my attention. The descriptions felt so commonsensical that I became worried if I was able to say anything novel about wellbeing. To my amazement it was however difficult to find wellbeing theory on the kind of phenomena which was repeating itself in the accounts; about the kind of wellbeing that is embedded in everyday communication and relations. To sift through and clarify the phenomenon became by primary concern at this point.
10.5 The process of analysis in the first encounter with the empirical material

The analysis of the empirical material was as it usually is with qualitative research time consuming and iterative between the material, analysis and pertinent literature. The final form went through several revisions during the process of writing and analysis.

Initially, I began analyzing the interviews directly after the interviews by memoing thoughts and tentative theories that came to mind from the interviews (see Charmaz 2006). After several interviews I experienced this practice as too time consuming in comparison to its rewards. After each interview the disharmonies in experience I needed to make sense of were overwhelming. Memoing felt as providing little help and consequently I stopped. Instead, I focused my efforts on reading pertinent literature and thus attempted to understand and integrate what I had heard and understood. I trusted that coherence, focus and understanding would come with time, new material and contemplation. By reading many books and articles, while continuing with the interviews and gaining corroborating statements in some issues and contradictory views in others, it began to clear what was pertinent for the informants and for this study and what was interesting but not necessarily relevant. The phenomenon of interactional wellbeing began to take shape based on extant literature and the empirical material. Before I terminated the interviews, I had a relatively good sense of what I was looking for but far from being organized and connected to the phenomenon nor did I have a clue on how it all would come together in a concise presentation.

After some two dozen interviews, I had a sense that there were perhaps two to four different and more precise phenomena related to interactional wellbeing. For example, one was a relational balance in dyadic interactions and a second seemed to be some kind of organizational schizophrenia (Bateson 1972; Schein 2006). My thought was that despite substantial dissimilarities from one another in the details, the overarching phenomenon was nonetheless a single more encompassing phenomenon of interactional wellbeing. If the phenomenon was based on interactions between persons, was considered significant by the interviewees themselves and arguably had an impact of their sense of wellbeing, then I considered it to be pertinent and part of the overall phenomenon.

My original thought was that I might write several different articles based on the empirical material given that I at the time thought it might be easier to argue for several different phenomena. After some contemplation I came to think of the matter in different terms. That it might be more fruitful, novel and challenging to try to ascertain a point of view within which all the examples were within a single world of experience and could be made sense of in a similar way despite substantial dissimilarities in details. Continuing on this path of thought, I began to work equally much on how to grasp the overall phenomenon from a more encompassing point of view and on understanding the interviewees’ worlds as precisely as I could.

I began analyzing the interviews immediately after they had been recorded and transcribed. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim by an independent service provider. I began reading through all of the interviews in the order I had conducted them. I underlined important sentences and longer paragraphs while also giving initial shorthand codes to them to designed what I thought the comment was related to or what they were examples of. I tried to use native codes, but in many cases an etic code seemed warranted and more intuitive (Charmaz 2006; Corbin & Strauss 1990). A second encounter with the empirical material took place as I tried to summarize the findings and other pertinent information for the executives at Techcorp Finland so that they could evaluate what improvement efforts were needed. I tried as fast as I could to come to some overall sense of the interviews and to report the tentative and
unpolished findings from a practical point of view. At this point I began to form a code structure similar to what has recently been widely utilized in grounded theorizing (e.g. Gioia et al. 2013). I initially decided to code the interviews in this manner, because it was familiar and I did not really have a better alternative for how to begin analyzing and grouping significant similarities and statements in the interviews in a systematic fashion, despite the acknowledged weaknesses of this approach (Cornelissen 2017).

While I picked out quotes and examples, I also abbreviated more complicated narratives into simple “video descriptions” of what had occurred (O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987). Such descriptions are deliberately cleansed to a minimal set of ready-made interpretive meanings and presuppositions so that one may use one’s own epistemology in their interpretation. I also wrote short summaries of the interviews and organized the interviews into several groups according to significance. I gave a number from 0–2 for their relevance for the whole study. A few got the number 0, almost completely irrelevant. About half got the number 1, relevant but already emptied in the initial stages of analysis. Another half the number 2, relevant and not fully emptied, waiting for more in-depth analysis. I organized these so that I could go back to the interviews at a later stage and quickly find what I thought was most important and also the ones which included interesting material, but what I had not considered necessarily pertinent for this study. On several occasions I reverted back to the original interviews to look at the context for several quotes, to determine their proper place and label in the grand scheme of things.

I ended up with a set of labels, which showed a core phenomenon and a range of more sophisticated patterns of incidents that built on top of the core. Such incidents required more details about the “context” (Johns 2001) or “scene” (Burke 1945) in order to be understood. My first priority was however to purify and bring forth the core phenomenon and thus make it accessible. In a sense, I was trying to answer the question: ‘What exactly is interactional well-being?’

Early on I had found Transactional Analysis (Berne 1964/2010; 1961/2016; Harris 1973/2012) and its various adaptations (e.g. Schein 2009) and associated developments (Bateson 1972; Goffman 1967; Gottman 2007; 2011; Gottman et al. 2006) to be very relevant for my study. With the help of this theoretical nexus I organized the labels and particular quotes and video descriptions into two sets. One set was a familiar code structure from GT but inverted and grouped into labels that jointly showed interaction sequences, plays and relational positions as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1. This code structure shows what sort of specific patterns of interaction came forth, by using the main theoretical prototype stemming from Berne and Goffman. The second set was still rich and unrefined at this point, yet it felt intuitively to build upon and intimately connected to the core phenomenon of sequences, plays and positions. The analysis of the second set I left for later. The idea to split the empirical part in several sections and to write this study as a back-and-forth between theory and the empirical material came to be through trial and error and was inspired by Mantere (2003) and Moscovici (2008). The main reason for the extensive dialogue between theory and empirics was that I lacked a suitable way of condensing and yet keeping the richness of the phenomenon in the latter set. I was confident that a suitable way would present itself later on, in the second encounter with the empirical material.
Figure 1. Coding structure from the first encounter with the empirical material. The figure shows how the main theoretical prototype of symmetric and asymmetric interactions was used to code a host of related exchanges. The four main types of exchanges were one-move interactions, two-move interactions, playing positions, and multiple-move interactions. These had their own subcategories.
Table 1. Example quotes and short case descriptions from the coding structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code hierarchy</th>
<th>Example quotes and case descriptions</th>
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| Symmetric relations | “In my mind [people here appreciate] equality and that people help each other out. People are really supportive of each other, at least that’s how I experience it. ... In our community we don’t leave one another behind. If someone for example can’t reach their targets then we help out and see who can do what. That’s what I think is good leadership. To organize, and that people have clarity about their duties.” Manager#17  
“In our unit we managers from different teams gather amongst ourselves to talk. It’s been really fun. People dare to speak their opinion and voice new thoughts. They are actually presented in a way that they get discussed and someone can be of a different opinion, but it’s not said as a bad thing. Instead it’s just the right sort of adult conversation where people voice different points of views and angles to issues and discuss openly. Somehow I’ve personally been amazed ‘Wow, she dared to take that up.’ It creates a good atmosphere in the entire group. That people dare to talk about, well, also about sensitive issues and bring them up.” Manager#39 |
| Asymmetric relations | “Almost everything is decided outside of this place [Finland]. We live as we are told.” Employee#28  
“At the end of the day you are told ‘we expect you to deliver your commitment and it’s your job, just do it.’ It’s a cold, Siberia cold, treatment at the end of the day.” Manager#25  
“He’s a sovereign. It’s a politics of dictation. If he’s decided something then that’s how it is. Sure there’s been many good changes as well but if it’s perceived that they originate from him then it’s immediately a negative change. That’s a shame. ... Now HR is a managerial bureau. It used to be a service center. ... Now all you get is orders and managerial politics that’s being disseminated.” Manager#37 |
| One-move interactions | Instigating one-up positions  
“An R&D-manager leading a “highest priority” project said: “Everybody does as we ask [no denials on resource requests]. This is unique. I cannot say that I will never experience this again, and I cannot believe that too many in Finland have ever experienced this, that you get what you want on the snap of a finger. [said somewhat exaggeratedly]... In smaller companies or with a lower status this project would have hit several pitfalls by now. Now we get solutions through importance.” Manager#38 |
| Receiving one-down positions | “Her style of writing, it’s like she’s talking with children, very instructive and the like. I don’t know the correct term for it, but it’s exactly as if one would talk to small children.” Employee#35  
“If we don’t meet our targets then one is forced to explain. That’s how it goes. I’m forced to explain to my manager, he to his and so on.” Team Supervisor#41 |
| Two-move interactions | One-up is turned one-down  
“One-up is turned one-down positions  
“Sometimes when you need their support [HR] but it goes backwards. You go there seeking help and end up with getting more tasks.” Manager#23  
“I think that in our unit we are pretty used to dictating to others what should be done and that’s why our unit is somewhat sensitive to critique. It hurts. It affects me as well if we get criticism and people take it personally, at least easier at our department. ... I’m at least touched by everything personal issues between people. If someone says a bad word, I get offended by that. It affects me terribly.” Employee#30  
“In my mind the new line manager is loads better because she’s somehow sharper in her management. The previous one had been doing the same for thirty years and was too easy-going. If someone went to him and said ‘this person was being an ass’ then he would talk to the person, but in reality nothing changed. The new manager is a good deterrent in a way, well deterrent is perhaps a bit dumb but, the workers now have to think twice, she’s new and tougher.” Team Supervisor#43 |
| One-up is turned symmetric | “If you try to make a suggestion or offer a point of view or something that differs from their opinion [bad managers], then you get quite a splash and get bullied. It’s a practice by now. People are bulldozed and the ideas are left untouched.” Employee#40  
“When we’re asked for our input for next year’s budget...And we put a massive effort to crunch the numbers, how much could it be. And in the end they give us the right numbers [as in a lottery]. And we go, ‘why did we have to do this exercise in the first place?’ If they have the numbers already set, why can’t they just give us the right answers and half our workload?” Manager#24 |
In manufacturing it was frequently recounted that co-workers surveilled each other, who had longer breaks than the rest, who was lazy, who seemed to have extra time on their hands and the like. Surveillance was bad if it was unwarranted, excessive or coming from unauthorized co-workers. All surveillance by co-workers was unauthorized but a matter of course in the daily life in manufacturing. At Techcorp Finland surveillance had its own concept that was frequently used in the interviews and equalled “being eyeballed” (kyräily in Finnish).

"We were in a situation where people were really negative and didn't understand why they were all the time told to do this and then that, and now this and...like that. We've gotten more understanding to the team about why we do things like this and the like. It's been a swamp. It was a situation where we got a lot of dictation, now we do things like this, and that needs to be in the inventory by tomorrow, and people didn't have any clue as to why. Orders just came down that this is what should be done. ... Since then we've created systems and thought out how people could understand why. We can't manage the fact that we get commands but we can increase people’s understanding towards where those commands originate. Like, is it the markets or something else that's putting a pressure, really? " Manager#37

"We had a Christmas party and [our manager] came at the beginning and gave us instructions not to stay too long and not to use excessive amounts of alcohol. I stayed to the very end and used as much alcohol as I wanted to. I don't take comments like that. As a grown up human being I can tell what's appropriate behavior and what's not. I don't need to be told as to a child 'Don't use too much.' I can decide for myself. That kind of patronage, we don't like it, no one at our department likes patronage like that.” Employee#31

"There are some people who can be said to be depressive. They are against everything and 'I would have been up to me it would have been done differently', ‘I told them five years ago’, 'everything used to be better.' ... Some people are really organizational viruses, they poison the atmosphere in a team, just one person [is enough] by being indifferent. ... Maybe it's because they haven't been developed and respected. And its connected to them behaving [arrogantly] as if they are indispensable.” Manager#47

"HR comes with a million new rules. At the same time HR doesn't give any service. [The new HR director] has the tendency to put everything online and let supervisors handle everything. Before all that was done by HR. So people feel they are demanded a lot without getting anything in return. ... People experience the situation so that HR gives way too many commands. What was before done by payroll is now done by managers so they have less time to do their own work. This is what they say: 'We nowadays have to do HR's work. They hire new personnel all the time and we nonetheless have to do their work for them. What the hell are they really up to? This is a common phrase.” Employee#31

"I see it as very simple, it's my driving force. The more I can give them [employees], to clarify their roles and give them the responsibility and power the better and the easier for me. I've taken the role that, I'm a kind of filter and shield. It's not that I block what comes from America, but I translate it to a language they can understand. Sometimes the message can be the kind that I have to modify it to get people to do as the messages require. It's because here, many things cannot be said as the Americans think out loud, 'Do this or get fired.' In this culture you can't say that." Manager#14

A manager described that one of his major accomplishments in the organization had been the successful lobbying of new R&D intensive projects and thus novel resources as investments in people and technology to Finland by showing and arguing to company executives that the Finnish site was trustworthy and competent to handle the projects. The manager recounted that it is not generally known that such internal lobbying to marshal trust and resources is very important in a large company such as Techcorp transnational. Manager#52

"It always causes some schisms between people especially if you yourself have to be like 'Could you begin to work on my thing?' It's not fun to go to another person like that all the while you know how much is on their plate. It's difficult to share. In these cases it's good that there's a line manager who can point to that and that person, 'you could do more of this." Employee#30

"If someone comes to tell on another worker, as the old saying, snitch that someone is not doing their work or is having extended breaks from work or similar, I always take the position that it's me whose noticed it and won't tell where I've heard it so that it doesn't cause any friction [between the two employees] as a consequence of snitching to a supervisor.” Manager#23
Part III: First Empirical Encounter

"If a project is in trouble... Then you have to go in fact based and 'We tried this, it didn't work, next we'll do this, and it will take this many weeks and that's why this project is delayed.' And if you need more money then you need to say it and how much is required. You have to go in there with a prepared case with facts and numbers ready. You specifically can't go in and 'This didn't work, what should I do next?' but instead 'This didn't work. In our opinion this should be solved the following way' so that they can say Yes or No. The executives, you can't expect them to tell you 'Do this.' What you can expect from them is a decision between a couple of alternatives." Manager#10

"My line manager to begin with went and micromanaged past me. Since then we've talk a lot about this subject because it completely destroyed my credibility. I said 'you don't need me, you can manage that entire crew, you don't need me for anything. Why should I supervise what you've commanded? This isn't how teams operate.' And it's decreased since, remarkably. Now it goes through me. If my line manager wants something done, then I hear it first and can get the message a bit differently across. But to begin with it was a real problem. Somewhat still, but no biggie." Manager#24

"A particular female manager is very well educated, a civilized person who's leading an important R&D project at the moment, which is well known to be important. She can maneuver between the American rules and the people. She can balance it. Of course she has the same demands from above as everyone else. But it's how she puts it into practice amongst her employees and how she presents things to the Yankees. She knows how to balance it. It's ideal leadership if you ask me. … [good leaders] respect what they are told and the prevalent values and practices. But they don't feel the need to bring all the crap in front of their employees. They play the role of the superior, they do it with respect. There are plenty of good managers here. But then again there are also the little bosses who can't cut it yet." Employee#31

"A couple of times my manager has told us that 'we should do things like this.' And my reaction was 'no, let's do it like this.' Then he said nothing. And we began manufacturing as I said. Afterwards it nonetheless turned out that we should've made them as he said. And then we had to dismantle. That pisses me off. Why can't he say to me that I'm wrong when I'm wrong. It doesn't matter if I'm right or wrong but the fact that we have to go through loops to find out. He should've been able to stand his own ground." Team Supervisor#41

"If a manager is not in a sense strong enough then a sort of 'lower' management shows its head. Someone else takes charge. It creates a kind of asymmetry about what we should do, what the targets should be and where we are headed. … In certain instances when the manager does not use his power or seems unsure, which is normal and understandable, then someone else takes over and 'now we do it like this.' That's not necessarily a good thing. Sure it solves the issue then and there but not in the long term and with the big picture in mind. It also undermines the manager. … And between colleagues it's 'how come you are deciding this, you can't do that?'." Employee#28

In discussing with a manager about his relationship with his senior manager the manager brought forth that the senior manager had an ability to listen and be thoughtful of what is said, to be the kind of person one can talk with and has the ability to summarize complicated issues into an overview of the situation and what would be prudent to do next. He also told the following example: "I was on my way out of the company. I had too much. I had the lead in two projects and I was totally fed up. I had already began looking for a new job and then went to my line manager to talk it over. He listened and we created a plan on how we would proceed. One of my projects would be given away, after a while, and in the other project I was given more rights and responsibilities. We agreed on even very small details. Afterwards I could focus on that single project. And all came true! If they hadn't I still had my CV in order, I would've immediately began sending job applications. I've had a couple of experiences like this. Usually it's the workload. … This builds trust, truly." Manager#29

"Once I steamrolled a product and a product change with force; that it had to be ready in time. As a consequence R&D had to give in, production too, manual writers as well, everyone had to give slack and I got it out in time and just the way I wanted to. We even had some challenges really at the last meter but it went out and the customer was really happy. Then I talked with [another manager] that now we need to thank everyone over a coffee service. … [I told them] this is what we can accomplish when we work together." Manager#27

"An employee resigned because his line manager had "different values" than what he had. The issue boiled down to him having to do what he considered morally wrong and unintelligent in the long-term.

"I have a really good reason to contemplate quitting just because the salary here doesn't go up, not by any means. Not even if one nags about it.[laughing] … I think I'm being taken for granted." Employee#30
11. Developing a vocabulary: Relational structure and relational dynamics

When it comes to the analysis of communicative interactions or “encounters” (Goffman 1961a) which involve “copresence” (Goffman 1963a: 17), for example, turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974), moment-to-moment nonverbal interactions (Beebe & Lachmann 2002; Seligman 2018) statement-response pairs (Goffman 1981), communication accommodation (Giles & Ogay 2007), forms of speech acts (Searle 1995; 2009; Quinn & Dutton 2005), ritual interchanges (Goffman 1967), presentations of self and identity work (Goffman 1959; 1981; Pratt et al. 2006), patterns of involvement and engagement (Goffman 1963a; Kahn 1990), escalation patterns (Bateson 1972; Gottman 2007; 2011), the structural characteristics of the communication system (Goffman 1981; Watzlawick 1990; Watzlawick et al. 1974), the interpretive frame of the interactions (Cornelissen & Werner 2014; Goffman 1974) energy-in-conversation (Quinn & Dutton 2005), conflict strategies (Rahim 2002), interpretation patterns (Isabella 1990), or specific discourses with particular organizational effects (e.g. Mantere & Vaara 2008) could be chosen as the primary unit of analysis.

My research, informed by the empirical material, focused upon what I call the relational dynamics that play out in the relational structure and especially in the interaction setup (cf. interaction arrangement, Goffman 1981: 153 ff). Perceived from a relational lens and against the backdrop of relational psychotherapy, this can be perceived as an in-between level of analysis; between “global relational patterns” like attachment behavior analyzed by attachment researchers and the second-to-second micro processes observed by infant interaction researchers (see Seligman 2018: 85 ff). To be able to concisely describe and point out facets in interactions that occurred at Techcorp Finland in this in-between level, I synthesize and suggest some further developments to a theoretical lens and vocabulary originally developed by the sociologist Erving Goffman and the psychotherapist Eric Berne. As a reminder, these theoretical discussions are elaborations and specifications to the widely used interactional model, discussed already in Part I.

Here in this short theoretical review I already add some conceptual elements to this vocabulary (e.g. interaction setup, incident setup, relationship setup, organization setup, and ideal setup), as they are later on needed to grasp the encounters that comprise the empirical material. The developed vocabulary provides an “exemplar” (Kuhn 1962/2012) or “prototype” (Burke 1945) of relational action. Burke (1945: 66) states the necessity for an exemplar thus: “to study the nature of the term, act, one must select a prototype or paradigm of action.” In this study action is understood through the relational formation, maintenance, and breakdown of different setups. A short theoretical review on Goffman and Berne with a focus on the
interactional and relational vocabulary is consequently presented before we delve into the findings from the first encounter with the empirical material.

11.1 Theory I: A Goffmanian synthesis for the analysis of different setups

In addition to drawing on Goffman’s extensive and groundbreaking work and vocabulary on encounters and everyday interactions, here I would like to propose five different setups – the interaction setup, the incident setup, the relationship setup, the organization setup and the ideal setup – as specific terms that disaggregate and concern the widely adopted interactional model (e.g. Gergen 2009; Watzlawick et al. 1967; Watzlawick et al. 1974), or what Goffman (1981) has described rather loosely as the “interactional arrangement.” I submit that in organizational settings, these five setups provide a relatively generic background of the “scene” (Burke 1945) to understand what occurs and is at play in interactions within organizational settings. These concepts emerged during theorizing and thus while attempting to concisely describe what had occurred in the empirical encounters. For the sake of understanding, I have chosen to present these concepts here alongside a short recap and synthesis of Goffman’s analytical vocabulary.

With the interaction setup I mean the organizational nexus of interactions in which relational dynamics in the form of shifting relational positions, moves and significant plays come to the fore (Berne 1964/2010; Goffman 1961; 1967; 1981). Whenever there is an interaction between two or more persons there is an interaction setup in which the interactions take place. Thus, all the other setups are interaction setups, but with particular characteristics that differentiate them from each other. Interaction setups are often “embedded” within communication, which give clues as to how an utterance is meant (Goffman 1974; 1981). The interaction setup can be defined as the proximal interactional situation or “scene” (Burke 1945) in which interactions take place and relational “moves” (Goffman 1981) are enacted. Usually the moves bear a significance upon all involved parties, and on occasion, some more than others. These moves “are found in the artful dialogue of the theatre and in novels, part of the transmutation of conversation into a sprightly game in which the position of each player is reestablished or changed through each of his speakings, each of which is given central place as the referent of following replies. Ordinary talk ordinarily has less ping-pong” (Goffman 1981: 35).

When an interaction setup takes a more enduring form like in a hierarchical asymmetric relationship similar to a mentor-mentee, teacher-pupil, and the like, I call this a relationship setup. A relationship setup is thus often the experienced and expected status quo of a relationship between two persons who have frequently engaged each other and thus formed a personal working relationship (e.g. Watzlawick 1990). This can often be considered the starting point in an encounter between two persons, or what I at times have designated as move 0 in a chain of interactions. It is thus often against the backdrop of the relationship setup that relational moves are enacted, and thus relational dynamics begin to show. Consequently, the interaction setup due to relational moves changes from the relationship setup to alternative setup constellations during an encounter. The relationship setup is of course not always the status quo, as for instance, a hierarchical relationship does not need to be enacted in all encounters like during lunch breaks or outings (Goffman 1959; Oakeshott 1991a; Searle 1995; 2009). Thus, when and where the familiar relationship setup is reliably performed depends on the surrounding circumstances for the encounter.
When relationship setups are not performed according to mutual preferences and mutually agreed upon historical arrangements, but instead the setup is designed and enacted to enable efficient “coordination” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009) in a larger organization than a particular dyad, I call this an organization setup. An organization setup thus differs from the relationship setup by being based on formal agreements, procedures, meetings, and practices that are constituted mostly through explicit arrangements and accords.

An incident setup occurs when a relationship or organization setup breaks down or is not performed according to the expectations of one or more participants (see Goffman 1967; Goldie 2009). The incident setup can occur incidentally due to an unexpected “emotional episode” (Goldie 2009), or, due to pressing circumstances of the situation it can be deliberately enacted to bypass some aspect inherent in the relationship or organization setup. This can occur as an implicit understanding like in a crisis (e.g. Grint 2005). Theoretically speaking, the incident setup consequently can never be a move 0 but occurs due to a move that instigates the incident setup with another setup in the background. The incident setup is thus formed against the backdrop of the relationship or organization setup.

The ideal setup is a person’s or community’s preference for how a situation or setup should be formatted and enacted (cf. Schein 1992). The ideal setup can be the same as the relationship setup, the organization setup, or a different setup, based on one’s or the community’s preferences and past experience of particular situations and how they should be handled. If a person experiences an incident setup, most often that is contrasted with the ideal setup, to show the discrepancy between how the interaction would preferably have been enacted and how it actually played out.

A key difference between the five setups is how they are established and thus also how difficult it is to change them. The organization setup is formed through mutual agreement and often fitted to the past agreements that constitute the rules of coordination in the larger organization. It is thus socially constituted and most often part of the enduring culture of an organization or society more broadly (see e.g. Schein 1992; Searle 2009). Changing organization setups can be difficult, because a single organization setup is often connected to other organization setups, what is usually and was also at Techcorp Finland referred to as a more encompassing “process” or “standard operating procedure” (see e.g. Morgan 1997).

The relationship setup is the implicit or explicit agreement between two or more persons how an interaction setup should most often be enacted between the interactants (see Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1990). The relationship setup can thus be changed through an agreement between the involved parties or one-sidedly if one person in the relationship setup desists from playing the mutually agreed upon relationship setup. Such acts tend to instigate incident setups. The incident setup can be initiated with a single move, but that does not necessarily change the more enduring relationship or organization setups (see Goffman 1967). The preferences and understandings that accumulate into a person’s understanding of the ideal setup are most likely in development during most of one’s life, albeit formatively influenced by childhood interactions (e.g. Annas 2011; Seligman 2018) and organizational culture (Schein 1992). One can consequently expect the ideal setup to change in accordance with one’s situated understandings and through discourse with other involved parties (e.g. Goffman 1974). Relational “moves” (Goffman 1981) have the power to change the constellation of the interaction setup, which in turn spurs the formation of a new setup like an incident setup. In sum, the proximal scene of action changes as such moves are enacted that manage to change the scene instead of abiding by its implicit rules (see Goffman 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b).
A relational position can be considered as one’s “footing” in a situation (Goffman 1981). Footing, put concisely, defines one’s role, form of self-representation and “participation framework” and thus also the “production format” for the person’s utterances and conduct in the encounter (Goffman 1959; 1967; 1981). Footing can be understood as “the multiple self-implicative projections discoverable in what is said and done” (Goffman 1981: 173). When one person changes their position and thus footing, this relationally changes the footing of other participants in the encounter (Goffman 1967; 1981). “A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance. A change in our footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events.” (Goffman 1981: 128)

In the next section a relational position is argued to encompass transactional characteristics (Berne 1964/2010), thus going beyond what Goffman (1981) meant with the term “footing.” To sum up, footing, relational position, relational move, relational dynamics and the five setups are thus interconnected notions, where one concept can be described with the help of the others. Goffman (1981: 53) astutely points out that “the social setting of talk not only can provide something we call ‘context’ but also can penetrate into and determine the very structure of the interaction.” This is the impetus behind the notion of a setup. The setup matters for what actions, interpretations and emotions are felt in an ongoing situation (see Part IV). For example, these setups and moves could occur coincidentally or be performed according to a deliberately planned design as in an organization setup. To grasp these setups and the moves and consequent incident setups that were performed in accordance with their relational structure, a short introduction to “Transactional Analysis” (TA) will be helpful in understanding the empirical findings that are presented shortly (Berne 1961/2016; 1964/2010; Harris 1973/2012).

11.2 Theory II: Transactional Analysis as a guide to relational positions and dynamics

At the outset it is worth mentioning that the underlying theory in Transactional Analysis (TA) is inspired by Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) tripartite superstructure of the Id, Ego and Superego, but the structure in TA differs in its origin, focus and application. Since Freud, especially in the United States psychotherapeutic theorizing took a turn toward Ego Psychology and a Relational turn toward two-person theorizing (Seligman 2018). Both of these early developments are tangible in TA, which is a precursor for many subsequent transactional models within psychotherapy (Sameroff & MacKenzie 2003). Seligman (2018: 127) argues that in the overall Relational turn, “the basic phenomena of interest are mutual regulation and organization of emotion, behavior, and meaning in dyadic interactions, which are intertwined, if not simultaneous.” According to this Relational perspective, mental life “originates in a relational matrix” and learned relationship patterns become internalized “psychic structure” (Seligman 2018: 118, 110). Recently in the psychotherapeutic literature such structures have been theorized with concepts like “implicit relational knowing” or “generalized representations of interactions” (for a longer list see Seligman 2018: 108). In this study we take Berne’s (1961/2016; 1964/2010) influential depiction of TA and the Goffmanian vocabulary as our starting point for discerning the relational structure and dynamics that are enacted in specific interactions.

According to Berne (1961/2016), TA is focused upon “phenomenological” and “social realities” (Berne 1961/2016: 24), that is, “phenomena based on actual realities” instead of perceiving the Freudian superstructure as organs endowed with agency in the mind (see e.g. Schafer
This is typical for the Relational turn, which sought to include actual happenings (acts) and realities (scenes) into theory-building (Seligman 2018). Berne (1964/2010; 1961/2016) has extended Freud’s seminal ideas by building a more action and communication oriented theory by drawing inspiration from, for instance, Mead (1934/2015), Bateson (1972) and Potter (1986). Berne (1961/2016: 18, 20) argues that the main difference between the orthodox view of the mind in psychoanalysis and his view, is that his is a “phenomenological approach”, “based solely on clinical observation and experience with patients, with previous preconceptions set aside.” TA consists of an understanding of the mind, which is called “structural analysis” (Ego Psychology) and of interactions, which is “transactional analysis” (Relational turn) (Berne 1964/2010; 1961/2016). The latter term of transactional analysis or TA is commonly used to refer to both. Berne (1961/2016: 21) describes TA like this:

“Structural and transactional analysis offers a systematic, consistent theory of personality and social dynamics derived from clinical experience, and an actionistic, rational form of therapy which is suitable for, easily understood by, and naturally adapted to the great majority of psychiatric patients.”

It would seem that TA has in fact been shown to be helpful in psychotherapeutic practice and has subsequently been incorporated into several of the most prominent schools of psychotherapy (Safran & Kriss 2014). Berne prefers to introduce structural analysis before going into transactional analysis. Here we shall do the same. Structural analysis is about discerning “ego states”, which in our analysis is good to understand as self-enforced and self-implicative relational positions (see footing, Goffman 1981). According to Berne, persons can demonstrate noticeable shifts in overall posture including marked changes in their vocabulary, behavior, feeling and state of mind. Berne calls these overall shifts as changes between ego states:

“In technical language, an ego state may be described phenomenologically as a coherent system of feelings, and operationally as a set of coherent behaviour patterns. In more practical terms, it is a system of feelings accompanied by a related set of behaviour patterns. Each individual seems to have available a limited repertoire of such ego states, which are not roles but psychological realities. This repertoire can be sorted into the following categories: (1) ego states which resemble those of parental figures; (2) ego states which are autonomously directed toward objective appraisal of reality and (3) those which represent archaic relics, still-active ego states which were fixated in early childhood. Technically these are called, respectively, exteropsychic, neopsychic, and archaeopsychic ego states. Colloquially their exhibitions are called Parent, Adult and Child” (Berne 1964: 2010: 23).

Structural analysis is consequently about the analysis of Parent, Adult and Child ego states. It is perhaps best to understand the ego states as the kind of behavior, attitudes and thinking one would associate with a Parent, Adult and Child. The persons and therapeutic cases through which Berne (1961/2016; 1964/2010) showcases these ego states are of course more idiosyncratic descriptions, which are nonetheless easily recognizable. Berne argues that these three ego states are equally important and have their place in the living of a healthy human life throughout the entire lifespan. Commonly one is using a convoluted aggregate of all three, but there are instances when it is possible to discern a particular ego state as prevalent (Berne 1964/2010). These ego states can in Berne’s account be active outside of situations in which
Persons in other words have a history of relationships, are immersed in relationships and take on familiar relational behavior patterns based on past relationships. This claim has gained substantial empirical support by more recent developments within infant and developmental research (Seligman 2018). “Overall, we now have substantial empirical support for the view that early parental care has a very substantial influence on subsequent personality organization” (Seligman 2018: 124). Such patterns of behavior are learned early on in life as part of indoctrination into a proximal social milieu (see also Boas 1928/1986; Dewey 2011). According to Berne, people can and do play games with such relational positions without noticing that they play them. Persons are also capable of altering what positions and games they play, based on rational and revelatory assessment of past behavior patterns. This speaks for the theoretical postulation and clinical observation that such relational patterns of behavior “go on predominantly out of explicit awareness” (Seligman 2018: 110).

In Berne’s (1964/2010) account of TA, persons are thought to be hungry for recognition by others. Berne theorizes that in daily life persons seek exchanges of recognition. Berne (1964/2010: 34-35) gives the following example of an everyday interaction:

1A: ‘Hi!’ (Hello, good morning.)
1B: ‘Hi!’ (Hello, good morning.)
2A: ‘Warm enough for ya?’ (How are you?)
2B: ‘Sure is. Looks like rain, though.’ (Fine. How are you?)
3A: ‘Well, take care yourself’ (Okay.)
3B: ‘I’ll be seeing you.’
4A: ‘So long.’
4B: ‘So long.’

It is worth noting that this interaction does not have the intention of giving “Assertions” or “Directives” (Searle 1995) to convey information, instead, it could be called a ritualistic exchange of recognition (Berne 1964/2010). It is an “Expressive” (Searle 1995) series of interactions (this issue is discussed more thoroughly in Part IV). The purpose of each individual
speech act is in one sense to abide by the social convention and thus show recognition towards the other and trustworthiness in abiding by the convention. Each “stroke” in this particular eight-stroke transaction is reciprocated and the number of strokes in an exchange tells of the level of intimacy involved (Berne 1964/2010). These exchanges are “transactions” in Berne’s terminology.

In day-to-day life social intercourse is, according to Berne, structured into sequences of such traditional complementary exchanges in the form of everyday rituals, procedures and manners (see also Goffman 1967). When a person is not directed by such shared social conventions but by personal histories and “individual programming” something else takes place and incidents begin to occur (Berne 1964: 2010: 16). Berne argues that structural theory is necessary for the analysis of transactions between people, and especially in the problems and “incidents” that occur between persons (Berne 1961/2016; 1964/2010). These incidents can be instigated for a variety of reasons. Berne (1964/2010) however highlights the reasons of boredom and drama in everyday relationships.

“These incidents superficially appear to be adventitious, and may be so described by the parties concerned, but careful scrutiny reveals that they tend to follow definite patterns which are amenable to sorting and classification, and that the sequence is in effect circumscribed by unspoken rules and regulations. [...] Such sequences...which are based more on individual than on social programming, may be called games. [...] It can be demonstrated that once a chain [of interactions in a game] is initiated, the resulting sequence is highly predictable if the characteristics of the Parent, Adult, and Child of each of the parties concerned is known. In certain cases...the converse is also possible.” (Berne 1961/2016: 86-87)

Berne in other words argues that interaction setups form a playing ground for different kinds of relational moves or transactions that tend to conform into predictable sequences of interactions. According to Berne (1961/2016: 103), single transactions can be classified into “complementary”, “crossed” and “ulterior.” If the transactions are complementary to one another, then communication proceeds smoothly. With “complementary” transactions Berne means the kind in which the instigator (of a transaction stimulus) takes a particular relational position, which is then recognized in the transaction response by the other interactant. A Parent-Child dyadic relationship is complementary when both the Parent and the Child recognize each other’s relational positions and act accordingly. In rituals and traditions of transactional exchanges the positions and complementary responses are relationally constituted according to the prevalent practices in society. If the relational position is not recognized but met with a transaction that positions the other differently, then Berne calls it a “crossed transaction.” A crossed transaction would be where one person acts as a Parent and thus treats the other as a Child whereas the other person can also act as a Parent and treat the first persons as a Child. Berne argues that crossed transactions are the source of social difficulties and the principal concern of psychotherapists.43

Characteristic of games is that they have ulterior motives at play (Berne 1964/2010). In games more than one position is most often played. Insinuations, irony, ploys, and the like, are common methods to deceive or provoke the other into acting often according to a disadvantageous and therefore a particular and yet veiled position (Berne 1964/2010; Potter 1986;

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43 This is Berne’s action and communication oriented reformulation of the classic issue of Freudian transference-analysis (Berne 1964/2010; see also Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Makari 2008). In plain terms, a patient often enacts his habitual relationship setups also in the therapeutic relationship (see also Seikkula & Arnkil 2006). With the help of the therapeutic relationship and by bringing to light the repeating relationship setups and the patients’ habitual moves and plays, the therapist can help the patient change his relationships with others (Berne 1961/2016; 1964/2010; see also Seligman 2018).
Watzlawick et al. 1967). Flirtation is a good example of a conversation in which there is an ulterior and yet well-known motive for the conversation. For example, ‘Would you like to come up for a drink’ is a common euphemism for a transaction that does not necessarily involve drinking. A conversation in which one complains about someone else to another may have the ulterior motive of feeling good about themselves and building trust with the interactant. “Family life and married life, as well as life in organizations of various kinds, may year after year be based on variations of the same game” (Berne 1964/2010: 17).

The result of the three relational positions in an interaction setup consisting of two persons are shown in Berne’s framework, Figure 2, which is a cornerstone of TA.

![Figure 2. The framework of Transactional Analysis. The framework presents a visual aid for how to understand the different kinds of interactions that can occur in a dyad. A single person can in a single exchange play a position of Parent, Adult or Child, which can be countered and responded to from one of the same three relational positions. The two transactions together form either asymmetric (complementary), Type I, or symmetric, Type II, pairs of transactions. These transactions can also be stable (e.g. Parent-Child) or instable (e.g. Adult-Child).](image)

In basic cases there are two inherently stable, i.e. complementary, relational pairs. The Parent-Child and the Adult-Adult. The Parent-Child is a classic example of an “asymmetric relationship” and the Adult-Adult is typical of a “symmetric relationship” (Bateson 1972). The Parent-Adult, Child-Adult and other identical variations thereof are inherently unstable, i.e. crossed transactions, because both parties have divergent positions they want or expect the other to assume. Both have different expectations concerning the other’s conduct and footing. They want the other to assume a different position amongst the Parent, Adult or Child. Instability in the relational position implies that after several exchanges in the unstable positions one or the other most likely assumes a complementary position to the other or disengages from the interaction (Gottman 2007; 2011; Watzlawick et al. 1967). These insights about interactions can be taken as basic prior knowledge, which we shall utilize in the analysis and description of the empirical material.

In sum, TA provides a relational and concordant psychic structure with which we can analyze relational positions and transactions in different interaction setups. To our hitherto developed vocabulary it adds the relational positions and framework of Parent, Adult, and Child.
interactions. In addition, it allows us to analyze various interactions setups as shifting between symmetric, asymmetric, stable and unstable interaction setups.

11.3 Results: putting interaction setups center stage in wellbeing scholarship

When asked, the interviewees gave examples and more details of why and how they considered their situation in the organization and their wellbeing to be of the kind that is was, the descriptions gravitated towards descriptions of relationships (relationship setups) and past incidents (incident setups) within the organization. These case descriptions could be about relationships and incidents that occurred between persons or between more abstract organizational entities such as departments, management and employees, and the like. For example:

“Almost everything is decided outside of this place [Finland]. We live as we are told.”
Employee#28

I found that the bulk of these cases could be analyzed with the help of the above described combination of TA and Goffmanian terminology and the suggested concepts about different setups. To be specific, with the help of interaction setup, relationship setup, organization setup, incident setup, ideal setup, relational moves, and the Parent, Adult, Child relational positions. In the above quote the employee described the ongoing situation and relationship setup in Techcorp Finland as the entire site being subjugated to a helpless Child position by Techcorp transnational and upper executives, the oppressive Parents. Inside Techcorp Finland the descriptions about single interactions and relationships were often more nuanced and less generalized. For example, a manager who was leading a “highest priority project” in the organization described the following:

“Everybody does as we ask [no denials on resource requests]. This is unique. I cannot say that I will never experience this again, and I cannot believe that too many in Finland have ever experienced this, that you get what you want on the snap of a finger. [said somewhat exaggeratedly] […] In smaller companies or with a lower status this project would have hit several pitfalls by now. Now we get solutions through importance.”
Manager#38

Leading a highest priority project meant that the CEO of Techcorp transnational was a direct sponsor to the R&D intensive and high-risk, high-reward R&D project. Thus leading the project received very little internal or political resistance; problems could be resolved “through importance” by asking and taking resources from other projects and units. The manager with the direct sponsorship of the CEO had an almost unparalleled “footing” inside Techcorp Finland when it came to the success of the project (Goffman 1981). This meant that the manager could take the relational position of Parent and particularly dominant “production formats” if the project’s future success required it (Goffman 1981). This was especially tangible in renegotiating the projects resources despite the managers comparatively modest hierarchical position inside Techcorp transnational. At face value these kinds of descriptions might be interpreted through a resource lens (Hobfoll 1989; 2002); the more resources the merrier and better well-being (see also Dodge et al. 2012; Fredrickson 1998; 2001; Hackman & Oldham 1980). However, when put in contrast with descriptions of incidents that drew forth condemnation and negative feelings a broader picture of a relational structure and its relational dynamics began
to emerge. An example of a contrasting description was of an asymmetric relationship when
the person described himself or his organization to be in the Child position or so to say at the
receiving end of an asymmetric relationship:

“At the end of the day you are told ‘we expect you to deliver your commitment and it’s
your job, just do it.’ It’s a cold, Siberia cold, treatment at the end of the day.” Manager#25

Symmetric and asymmetric relationship setups were often described in static terms as an over-
all attribute or objective state the organization, as shown above (see Sveiby 2011). The organi-
zation was described by describing the relational structure of enduring and significant rela-
tionships. When asked for further details, interviewees often provided examples, incident set-
ups and dynamic descriptions that showcased more detailed “moves” that in effect described
the status quo in the relationship, i.e. moves that affirmed and exemplified a particular rela-
tionship or organization setup (Goffman 1981; Sacks et al. 1974). This level of description that
portrays the form of evidence interviewees used for their assessments became my primary fo-
cus of interest instead of the more global assertions about the general state of affairs. Thus I
honied in on interaction setups, whilst keeping in mind what the empirical material had taught
me, that to understand the significance of particular moves, one at times needs to understand
the other setups and thus the backdrop upon which the moves are enacted like the relationship
setup and the organization setup.

Moves that change the pattern in the relationship can be understood as “a difference that
creates a difference” or “schismogenesis”, that is, as a shift in the status differences of the rela-
tionship (Bateson 1972). Some have called this kind of mutual shift in schemata as “second-
order change” (Bartunek & Moch 1987). Getting to lead a highest priority project had thus been
a second-order change that changed the manager’s relational position in most relationships
and thus also his relationship setups within the organization. This highly valued relational po-
sition was something new to the manager in question, he had received a steadfast “one-up”
position in many relationship setups in comparison to most others in the organization (Potter
1986).

One could also receive more or less habitual one-down relational positions, as this derogatory
comment shows:

“Her style of writing, it’s like she’s talking with children, very instructive and the like. I
don’t know the correct term for it, but it’s exactly as if one would talk to small children.”
Employee#35

In this comment the employee was commenting on the kinds of emails a particular senior man-
ger commonly sent to employees in the organization. It signaled of a Parent-Child relation-
ship setup, which was against the expectations or ideal setup for how people in the organization
should be treated in emails. This sort of asymmetric and mostly negative descriptions of rela-
tionship setups where one’s capabilities and understanding were undermined, however, also
highlighted yet another sort of interaction setup, the symmetric Adult-Adult interaction style:

“We have it quite relaxed, here we don’t have any of those terrible supervisor-supervisee
relationships. […] How people enjoy it here? I think it’s the relaxed supervisor-supervisee
relationship. […] It’s independent work. Work gets done and nobody orders the schedule
or the like. I can think for myself, if it’s not highest priority, [then I can decide] if I do this today or that tomorrow. That suits me better; when I can decide on my own how long a task will take and if it’s better to get it done before or after the weekend. You don’t have to do it then and there and with someone telling and following your every move. I think that’s why people enjoy it here. None of that terrible supervisor-supervisee relationships and hierarchies. I’ve been able to go directly to the CEO [country manager] and so on. There’s not that kind of a threshold, you understand.” Employee#15

With these kinds of descriptive case evidence interviewees described how they were faring in the organization, their significant relationships, what kind of organization they worked in, how the Finnish site was doing overall in the corporate political landscape, and about particular and significant incidents that had occurred at work. The vocabulary of Parent, Adult and Child from TA (Berne 1964/2010) and other terms form the relational structure thus became during the course of analysis repeatedly confirmed as a suitable vocabulary to describe the kinds of interactions and relationships that interviewees reported as significant to their wellbeing and overall satisfaction at Techcorp Finland. This vocabulary provided a way to discern similar relational patterns and – both stabilizing and destabilizing – relational “moves” within significant relationships that persons used to judge theirs and others’ situation in the organization.

The setups interviewees described could however be much more sophisticated that mere descriptions of relational positions or single-move encounters. Relational dynamics as a concept in itself implies interactional encounters as an ordered series of occasional moves within countless interactions across an indefinite time horizon (Goffman 1981). This prior finding from Goffman showed itself in this study in the form of multiple moves within a single encounter. For example:

“If you try to make a suggestion or offer a point of view or something that differs from their opinion [bad senior managers], then you get quite a splash and get bullied. It’s a practice by now. People are bulldozed and the ideas are left untouched.” Employee#40

This incident setup was exemplary of a meeting in which the interviewee implicitly expected a democratic work culture and relationship setup in which all opinions are equal and based on the merits of the argument and professional competence (Lee & Edmondson 2017; Sveiby 2011). It is an expectation of an Adult style relationship setup and represented a sense of relational balance or an ideal setup for most employees in those kinds of interactions. To be specific, relational balance for the time being designates an expected, habitual, stable and pleasurable form of interaction in the relationship setup regardless of the particular form in the relationship (e.g. Adult-Adult, Parent-Child). In the above quote this particular employee however underscored that at times if your opinion or view differed from a particular senior managers opinion, you may even on a regular basis get “bulldozed” and “bullied.” This move initiated the incident setup. I interpreted this sort of incidents as descriptions of two-move interactions where an expected symmetric relationship setup (move 0) was turned into asymmetric (move 1) against the expectation and “trust” (Luhmann 1988) of the interviewee. Move 1 thus signaled the shift from a relationship setup into an incident setup. In this particular case it was when an expected symmetric Adult-Adult relationship setup was frequently turned into “crossed transactions” (Berne 1964/2010), as the employee was bulldozed into an undesired Parent-Child interaction setup. For the employee this interaction setup felt wrong probably
Part III: First Empirical Encounter

due to the self-implicatory meanings inherent in a Child position, thus inciting the sense of an incident setup. There were even longer move-countermove interaction-chains than this:

“I was on my way out of the company. I had too much. I had the lead in two projects, and I was totally fed up. I had already began looking for a new job and then went to my line manager to talk it over. He listened and we created a plan on how we would proceed. One of my projects would be given away, after a while, and in the other project I was given more rights and responsibilities. We agreed on even very small details. Afterwards I could focus on that single project. And all came true! If they hadn’t, I still had my CV in order, I would’ve immediately began sending job applications. I’ve had a couple of experiences like this [during the years]. Usually it’s the workload. [...] This builds trust, truly.” Manager#29

This is an example of what I analyzed to be a four-move interaction sequence. In this interaction a manager threatened to leave the organization. It was enlightening as to what one can do to break a sedimented relationship setup in which one feels overwhelmed and at a disadvantage like in a Parent-Child relationship setup. The manager had sought a job elsewhere and with that opportunity in hand went to confront his senior manager and talk it out. With the alternative to end the relationship and employment at Techcorp Finland, the manager took the Parent position in the interaction setup and thus initially took a “dominating conflict style” (Rahim 2002) and demanded particular changes to his long-term responsibilities. By taking a dominant relational position he in this encounter made the daring move to put his senior manager in the position of Child and thus deliberately break away from the established relationship setup. In this case the senior manager listened, and apparently responded by taking the Adult position and an “integrating conflict style” (ibid.). Based on the described incident, the interaction setup quickly turned from an overworked Child-Parent relationship setup (move 0) with the force of a threat to its opposite Parent-Child (move 1) and then finally to Adult-Adult (move 2) with mutual agreement during the course of the short description. In the end, explicit agreements were made and upheld by both (move 3), which the manager said built “trust, truly.” The last move reinforced the newly established Adult-Adult relationship and the new relationship setup as it was formed based on the preferences of both parties.

Noteworthy is the fact that this is a positive description from an incident setup to a novel relationship setup, and that its end-state is an Adult-Adult symmetric relationship setup of mutual understanding and respect. Indeed, the symmetric Adult-Adult interaction setup was most often described as the ideal setup for relationships at Techcorp Finland, when details about the situation were omitted or considered irrelevant. Like in the above quote, enacted asymmetric relationship setups (Parent-Child) were often described as instigating or perpetuating an ongoing incident setup or conflict whereas symmetric relationship setups in the form of Adult-Adult interactions marked a return to good relations and thus closed off past incident setups. There were of course exceptions. As shown in Table 1, some cases had ended in terminating the employment contract or at the time of the interviews were headed that way according to the interviewees’ own accounts.

Most of the moves and descriptions of wellbeing degenerative incidents were of the kind in which the interviewee was in the interaction setup actively and against the will of the interviewee put in a Child position of relational weakness by another interactant. In other words,
the relationship setup had turned from an expected and preferred symmetric Adult-Adult style to an incident setup of an asymmetric Parent-Child style.

However, in some exceptional cases with particular situational characteristics the Parent position of relational strength or the Adult position of mutual worth could also be forced upon or resisted by a person against their preferences. Indeed, interviewees’ assessments of their current situation in the organization often corresponded with assessments of the form of their significant relationships and thus the frequently enacted relationship setups within the organization.

Albeit it is tempting to generalize the relational positions to be of a particular valence and value in itself, this, according to my analysis, would not be entirely accurate. For example, a manager who had recently been appointed as head of a team actively resisted taking the hierarchical Parent role with his subordinates (Lee & Edmondson 2017; McGregor 1960/2006), because he thought that would automatically allow his employees to stay in the familiar and yet in the manager’s eyes in the irresponsible and passive position of the Child:

“We’ve clarified everyone’s duties quite a lot, what they do and what’s whose territory. Some of them had [before my arrival] zero independence. It was a culture of permission asking, ‘can I’, ‘may I.’ One can come with a blank sheet of paper and ask, ‘what should I do?’ I’ve tried to guide their actions ... ‘You know best, you’ve done this before, you have suggestions, you have opinions, tell me, let’s talk about it together, make a suggestion.’ Then I can more easily comment yes or no or ask if it makes sense. But if you come with a blank sheet of paper then I can say something really silly. Make a suggestion. To give responsibility and in this way build their confidence in the long run. It’s been rather hard.” Manager#24

This case description shows that certain employees might at times for one reason or another prefer and thus become accustomed to a particular relationship setup with their manager and thus a steadfast relational position (Berne 1961/2016), including the position of Child. The employees in the above case had learned to perform according to a Child position in their relationship setups with the previous manager. The new manager enacted an Adult-Adult style in the interaction setups, a style he thought would improve the performance of the team and his team members. The manager was thus trying to instigate a second-order change in the relationship setup of his team by frequently enacting Adult-Adult interaction setups with his subordinates. I have come to call this sort of situation a setup disharmony, in cases where one interactant prefers one form of setup and another a different kind of ideal setup for the relationship. In setup disharmony experienced relational balance cannot be accomplished for both parties in the interaction, but instead the interaction most likely represents an incident setup for one or more involved parties.

The sentiment of not wanting responsibility and the Parent role was expressed especially in connection with negative encounters like layoffs or situations the persons felt that they did not have an adequate handle on. In cases riddled with uncertainty personal responsibility as a Parent could be eschewed both by employees and managers alike. For example, another manager commented that he at times preferred that the responsibility of a decision was carried by more senior managers, which relinquished him from assuming a Parent position:
“Considering that oneself has a managerial role I think it’s good that one can give the final responsibility to someone else. In that sense it’s good that there is a hierarchy. If I feel that the issue is too big for me then there’s always the next level where you can take it. [...] In that sense I think it’s always good that there’s someone you can rely on in making decisions. You don’t have to be alone.” Manager#37

In this case the manager could experience setup misalignment between the relationship setup and the organization setup. In the relationship setup and thus the proximal situation he could be the decision-maker, but within the broader organization he felt that the decision was too big for him. The circumstances and content of the decision thus prompted a shift in schema and what setup was ideal and corresponding relational position would be appropriate to play out in handling the situation. There were in other words particular situational circumstances that influenced the judgement if a Child, Adult or Parent positions and corresponding interaction setups were appropriate or sought after (see Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Putting the organizational circumstances aside until the second encounter with the empirical material (Part V), one can, nonetheless, at this stage say that the general pattern was that Child positions were shunned, and Adult and Parent positions appreciated and sought after. Adult and Parent positions enabled “empowerment” (Spreitzer 2008) and “autonomy” (Deci et al. 2017) at work.

Persons at Techcorp Finland did not always question and try to influence the relational position they were in but accepted and played the cards they were dealt in the interaction setup, and most often in the organization setup. One could however play the positions with varying positional proficiency. That is to say, each relational position varied in the relational duties and expectations the positions were imbued with, but all included such coordinated responsibilities. Managers for instance were often expected to play the role of bearer of bad tidings. Some managers commented that their work was to function as a filter or shield between their employees and senior executives. As they put it, the managers “translated” the message to employees in a way they could take it in without unwanted under- or overreactions. Managers who could play this predicament of multiple positions – being a Child in one conversation and a Parent in the next – were known to be able to “balance it”, as one employee put it, and thus be respectful towards their employees even though their orders might not have given them much leeway. They thus showed positional proficiency in playing multiple positions.

One could even play the position of one-down or Child with some proficiency. A team leader in an R&D project described the way it was expected to present a situation to the project review board when all had not gone according to plan. This example shows a deliberate interaction setup, that is, an organization setup, that showed how the interaction between a project lead and the review board was expected to be played:

“[If a project is in trouble] ...Then you have to go in fact based and ‘We tried this, it didn’t work, next we’ll do this, and it will take this many weeks and that’s why this project is delayed.’ And if you need more money then you need to say it and how much is required. You have to go in there with a prepared case with facts and numbers ready. You specifically can’t go in and ‘This didn’t work, what should I do next?’ but instead ‘This didn’t work. In our opinion this should be solved the following way’ so that they can say Yes or No. The executives, you can’t expect them to tell you ‘Do this.’ What you can expect from them is a decision between a couple of alternatives.” Manager#10
In these kinds of situations, a manager could be expected to perform as a Child in the organization setup. The setup was not necessarily experienced negatively but merely included some implicit rules for how such situations and corresponding relational positions should be played with adequate proficiency in order to facilitate coordination and decision-making.

There were also descriptions of significant interaction setups in which a manager did not play their expected position and thus the relational position in the relationship setup. This sort of incident setups seemed to cause confusion or disapproval of the managers actions if he was not able to stand his ground. I analyzed these cases as cases where a move caused the interaction setup to become misaligned with the relationship setup, thus causing an incident setup. The following quote depicts a case when a manager was not giving the long-term “direction” for the team (Drath et al. 2008), but a team-member took charge of the discussion. This sort of play in which a person is not playing according to the relationship setup and his expected relational position would seem to lead to relational disorientation through setup misalignment. Relational disorientation occurs when the setup format is broken through inaction or move and there is no longer an agreement between what setup is going on and being enacted. Relational disorientation thus designates a situation in which the setup, the relational positions and role expectations became unclear. It differs from setup disharmony, which concerns the ostensible difference between preferences and their enactment in ideal setups. In this case of setup misalignment, the incurred interaction setup undermines or even contradicts the relationship setup, thus causing an incident setup. Suddenly it is a colleague who is making the decisions instead of the manager or the team in unison:

“If a manager is not in a sense strong enough then a sort of ‘lower’ management shows its head. Someone else takes charge. It creates a kind of asymmetry about what we should do, what the targets should be and where we are headed. [...] In certain instances when the manager does not use his power or seems unsure, which is normal and understandable, then someone else takes over and ‘now we do it like this.’ That’s not necessarily a good thing. Sure, it solves the issue then and there but not in the long term and with the big picture in mind. It also undermines the manager. [...] And between colleagues it’s ‘how come you are deciding this, you can’t do that!?.” Employee#28

This quote shows rather nicely the kind of relational “roles” with corresponding obligations and expectations that surrounded particular interaction setups at Techcorp Finland (see Part IV). When the expected relationship setup was broken it was unclear if the organization setup was also broken, that is, if the decision stemming from the novel interaction setup was aligned with the “big picture.” There was in other words an expectation that the managers suggestions would not go against any surrounding agreements and thus the “direction” and “alignment” within Techcorp (Drath et al. 2008). When an employee made the move to the relational position of Parent, it was unclear how well his lead and ensuing suggestions were aligned with the rest of the organization’s direction and efforts of “coordination” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009).

Similarly, when a senior manager repeatedly began to take a Parent position with others in the organization, that is, to enact a second-order change in his relationship setups from a symmetric to asymmetric, it was at times assumed that the manager was acting on the behalf of the organization as communicating a novel organization setup. It was often assumed that the change in relationship setups was due to changes in organization setups and thus that there was alignment between the two. There was an expectation that relationship setups would and
should be aligned with organization setups. If the enacted interaction setup upset the relationship setup or the organization setup then setup misalignment and relational disorientation could arise. Similar confusion and enactment of bad judgement could occur if the circumstances surrounding the situation changed and a familiar relationship setup was suddenly misaligned with the organization setup:

“Some of the managers are good friends...they are more friends that superior-supervisee relationships. At times some awkward decisions have been made, or not been made because the emotional attachment has been so strong, and they haven’t had the stomach to hurt the other.” Manager#47

There was in other words an expectation that relationship setups and organization setups would be aligned, and that the organization setup had precedence over relationship setups. That is to say, the good of the organization was seen as more important than individual relationships.

There were planned organization setups where persons had “scripts” (Harris 1973/2012; Gioia & Poole 1984; Goffman 1967) or “production formats” (Goffman 1981) concordant with designed roles of a Parent, Adult or Child. Most organization setups were accepted and seen as proper, albeit some areas of decision-making were pinpointed as where there was a need for better coordination through purposively designed organization setups. Moreover, here and there were some particular organization setups that were questioned because they differed from the ideal setup. For example, an R&D-manager who had recently come from another similar company perceived the product development process in his division at Techcorp as outdated and not as “advanced” as it should be:

“The most important for a project is the steering group where the executives are. It is the steering group that should in fact be responsible for the project, its timetable and budget. It is the people higher up who should be responsible. Nevertheless, in most companies where the processes are not that developed the situation is backwards. It is the project manager who stands as accused. When doing overviews, the steering group asks questions about why you are not on schedule and similar questions, while the setup should be turned on its head. They should be the ones who do the explaining ‘there are not enough resources and therefore the schedule has not been met and been too tight to begin with.’ They should be supporting the project and actually be a part of the leadership team. [...] It is usually the business director that should be responsible for the project and interested enough so that he would do everything in his power for it to be on schedule. Here it’s exactly the opposite. We just report to him how we have progressed and if we are late then why we are late. Support has been a bit scarce. If we for instance report that we need a resource the request is easily ignored. They just say that nothing can be done, one should get by with what’s available, and nevertheless the schedule should hold. [...] The result is a kind of a blame game where the project team has – well nobody says it directly but – been too slow-moving or done mistakes.” Manager#34

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44 The reasons for this confusion is discussed further in Part V. In short, I submit that this is in large part because the manager is expected to be the representative of the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993).
Given that these organization setups and their embedded relational positions and how one should participate in the setup were *designed*, this meant that they could also be deliberately but often laboriously changed. The following example of an *organization setup design* toward a communally more ideal setup is enlightening as to what kinds of interactions were considered normatively good and bad at Techcorp Finland.

The context for the next quote is the following: In one business unit a new senior R&D-manager reorganized how the work in product development got done. Product development not only has the responsibility to develop completely new products but also to troubleshoot in cases that more or less continuously and foremost unexpectedly arise in manufacturing or from dissatisfied customers. These were called “sustain” projects. A subordinate R&D-manager describes what changes were made and why when an organization setup was put in place to substitute prior relationship setups:

“When I came here it was a mess. [The senior R&D manager] has very admirably straightened out how sustain projects are organized. Now they are put on a list and once every Friday the sustain projects are prioritized. Previously it was done by who yelled the most. Someone came from marketing and screamed that customers were going berserk. With some investigation one could observe that somebody had received a single cranky call. [...] [The senior manager] systematized the process so that work is not [anymore] interrupted on a daily basis. I think it’s his greatest achievement and he did it beautifully. [...] Now no-one goes by themselves to a physicist and says ‘hey, get this done immediately’ but there is the meeting between marketing and R&D. Then R&D tells how long a project takes and its cost. Then marketing has to be in on the decision and also responsible if the launch of a new product is delayed or if they will stand the heat coming from customers. [...] It’s tremendous how the situation has calmed down. Now the head of marketing can act up and have tantrums in the meetings as much as he wants to. [The senior R&D manager] created a process in which marketing is forced to be in on the decisions despite the fact that they want everything now, immediately. Now they don’t have the luxury of getting everything, wanting everything on the spot, they have to behold the consequences of their desires and weigh them for themselves.” Manager #45

Situations in which a subordinate could be exposed to sudden outbursts, tantrums and unrealistic wants from more senior managers were seen as undesirable and thus preferably avoided (Vuori & Huy 2016). These were asymmetric Parent-Child interaction setups what were experienced as incident setups by employees. At Techcorp Finland there were numerous such recurring situations that were designed into processes and organization setups. More colloquially, they were called joint meetings which were designed into the “participation framework” and “production format” of Adult conversation and joint decision-making (Goffman 1981). A manager described this as the overall modus operandi at Techcorp Finland, although this did not manifest in all meetings and with all people inside Techcorp Finland:

“We have very seldom any kind of skirmishes. Here [in Finland] people understand it very well that we can’t fight among ourselves. We pull together and try to get this site to work well and look smooth and as efficient as possible within the larger corporation – professional as we are.” Manager #10
Organizational “alignment” and mutual “direction” were thus valued and actively sought after at Techcorp Finland (Drath et al. 2008). This was experienced as enacted relational balance in the setups and as an infrequency in incident setups. Organization setup designs and redesigns seemed to follow the logic of this overarching purpose and were considered improvements in the organization’s coordination (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). Thus, improving coordination through mutually agreed organization setups also interaction setups were overall seen to change for the better.

The rationale seemed to be that Adult discussions and shared responsibility prohibits immature conduct, unintelligent orders, emotional outbursts and the risk of unprovoked and unwarranted Parent-Child interaction setups. It is worth noticing that the organization setup design in this case focused attention on the quality of coordination instead of trying to remove moral improprieties in the interactions or to increase mindful self-regulation (Ocasio 1997; Weick & Sutcliffe 2006). That is to say, improved coordination had more traction as an accepted “warrant” (Toulmin 1958/2003) for organization setup designs than arguing for and enforcing good manners or personal self-regulation to battle emotional episodes. Unwarranted Parent-Child interaction setups instigated incident setups and thus emotional episodes which required handling and effort in order to return to the symmetric position of Adult that was often perceived as the neutral and emotionally balanced status quo at Techcorp Finland. According to my analysis, one familiar way to handle these kinds of situations was to turn to a third outside party and complain or condemn the previous interaction. For example:

“Of certain kinds of decisions, for instance if people are temporarily moved between teams, that can be taken really negatively and if the worker suggests a counter proposal on how to handle the situation then the bosses are like ‘I get your point’, but nothing’s done to change the temporary transfer because yet another team would be more urgent. There’s quite a lot of this sort of strife against the decisions but more in the sense ‘I would’ve made better decisions.’” Team supervisor#43

Following an emotionally laden move that instigated an incident setup there were often efforts to rebalance one’s sense of the appropriate relationship setup and respective footing within the company. This rebalancing could be established by either emotional and social support to the receiving party, or, by condemning the actions or character of the Parent in the incident setup with a judgmental countermove (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; see also Goffman 1963b). This sort of “postplays” (Goffman 1961a; 1961b; 1981) or post-conversations that re-establishes one’s prior relational “footing” (Goffman 1981) seemed to rebalance the incident and signal a return to relational balance reminiscent of homeostatic symmetry (see Burke 1945; Edwards 1992).

11.4 Discussion: wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination

At the core of the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings we can find a relatively generic relational structure and enacted relational dynamics that mold the relational structure between two or more conscious moral agents. The relational structure consists of concepts like relational positions, move, interaction setup, footing, participation framework, and production format (see Goffman 1981). The relational structure is a theoretical fusion of Goffman’s and Berne’s pathbreaking insights and an integration of their interactional
vocabularies, to which I have suggested some additional concepts that were developed during the course of this study. The suggested novel concepts that are included in the notion of relational structure are presented in Table 2. This extended vocabulary about the relational structure enables improved descriptive accuracy, generality and simplicity targeting the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings (see Weick 1999).

Table 2. A summary of novel concepts that emerged from the first encounter with the empirical material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Supporting literature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational dynamics</td>
<td>Unintentional shifts and intentional relational moves that alter the relational structure during an single encounter, in a series of designed interactions or during the course of a longer relationship.</td>
<td>A Parent-Child interaction setup is changed to an Adult-Adult interaction setup through a relational move instigated by the Child and subsequently affirmed by the Parent.</td>
<td>Bateson (1972), Berne (1964/2010), Goffman (1981), Watzlawick et al. (1967/2011), Watzlawick et al. (1994/2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational position</td>
<td>An interactant's footing in an interactional situation, describable in terms of a Parent, Adult or Child position. The relational position defines one's co-constituted role, form of self-representation and participation framework and thus also the production format for the person's utterances and conduct in the interaction setup.</td>
<td>A Parent position, which is co-constituted and relationally affirmed with the complementary Child position in the interaction setup.</td>
<td>Berne (1964/2010), Goffman (1967; 1974; 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction setup</td>
<td>The proximal interactional situation (scene) in which interactions in one another co-presence take place and relational moves are enacted. The interaction setup is co-constituted by the participants in the encounter. All other setups including relationship setup, organization setup, ideal setup and incident setup are also interaction setups.</td>
<td>An Adult-Adult interaction setup in which both participants participate in the encounter on equal terms and with similar freedoms and responsibilities.</td>
<td>Berne (1961/2016; 1964/2010), Goffman (1967; 1974; 1981)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship setup</td>
<td>The experienced and expected status quo of an established relationship between two persons who have frequently engaged each other and thus formed a working relationship based on past experience and mutual arrangements.</td>
<td>A supervisor-subordinate relationship setup, which is an enduring and more contextually specific form of the generic Parent-Child relationship setup with complementary roles.</td>
<td>Bateson (1972), Goffman (1961b; 1963b; 1967; 1981), Gottman (1997/2007; 2011) Watzlawick (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization setup</td>
<td>A designed interaction setup formed through explicit agreements about how relational coordination should be enacted in the organization.</td>
<td>A project review meeting formatted as a Parent-Child organization setup in which upper executives ask questions and make decisions and the project manager is confined to providing information about the project.</td>
<td>O’Hanlon &amp; Wilk (1987), Searle (1995; 2010), Seikula &amp; Arnkil (2006), Wilk (1999; 2010a, 2013)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The relational structure provides a concise relational vocabulary that was able to describe a significant amount of wellbeing related interactions within Techcorp Finland. The great majority of those cases were stable Parent-Child, Adult-Adult interactions and destabilizing “moves” (Parent-Adult, Parent-Parent, etc.) that differed from the expected relationship setup and thus upset the expected relational balance. As theorized in Transactional Analysis (Berne 1964/2010) stable transactions occur in symmetric Adult-Adult or in asymmetric Parent-Child relationship setups in which both parties play their respective and mutually affirming relational positions (see also Bateson 1972; Watzlawick et al. 1967). We also found that there was an expectation of setup alignment in the interaction setup, that the preferred and expected relationship setups would be aligned with organization setups, and both with the ideal setups, otherwise incident setups and relational disorientation could occur. Indeed, in organizational settings the significant interactions and their setups were most often concerned with “coordination” of mutual efforts (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). Some of the setups were more set in stone than others, pointing out one significant difference between the different setups.

The results show that interviewees described their wellbeing and how they were faring within the organization in terms of both stable and unstable setups within Techcorp Finland. They in other words described the relational matrix surrounding them and their respective relational position within the matrix. Some of the interaction setups and the repeating relationship and organization setups were undesirable or seen as unintelligent or unproductive, others were found pleasant and supportive whilst some were without a doubt insignificant and not even reminisced at the time of the interviews. In a purely theoretical light one could perhaps assume that amongst adult human beings in organizational settings all Parent-Child interactions
would be condemned, and Adult-Adult interactions praised as the ideal setup for all interactions (e.g. Deci & Ryan 2000; Lee & Edmondson 2017; Maslow 1987; McGregor 1960/2006). The empirical findings support the notion that the Adult-Adult style was generally preferred when other situational characteristics were missing. However, in particular circumstances or with some of the interviewees, the Parent-Child interaction setup was preferred, especially in cases that involved decision-making and coordination. This insight prompts further discussion and analysis.

Based on the results, we can theorize that the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing can be structurally broken down into a handful of wellbeing generative and degenerative forms of relational coordination that are played out in a dyad or bigger ensemble within an organization (Gergen 2009). These are presented in Figure 3. Building on Gergen’s (2009) theorizing on “relational coordination” and “generative” and “degenerative” relational processes, we here add to Gergen’s theorizing by specifying three particular types of wellbeing generative and degenerative forms of relational coordination in organizational settings:

1. Wellbeing generative relational coordination in organizational settings
   a. Positional proficiency
   b. Relational affirmation
   c. Setup alignment

2. Wellbeing degenerative relational coordination in organizational settings
   a. Positional incompetence
   b. Relational invalidation
   c. Setup misalignment

![Figure 3. Three types of wellbeing generative and degenerative forms of relational coordination. The three types of coordination can overlap and feed into each other, thus forming self-reinforcing loops of either wellbeing generative or degenerative coordination.](image)

### 11.4.1 Positional proficiency and incompetence

*Positional proficiency* was shown to be a person’s capacity to fluently play an assigned relational position in an interaction setup. Such a proficiency can be understood as twofold. One aspect would seem to be the ability to play the expected setups instead of unknowingly or otherwise initiating a “move” (Goffman 1981) to change the interaction setup and thus cause
misalignment between different setups and concordant unease and possible relational disorientation in other interactants. To play one’s relational position with proficiency is thus to enable others to play their preferred or expected positions in the interaction setup. Whether the other interactant(s) expect relational balance through a Parent-Child or an Adult-Adult interaction style, a proficient player would seem to be able to accommodate the expectation, especially if it fits the circumstances of the situation.

At Techcorp Finland positional proficiency could occasionally result in, what I had originally coded as positional inflexibility. There were times when a relationship setup overruled other setups, including the organization setup. As exemplified by one presented quote, this could cause “awkward decisions.” In other situations, positional inflexibility was in the form of not being able to cultivate in-depth personal relationships within the organization, so that the relationship setup would not in any circumstances become misaligned with the organization setup. Interestingly, this was in most cases deliberate and thoughtful enactment of a relationship setup. In preemptively seeking to avoid potential misalignment between setups some at Techcorp Finland felt the burden of positional inflexibility, which often seemed to accompany positional proficiency and being clear that the organization setup was primary to the relationship setup. Put differently, the overarching “purpose” (Burke 1945) of the organization was in most cases represented by the designs of the organization setups whereas the purpose of a relationship setup could be the presence of a pleasant relationship through mutual affirmation. These are vastly two different purposes for an interaction.

The second aspect of positional proficiency would seem to be the capacity to change relational position and the interaction setup in a way that actually benefits the situation. As the senior manager did in the four-move interaction chain, it is not always, for example, beneficial to accommodate a Parent-Child interaction setup, but instead the situation might benefit from changing the interaction setup to an Adult-Adult interaction style. The same relational dynamics played out in the example of the manager who tried to habituate his employees to a novel Adult-Adult relationship setup and corresponding sense of relational balance. Thus the ability to initiate a move towards an alternative relational balance and in the long-run sediment the new balance as the new relationship and organization setup would also seem to require positional proficiency. Further, to use moves to change or stabilize a more suitable relationship or organization setup would seem to be a pivotal relational proficiency in organizations. When one should do which – instigate a move to change the interaction setup or proficiently play one’s assigned relational position – seemed to depend on the circumstances of the situation, the reading of which most likely requires some practical wisdom (see Johnsen & Toulmin 1988; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b).

In this light positional incompetence can range from not being able to fluently communicate one’s own relational position, unintentionally initiating moves or incident setups like with tantrums or miscommunication (e.g. Goffman 1967), not being able to play a particular relational position even if it would fit the occasion, or not being able to read the interaction setup or the surrounding circumstances and one’s assigned or otherwise fitting relational position for different encounters and situations. The different ways to show positional incompetence seem innumerable. This can perhaps be expected, as fitting balances in the act-scene and agent-act

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45 In the second encounter with the empirical material we will approach the issue of situated practical wisdom through the concept of relational frames. The enactment of a particular relational frame at the right time, at the right place, with the right people, and in the right way indubitably requires positional proficiency, as will later on be more thoroughly discussed.
ratios are most likely more difficult to come by compared to unfitting responses to a situation (Burke 1945).

Conduct similar to positional proficiency and incompetence has been analyzed by at least Goffman (1967) through the concepts of “face”, a “line”, and “in wrong face”, albeit in another theoretical context far afield from wellbeing scholarship. These related concepts, Goffman’s overall approach and also a more thorough look at *phronesis* or practical wisdom (Annas 2011; Aristotle 2005) as a theoretical lens to read the circumstances of a situation were briefly introduced in Part II and is discussed more thoroughly in Part IV of this study, in preparation for the second encounter with the empirical material in Part V.

11.4.2 Relational affirmation and invalidation

Relational affirmation concerns the validation of the expected relationship setup and thus also a person’s expected relational position and the expected relational balance in that interaction setup. When a person for example expects to be treated as an Adult and when that relational position is affirmed by the interaction setup and through concordant conduct by other interactants then relational affirmation can be said to take place. In general terms, relational affirmation is the alignment between the interaction setup and a person’s expectation of the relationship setup. This most often results in relational balance and through a mutual understanding of the setup and played relational positions facilitates successful communication and coordination (see Part IV). Relational balance affirms one’s “face” and other implicit assertions of self-worth as well as other “self-implicative suggestions” (Goffman 1967) of for example one’s expertise and knowledge. For example, relational affirmation can be said to have occurred in the quote where an employee described that there are no “terrible supervisor-supervisee relationships” at Techcorp Finland. The employee gave as one piece of evidence that he could walk into the country manager’s office anytime he needed, which in his account affirmed an Adult-Adult interaction style and expected relational balance at Techcorp Finland.

If one were to merely focus on the emotional content occurring in relational affirmation, it could be seen as a symbolic reward (Etzioni 1975) through the show of appreciation or “gratitude” in a relationship or social exchange setting (Algoe & Haidt 2009; see Adler & Kwon 2002). Gratitude can also be understood as a much broader emotion than occurring in relational settings, like in the case of “habitually focusing on and appreciating the positive aspects of life” (Wood et al. 2010: 890). However, in relational affirmation the relationship setup and relational positions are key characteristics of what is affirmed and how and under what circumstances. Relational affirmation is wedded to the concept of interaction setup, which thus significantly differs from the concept of gratitude.

Given the different setups, relational affirmation reconfirms a person’s expected “line” (Goffman 1967) and “footing” within the interaction setup, and thus also validates the employed “participation framework” and “production format” for how the person engages and expresses himself within the setup (Goffman 1981). Thus perceived relational affirmation goes beyond gratitude in its relational structure and dynamics as well as specific organizational consequences. Relational affirmation has consequences on how “coordination” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009) takes place and what kind of “frame of activity” or “person-role formula” a person turns to in different interaction setups (Goffman 1974: 247). The expected and preferred person-role formula is validated in relational affirmation.

Relational invalidation was easy to spot in interviewee accounts, as the emotional reaction to invalidation was often tangible and robust. Relational invalidation and setup misalignment
most often went hand in hand. As in the quote when a manager recounted being “bulldozed” and “bullied”, these were cases where a manager’s expectation of being treated as an Adult was ostensibly invalidated. In another structurally similar but emotionally less severe example that was shown earlier, an employee described getting emails from a senior manager that was experienced as “exactly” like “talk to small children.” Such incidents more or less directly put the recipients in Child positions in the interaction setup thus relationally invalidating an Adult or perhaps even expert Parent positions.

Given the expectation that relationship and organization setups should be aligned, relational invalidation seemed to result in particularly significant incident setups. Relational invalidation could result in relational disorientation and speculation about the other interactants motives and if the person was actually acting in the best interest of the organization. Thus, when an expected relationship setup was upset, one could most often merely speculate on the possible reasons. If it was because on one’s own incompetence, because of the other interactant’s unthoughtful actions, or if the recent interaction setup indeed was the new organization setup or relationship setup. These particularly significant incident setups could thus alter how the person’s perceived their surrounding relational matrix and their relational position within it. This discussion is continued and enriched in the second encounter with the empirical material (see especially the discussion about HR and the new senior HR-manager).

11.4.3 Setup alignment and misalignment

In setup alignment there is alignment between the setups, between the interaction setup, the ideal setup, the relationship setup and the organization setup. When the setups were aligned then the interaction went according to mutual expectations and preferences of how the interaction and the corresponding relational positions should be played out. Given that it would seem to require the aligned actions in the form of “interdependent know-how” (Weick & Roberts 1993) about “acting well” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a) in concert, when setup alignment occurs reliably and through collective action it is fitting to understand it as the enactment of a “collective capability” (Lilius et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002). Interactants’ actions are in such cases heedfully interrelated and relationally fit their respective performances into the mutually enacted “collective mind” of the organization (Weick & Roberts 1993; see also Lewin 1948; Mead 1934/2015). As described earlier, collective mind can be understood as an attribute of intelligent and heedful co-action fitting the circumstances of the situation (Weick & Roberts 1993; see also Ryle 1949/2000; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b).

In general terms we can describe the interaction in setup alignment as relationally coordinated wellbeing generative “co-action” (Gergen 2009). In such an interaction setup all parties most likely enact positional proficiency and reciprocal relational affirmation takes place. Moreover, the setup is probably seen as facilitating organizing and the achievement of mutually sought-after ends in a fitting way, which is the purpose of deliberately designed organization setups. If the setups were in harmony with each other, there was very often nothing to report beyond good teamwork. Interviewees could find it difficult to describe what made such encounters so harmonious and mutually uplifting. In a word, the interaction went as it “should” (Burke 1945).46

46 The concept of “should” (Burke 1945) is important to remember, as it has significant consequences upon our analysis in the second encounter with the empirical material.
There is however more to say about the cases in which one or more of the setups were in misalignment and thus there was a dissatisfaction with what had occurred in the encounter, how a person had handled a particular situation, or how a particular situation was habitually handled in the organization. One should remember that the organization setup was most often an explicit agreement or process description of, for example, how a particular meeting was to take place or how a recurring issue should be coordinated within the organization. Intriguingly, the organization setup could however differ from the ideal setup. There could be an intangible expectation and preference of how a particular organization setup should be organized in the best interests of the organization. When there repeatedly occurred interaction setups that were considered unfruitful, like in the case with “sustain”-projects, an organization setup was designed to counter the unproductive wellbeing degenerative interaction setups within the organization. In another discussed case, a manager argued that the organization setup should be redesigned because it was not that “advanced” and thus did not give the best outcome for leading R&D projects at Techcorp Finland. In this case the organization setup was not considered ideal given the person’s know-how and expertise of how positional proficiency should be enacted.

If there was an organization setup in place, then it was expected to be heedful, thoughtful, and benefit coordination (Weick & Roberts 1993) – to provide “direction” and “alignment” (Drath et al. 2008) – and thus help accomplish the overarching purpose of the organization. If the organization setup was not embodying these qualities, then it did not represent the ideal setup or there was the thought that a better organization setup should be designed. In most cases the organization setup was however seen as a fitting means to mutually sought-after end. Often the organization setup was designed based on the ideal setup; consequently, at times it was seen that one ought to do as the organization setup dictated regardless of what the ideal setup might be. The organization setup was seen as primary to relationship and situationally once-occurrent interaction setups.

Based on our findings, we can suggest that setup misalignment can occur in three different ways. Three different forms of setup misalignment that were encountered in this study were (1) between the interaction setup and the relationship setup, (2) between the relationship setup and the organization setup, and (3) the interaction setup and the organization setup which is equivalent to a misalignment between the organization setup and the ideal setup. Whenever there is a setup misalignment, it gives rise to an incident setup and a sense of disharmony and relational imbalance in the interaction setup.47

In the misalignment between the interaction setup and the relationship setup the problem could be seen as either in the relationship setup or in the interaction setup, depending on the circumstances of the situation and preferences. If the problem was seen in the interaction setup then the encounter could be described as an individual incident that broke with the expected and harmonious relational balance and thus instigated an incident setup. For example, a manager did not act as a role model, or an employee was temporarily acting up and mistreating his colleagues. When the problem was seen in the relationship setup, then the move and the destabilizing interaction setup could be seen as an example of trying to alter, for example, the team culture through its expected relational balance and the recurrently played relational

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47 For the sake of understanding and adequately grounding these theoretical suggestions to the empirical material, I have here made the unorthodox choice of showing and building on additional quotes that support these conclusions, even though this is a discussion about results. Given that there are two empirical encounters in this study, I believe this method is warranted and in part bridges the two empirical encounters. In addition, more supporting quotes and case descriptions are provided for these prospective suggestions in the second encounter with the empirical material in Part V.
positions and the accompanied participation frameworks and production formats. One could also see a problem in the relationship setup if it blocked intelligent co-action in an interaction setup:

“There’s a guidance here that ‘you can’t say that, even if it’s true.’ Here the culture is that you cannot tell the truth.” Manager#25

The above quote shows when for example a manager’s “face” is more important than the truth, then the problem can be seen in the relationship setup instead of in the act that would call a spade a spade. It could also be that the circumstances of the situation were unprecedented akin to a crisis and warranted an interaction setup that differed from the relationship setup and its relational balance (see Grint 2005). An example would be an expert employee taking charge of an important issue in a crisis and getting full support from his manager and senior management. As an example from Techcorp Finland, when a key supplier’s factory had burnt down and put Techcorp Finland’s supply chain essentially at a standstill, the procurement team was given full authority and all support to rectify the situation. One of the employees recounted it being one of the most exhausting and yet rewarding experiences in his career. In this case the circumstances of the situation and being given full authority meant that the interaction setups were temporarly primary ideal setups and thus overruled long-term relationship and organization setups within Techcorp Finland. This positive example of situationally attuned setup alignment by collectively subordinating the relationship and organization setups to the ad hoc interaction setup highlights that the setup and setup alignment should enable a fitting response to the circumstances of the unique situation (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b).

In the misalignment between the relationship and organization setups, again the problem could be seen within either of the two setups. If the problem was apprehended to be in the relationship setup, then there had occurred actions that spoke for personal relationships being primary to organization setups, or, for example a manager enacting a typical relationship setup that in those circumstances went against the best interest of the organization. In those instances, a manager could, for example, protect a friendship with an employee or perceive that enacting a hierarchical Parent-Child relationship setup and pursuing own interests and career advancement was more important than fruitful coordination according to the long-term interests of the organization. Indeed, upper executives who were perceived as acting merely on their own behalf and thus perceived as maximizing their own annual bonuses, were often criticized for their actions.

Conversely, when the organization setup broke with the relationship setup, then it could be a case in which there was a designed organization setup in place that was perceived as unducive for coordination despite upholding the expected relational balance between interactants. The processes of budgeting and project planning at Techcorp Finland are good examples. Many managers felt that the process was arduous and the teams own budget or project plan was often very detailed and well argued, and yet at the end of the day the budget or timetable that was decided by senior executives could come back unrealistic to the point of being perceived as oppressive:

“When we’re asked for our input for next year’s budget...And we put a massive effort to crunch the numbers, how much could it be. And in the end they give us the right numbers [as in a lottery]. And we go, ‘why did we have to do this exercise in the first place?’ If they
have the numbers already set, why can’t they just give us the right answers and half our workload?” Manager#24

“Say we used plenty of time to plan [a project] and we’re really content that ‘yes, this is how this should be done, this is the critical path, and this is how long it will take.’ Once it is reported upstairs then for some reason it comes back down with a year taken off without any explanation. It’s really hard to take that to the project team. I understand the idea of creating a positive pressure, but if it’s totally unrealistic then people just drop their gloves because there’s no way to reach that. One has to be really careful with what is cut. The schedule is usually shortened. There should be some justification to why they think that it can be shortened.” Manager#42

These two quotes show how the organization setup could be seen as unproductive or unwarranted. Instead of improving coordination the setup was seen as adding work or lacking justifications and reasoning that would provide an intelligent course of action. Such organization setups could be apprehended as a relational imbalance, the recurring process seemed tilted toward serving someone else at one’s own expense, thus putting oneself or one’s team in an oppressed Child position. In these cases the people could feel oppressed by the organization setup. The organization setup could be seen as an enduring Parent-Child interaction setup whereas it would have been preferred as an Adult-Adult interaction style where the reasoning and information flow went both ways.

When the interaction setup and the organization setups were misaligned then there was also misalignment also between the organization setup and the ideal setup. It could be a case in which personal relationships and thus relationship setups were often less relevant or secondary like in a project review board or in communication between departments and functions. If the misalignment was seen as stemming from the interaction setups, then it could be seen as improper and unproductive communication by one interactant. One might call it uncivil and inappropriate conduct or positional incompetence (see Elias 1998; Goffman 1967). Dictation or tantrums were typical examples, which could even be directed towards the wrong persons who might not have control over the issues. In these cases, the instigated interaction setup was far from ideal.

In other cases, the organization setup could be an already well-established social arrangement for how a particular situation was to be handled within the organization. In cases where the problem was perceived to be in the organization setup the issue was often perceived as a lack of organizing or as an example of poor coordination, because the organization setup could not imbue interaction setups with proper coordination by setting up a fitting and widely enough agreed upon organization setup that would appropriately tackle all relevant aspects of the recurring situation:

“Sometimes we get all kinds of requests for reports from the division. […] A tremendous amount of completely unimaginable ad hoc requests which we curse... ‘List all your projects, their critical paths, how they are going, how much have they cost, and we need this by tomorrow.’ It’s mean. It stops everything and everything else must wait. We’ve gotten a lot more of these lately.” Manager#42
For example, ad hoc and last-minute organizing and cases where prior decisions had been subverted by upper management were seen as examples of poor coordination in which a suitable organization setup was difficult to design. In other examples, the work process or meeting might not include the right persons or include too many persons, persons might play unproductive relational positions and games during a meeting, the effort to coordinate could not actually deal with the relevant issues due to other organization setups and lack of authority on the issues, and the like. Thus the problem was that one could not necessarily think of a better organization setup and thus of an ideal setup for those situations, and consequently unproductive interaction setups would occur. One could also be dissatisfied with the organization setup and lack the means to change it for the better. Indeed, many at Techcorp Finland saw problems with unproductive meetings, unproductive individuals in the sense of how they participated in “co-action” (Gergen 2009), difficulties in coordination and prioritization, and lack of means to set up or change organization setups to counter these problems. All these manifested as accounts of dissatisfactory interactions as the misalignment between setups. Through experienced relational imbalance, interaction setups were considered misaligned with the ideal setup, without necessarily having a clear comprehension of what the ideal setup should be.

In sum, wellbeing generative relational coordination and co-action in organizational settings can be concisely described as enacted setup alignment, in which the circumstances of the situation, the collective actions fitting the situation, and the appropriate setup are co-created whilst relational affirmation and positional proficiency are enacted. There were multiple different reasons and particular interaction setups for how wellbeing degenerative relational coordination took place, which we have here described as different types of setup misalignment disturbing coordination and effective communication. We can thus suggest that the employed vocabulary, i.e. the extended relational structure, provides a relatively generic vocabulary to analyze and describe wellbeing generative and degenerative interactions within organizations.

In addition to these theoretical suggestions concerning setups that integrate and extend the works of Goffman, Berne and Gergen into the organizational context as well as the general topic of wellbeing in organizations, we have come to understand that interactional wellbeing in organizational settings touches upon everyday phenomena like “coordination” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009; see also Drath et al. 2008) and other broad academic topics. The theory concerning different setups and relational coordination is ingrained with implicit understandings that for instance concern habituation and enculturation (Dewey 2011; Janoff-Bulman 1992; Seligman 1990), preferences and situated morality (Lawrence & Maitlis 2012; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b), relational and collective capabilities (Lilius et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002), actions fitting the circumstances of the situation (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988, Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b), relationally responsive attunement (Cunliffe 2008; Seligman 2018; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a), and the enactment of purpose in the form of a collective mind (Weick & Roberts 1993; see also Burke 1945; 1984; Ryle 1949/2000). It would seem that there is a broad and hitherto in part undiscussed intellectual landscape surrounding the topic of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings that most likely has a bearing on this overarching theoretical perspective. This philosophical and theoretical scenery is outlined in more detail in Part IV of this study.

To go beyond the presented generic relational structure and its relational dynamics, it is reasonable to ask why and how a particular interaction setup was seen as good and another one was considered bad – beyond setup alignment and misalignment? To answer this question
with appropriate analytical depth, I decided to conduct a second encounter with the empirical material after mustering additional theoretical muscles. The issue of context-specific relational balance became a primary focus in my investigation, which I began to explore as a harmony between the different coordinates of the dramatistic pentad (Burke 1945). My interest was especially in the balance between the “act” and its relevant “scene” which would seem to correspond with that of a move, the circumstances of the situation and that of an appropriate setup that would facilitate a balance between the two. However, as the present findings suggest and the next Part IV discusses further, in discussing the balance between the act and its relevant scene one cannot turn a blind eye to the other elements of the dramatistic pentad, i.e. agency, purpose and the agent (Burke 1945).

In the second encounter with the empirical material in Part V, I provide a theoretical synthesis that incorporates the theoretical suggestions from this first encounter with the empirical material and further refinements, in the form of relational frames.
PART IV: CONDUCIVE PROTO-IDEAS AND THEORETICAL PROTOTYPES

The overarching path of thought in the following intimately interrelated chapters – towards the study of history-making, a grammar of management, and understanding interactional well-being – has been summarized in connection with the structure of this study at the end of Part I. To recap very concisely, the objective of the following three chapters is to answer the third research question: **What proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes are especially helpful in theorizing about interactional well-being in organizational settings?** During this discussion, especially in the chapter on interactional wellbeing, the answer to the fourth research question is finalized: **What metatheoretical understandings of wellbeing is one inclined to commit to by using the theoretical prototypes stemming from the interactional and relational perspective?**

These three chapters can in other words be understood as my own account about the constellation of ideas that underpin a relational point of view and thus also interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. Although there are numerous accounts on the relational orientation (e.g. Barge & Fairhurst 2008; Bateson 1972; Burke 1945; Cunliffe 2008; Emirbayer 1997; Gergen 2009; Macmurray 1960; Seligman 2018; Shotter 2010; Wachtel 2014; Watzlawick 1990), as discussed in the Preface, I prefer to showcase my own selection and amalgam of relational ideas, which includes and unites ideas that serve to elaborate and further our investigation into the investigated phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.48

From the point of view of the first encounter with the empirical material in Part III, this Part IV illuminates on the intellectual scenery surrounding, informing and at times penetrating the topic of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, as I see its intellectual context and place in the history of ideas.49 Part IV is concerned with showing the comprehensive ocean of ideas that undergirds the presented relational perspective and its concomitant vocabulary on

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48 It should also be noted that at the present time there are to my knowledge no studies that would review all pertinent relational streams of scholarship including relational psychotherapy (Seligman 2018; Wachtel 2014), cybernetics (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1990), relational organization scholarship (Gergen 2009; Hosking 2011), and philosophical accounts (Heidegger 1962/2008; Macmurray 1960). This suggests that relational scholarship is fragmented and consequently in need of integration and of novel accounts that pull together the divergent streams of scholarship under one umbrella term of relational research.

49 Theories are seldom praised for their sensitivity to the intellectual context in which they were written. However, influential theories are more often criticized for the lack of such sensitivity, especially once the theory has become influential (e.g. Makari 2008; Seligman 2018). In this study the intellectual scenery is described at length because it is the belief of the author that only by doing so can the adhered relational perspective and developed vocabulary be understood according to its own “field-dependent” criteria (Toulmin 1958/2003; see also Ketokivi & Mantere 2010; Ketokivi et al. 2017; Rorty 1989). In terms of an analogy, a rock song shouldn’t probably be assessed for its merits with the criteria of a classical symphony; and similarly, a relational theory is perhaps best evaluated from the point of view of a relational perspective.
interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. When perceived against the soon to be depicted intellectual backdrop, the advocated perspective on wellbeing arguably does not set itself as fringe or unconventional as one might be inclined to believe, but in the history of ideas may in fact turn out to be widely acknowledged, reasonable, and a compelling point of view, also regarding wellbeing in organizational settings despite its relative novelty.

As discussed in the Preface, the purpose of Part IV is to illuminate the intellectual context surrounding the investigated relational phenomenon to better understand the encompassing way of reasoning behind this approach to wellbeing and how its “world of experience” is glued together (Oakeshott 1933/2015). The following chapters are chiefly written to a person unfamiliar with an action and context oriented point of view in academic settings. In addition, the chapters also most likely bring to light novel connections and relational ideas to those already familiar with organization studies and wellbeing literature. It is for the reader to decide how deep into detail they want to immerse themselves in each chapter.

Part IV completes and “elaborates” (see Cornelissen 2005) the philosophical departure explicated in the end of Part II of this study. One way to comprehend the gist of these three chapters is that they exercise the mental muscles on a perspective level concerning particular grammatical ratios between “act”, “scene”, “agent”, “agency” and “purpose” (Burke 1945), thus providing some ground on which to build upon with a less synoptic and more narrow theory on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. These conceptual muscles will consequently be utilized in Part V as we come to our second encounter with the empirical material, but this time with more developed tools of thought at our disposal than in the first encounter. In addition to the summary in Part I, the three chapters are equipped with forewords to orient the reader to the contents and purpose of each chapter. The chapters are in their own way scenic in relation to particular dramatistic coordinates and how they can be understood to come together (see Burke 1945). At the end of each chapter I summarize in propositional format a set of significant proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes which I later on implicitly or explicitly use in connection with the second encounter with the empirical material.

To recap on these concepts, with a “proto-idea” I mean a singular pre-theoretical notion like an analogy of how to conceptually understand a subject matter (Fleck 1979). The Freudian idea that wellbeing is like the unhindered flow of instinctual (sexual) energy (e.g. Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Seligman 2018), would thus be a tentative conceptualization in the form of a proto-idea that can guide subsequent theorizing and investigations. With a theoretical prototype I mean a more complex cluster of proto-ideas that fit together and thus begin to weave together a theoretical backdrop that enables a more comprehensive way of understanding a subject matter. Burke (1945) refers to a theoretical “prototype” as a “representative anecdote” that essentially gives the root metaphor or lived life example for how to put together experience and evidence concerning the subject matter. An example of this would be the tenet that wellbeing stems from or “behaves” like need satisfaction (e.g. Haybron 2008; Deci et al. 2017), which is an idea that connects several simple ideas together into a more complex understanding (see Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008). In this study I do not intend to draw a clear-cut line between a proto-idea and a theoretical prototype, instead I list a set of ideas as propositions in the form and length that makes a particular idea adequately accessible. After the three chapters the reader has hopefully come to grasp how the various ideas come together and form a refined and overarching relational perspective, which connects the coordinates in the dramatistic pentad in its own distinct way.
In interactional and relational research, it is not uncommon to find elaborate discussions about science and how some of the main theoretical prototypes within the perspective differ from many established notions within the traditional Enlightenment doctrine (e.g. Bateson 1972; Seligman 2018; Watzlawick 1990). In the first chapter on history-making, I follow this tradition. Instead of discussing science overall, I take a closer look at the idea of history and what proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes the philosophy of history has given birth to. My claim is that within the grand idea of history (e.g. Collingwood 1946), we can find many proto-ideas that are seminal for understanding and thus also for investigating the topic of interactional wellbeing within organizational settings.

This chapter on “history-making” (Hosking 2011; Spinosa et al. 1997) can be understood as an investigation into the partly constructed “scene” of human action (Burke 1945; see also Gergen 1973; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). History-making could also, for lack of a better word, be understood as “scene-making” or “scenic constructionism”, arguably a philosophical precursor to social constructionism and plausibly other -isms (Berger & Luckmann 1966; Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). The chapter argues that the scene of human action is partly defined by the historical and local “acts” that define it (Burke 1945). Based on the works of especially Collingwood, Berlin and Toulmin, it is argued that a particular investigative attitude and orientation towards writing is required from a scholar interested in understanding history-making in the scene where it is done and at the time the people were there to do it.

In the next chapter on the grammar of management we take a closer look at the dramatistic “grammar” that structures “human relationships” and thus also different setups from a performative and communicative point of view (Watzlawick 1990: 43). This chapter situates the generic relational structure described in Part III of this study in a communicative, constructionist and developmental landscape (e.g. Seligman 2018). It would be beneficial to understand the chapter and a grammar of management chapter as an investigation into the “act” within a relational framework and how the act is connected to the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad (Burke 1945). In this chapter it is shown how an “act” is intimately connected to “agent” and “scene”, and how it is infused with “agency” and “purpose” (Burke 1945). These considerations are unearthed, for instance, through an understanding of “intentionality” and “deontic powers” stemming from the matrix of past agreements that constitute the relationally established scenery (Searle 1995; 2009). This chapter thus deals with the conceptual building blocks that form a relationally constituted scene of action, like an “authority system” (Milgram 1974/2009) or “relational matrix” (Gergen 2009; Seligman 2018). Thus the “act” becomes inseverable from its scene of action (Burke 1945).

The third and final chapter of Part IV – understanding interactional wellbeing – builds on the previous two chapters. In the final chapter we investigate the perspective and theoretical consequences of understanding human beings and thus also their wellbeing and emotions as situated and thus always occurring within at least partly man-made scene of action. Including the scene into an understanding of wellbeing, arguably alters how emotions are perceived, which has thus far been the hallmark of wellbeing (e.g. Diener et al. 1999; Diener 2000; Fredrickson 2013; Haybron 2008). Considering that the relevant scene for human action and also wellbeing can be man-made, the fit and balance between a man-made act and a man-made scene is investigated further through a closer look at civil conduct. Here we rely on the work of Goffman (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981), which also serves to elaborate further on some of the hitherto borrowed concepts in this study. In this chapter the act-scene relationship is extended to include the agent and thus becomes the agent-act-scene
triad. The triad denotes that which is balanced and attended to in the relationally constituted acts that give rise to the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

To finalize the fourth research question, the theoretical issue of balance in the agent-act-scene triad is investigated further with the help of Aristotle (2005) and neo-Aristotelian views on practiced eudaimonic happiness (Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). It is argued that from an individual and thus agent-governed standpoint, interactional wellbeing can be perceived as relational moral competence, which allows one to fit one’s actions even in unexpected and unsettling man-made scenes and situations (see Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). It is argued that such competences and moral education is furthered through situated and timely “phronetic” knowledge (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) where none of the dramatistic coordinates can be reduced away or entirely merged with the others. Given that the interactional and relational perspective can be characterized as having a revolutionary undertone that brings forth occluded frames of reference (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009), it is likely that the perspective gravitates toward a phronetic definition of wellbeing, one that does not allow for simple reductions of the pentad. My claim is that along with relational balance and balancing of the coordinates in the dramatistic pentad (Burke 1945), this is the kind of knowledge that is advanced and the type of metatheoretical commitments an interactional and relational perspective is inclined to commit to.

This final chapter of Part IV ends with a discussion on learned relational incompetence, which shows that an imbalance between grammatical ratios can also be learned behavior (Janoff-Bulman 1992; Joseph 2011; Seligman 2018), similar to gained relational moral competence implicit in eudaimonic happiness (Annas 2011). In terms of the grammatical coordinates, this chapter infuses “purpose” and “agent” with the act-scene ratio, thus forming the agent-act-scene triad (Burke 1945). This is to show that there is often much more at play in fitting an act with its scene than mere setup alignment, as discussed in Part III.

These three chapters thus show the intricate interplay and balancing act in the agent-act-scene triad, within which also agency and purpose are embedded. Different formations of the triad are where agents find themselves everyday whilst seeking an appropriate act and interaction setup for each encounter. This is the overarching theoretical landscape that is argued to surround the subject matter of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.
12. Towards the study of history-making

“One of the major reasons for the difficulties with which people have to contend in their en-deavour to gain more reliable knowledge about themselves is the uncritical and often dogmatic application of categories and concepts, highly adequate in relation to problems on the level of matter and energy, to other levels of experience and, among them, to that of social phenomena. Not only are specific concepts of causation or of explanation formed in this manner generalized and used almost as a matter of course in inquiries about human relationships; this mechanical diffusion of models expresses itself, too, for example, in the widespread identification of ‘rationality’ with the use of categories developed mainly in connection with experiences of physical events, and in the assumption that the use of other forms of thinking must necessarily indicate a leaning towards metaphysics and irrationality.” (Norbert Elias 1998: 229)

12.1 Foreword

The main assertion of this chapter is that the “scene” in which man-made “acts”, “purposes” and “agency” of conscious moral “agents” are played out is principally a historical scene instead of, for example, a universal environment or nature (Burke 1945). This chapter also investigates the relevant consequences of this theoretical shift from a universal environment to a local man-made “scene.”

“There is one notable difference between the materials of nature and the materials of our ‘second nature.’ The materials of our second nature are largely man-made. [...] Nature is ‘given’, but the environments to which we adapt ourselves as to a second nature are the creations of agents. In [for instance] adapting ourselves to machinery, we are adapting ourselves to an aspect of ourselves.” (Burke 1945: 109)

Once the scene is approached as man-made, it naturally follows that the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad such as “agent” and “act” become viewed in an alternative light (Burke 1945). Especially the act and its relation to the scene is put in the limelight. Put plainly, “history-making” (Hosking 2011; Spinosa et al. 1997) is about scenic construction or the “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945). The purpose of this chapter is thus to animate this particular ratio and to pinpoint the kind of philosophical insights in the history of ideas this focus of attention builds upon.

The full ramifications of this point of view on “second nature” (Elias 1998) and “history-making” (Hosking 2011; Spinosa et al. 1997) and the circularity between the act and the scene (e.g. Burke 1945; Giddens 1984; Sameroff & MacKenzie 2003; Seligman 2018) would require an even longer interdisciplinary discussion than what could be considered appropriate for this study. One key takeaway from this chapter is that when the overarching theoretical scene is
altered, also to agents and the actions that transpire within that theoretical landscape alter in form: When a generic environment becomes the scene of history many other conceptual changes ensue. Behavior becomes purposive and often intelligent conduct fitting the surrounding scene. A human being becomes a conscious moral agent or person. Psychological effects turn into situated judgement and action. Timelessness and universality turn into timeliness and situatedness. Nature becomes at least in part a man-made situation and a location in an inhabited world. Natural process becomes a man-made plot. Here we put forth particular steppingstones that pave the way towards this understanding, which in effect situates our understanding of persons within a point in history and outlines how and for what purpose one could study persons with its vocabulary and concomitant philosophical commitments.

In approaching the terrain of everyday life of actions and accumulated experience a historical outlook is not only a philosophical possibility, but it is arguably also a useful and practical outlook especially in comparison to a natural-scientific vocabulary (Elias 1998; Toulmin 1990; 2003). In orthodox natural science built on objectivism the pertinent questions can be said to revolve around the mechanics of ‘what’ and ‘how.’ Usually questions of ‘why’ are interpreted into ‘what’ and ‘how’, for example, a causal force (a what) enforces a change in a particular manner (how) and this is the answer to a “why” question such as ‘why do the stars move at night.’ What is omitted is questions like ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘where’ and a human purpose behind the ‘why’ (Becker 1932/2003; Burke 1945; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). Centuries ago ‘why’ was answered by the grace of God, and then in naturalistic inquiry it changed into an understanding of natural laws set by God, and finally to discoverable and presumably stable and given natural laws (Becker 1932/2003; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999). The idea of history changed what kinds of questions could be posed and deemed worthwhile to answer with scientific rigor, as well as what type of knowledge can be helpful for mankind (Berlin 1997; Collingwood 1946).

For any person’s daily life the often-omitted aspects in natural-scientific theorizing like unique persons, timeliness, situatedness and practical purposes are far from inconsequential. For example, that a particular person says a kind word at just the right moment and place and for the right reason can make all the difference in the world (see Aristotle 2005; Burke 1945). Thus, to gain deeper knowledge about the act-scene ratio it is crucial to transform the theoretical vocabulary toward the kind of language that is used in connection with the everyday life of persons in an inhabited world. Unfortunately, due to their lack of universality, interesting questions that can be answered with a history-making vocabulary have by far and large been shunned by orthodox science and cast into the realm of mere subjectivism. One could call it a problem for the philosophy of science if issues such as who, when and why cannot be approached scientifically (Berlin 1997; Toulmin 1990; 2003). The still prevalent subject-object distinction in at least management theory (e.g. Cunliffe 2008; Shotter 2015) is thus cast aside in the philosophy of history and an alternative investigative attitude and mode of judgement is sought to penetrate previously impenetrable areas of scholarship with its path-breaking tools of thought (Collingwood 1946; Macmurray 1960; Oakeshott 1999; 1933/2015).

History is commonly understood as something concrete and real because it is thought to be concerned with what persons have factually and very concretely done, how they did it, for what ends, and how the world changed as a result. From this point of view, history-making is far from subjectivism. As said, history-making is about the “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945) where acts can create scenes and scenes can guide and direct acts (cf. agency-structure dialectic in Giddens 1984, situated vs. situational in Goffman 1981). Historical descriptions are, I would argue, commonly thought to be real, true and yet always somewhat imperfect, ambiguous and
The grand and elusive themes of an objective Reality and a final Truth are in all likelihood apprehended as inconsequential for everyday life and the kind of knowledge life in the real world with other moral agents requires. It is a commonsensical understanding of truth and reality which one uses in handling the familiar actions of day-to-day life (Toulmin 1958/2003). Also, for these reasons, the idea of history in our current day and age may very likely be a pregnant one (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015).

A historical approach to the study of mankind (Berlin 1997) consequently provides a fruitful way into a study of situated and timely human conduct. A historical outlook enables one to fly past the still prevalent Cartesian dualism (see Burke 1945; Oakeshott 1991a; Shotter 2015). Coming from this angle, “history-making” (Hosking 2011; Spinosa et al 1997), which is elaborated even further in the next chapter, a grammar of management, shows itself neither entirely subjective nor objective. Its study builds upon a non-dual epistemology along the lines of “territory-as-mapped” (Wilk 1999; 2010a; 2013; cf. Goffman 1974). In other words, one thus uses an alternative constellation of the dramatistic pentad and cut-and-pastes experience in another way than in a natural-scientific perspective (see Bateson 1972; 1979; Bateson & Bateson 1987; Heidegger 1962/2008; 2011; Oakeshott 1933/2015). Through a history-making perspective one perceives different pieces of experience as significant. One could indicate the area of history-making as the science of making a difference in a pre-existing, ambiguous, man-made and historically unstable state of affairs (Bateson 1972; Giddens 1984; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Arguably such a science inevitably relies somewhat on prudence and practical judgement (Flyvbjerg 2006; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Toulmin 1958/2003). The significance of this area of research, that produces knowledge about living within an uncertain and created society, is in my mind nonetheless unquestionable.

In seeking an alternative language or constellation of dramatistic coordinates (Burke 1945) to approach a phenomenon, the intellectual backdrop of the history of ideas is particularly useful. The history of ideas is in part a history of linguistic change (Burke 1945; Kuhn 1962/2012; Wootton 2015). Consequently, this context of study is an apt source from which to gather insights for an alternative and feasible language – proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes – into a phenomenon of interest. Consequently, the intellectual heritage of history-making and with the vocabulary and the pre-theoretical convictions they rest upon are explored in this chapter.

This chapter is not about giving a definitive answer to what history-making is (cf. Spinosa et al. 1997), instead it is a targeted exploration into the history of ideas to show the outlines and the key distinctions that opened up such a theoretical landscape and concomitant vocabulary. The aim is to uncover and organize a set of philosophical insights that gives rise to history-making as something that could be studied scientifically even though the scene of history is not eternal or universal (see Shotter 2015; 2016). This account is not about history as a discipline of the humanities, but instead of the broader – non-dual, non-objectivistic, non-subjectivistic, a non-foundationalist – philosophical understandings inherent in a historical outlook (see Rorty 1979/2009; cf. Seligman 2018).

This chapter begins with a short account on the idea of history. In order to take a firm grip of history-making I then visit the history of ideas and especially the rise of Romanticism and the Counter-Enlightenment philosophers of Giambattista Vico, Johann Hamann and Johann Herder through the eyes of Isaiah Berlin (1996; 1997; 2000; 2001; 2013a; 2013b). The gamut

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50 Both this chapter and the grammar of management concern primarily the act-scene ratio. In this chapter it is treated as the act-scene ratio and in the next as the act-scene ratio.
of original insights that these eminent philosophers articulated, and which the interpretive and postmodern movements are arguably to a large extent founded on, are then organized into a scientific outlook with the guidance of Isaiah Berlin and especially his mentor R.G. Collingwood (1945/2014; 1946/2014). The chapter ends with a rudimentary discussion on how management studies are already philosophically and practically engaged with history as it is conceived herein.

12.2 A short history on the fall and rise of history

The custom of pinpointing one’s own take on knowledge and science, hence one’s meta-theoretical assumptions within an acknowledged paradigm is traditionally accomplished by leaning on certain landmark studies. This practice usually follows certain conventions or patterns. A cursory reading of well-known books and articles within social studies shows that the main signpost is most often published after the 1950s, with a couple of founding fathers from the early 1900s casually mentioned in bypassing as seminal sources of inspiration. These dates are not insignificant.

Two watershed events had taken place by then, which formed the modern bedrock of “social theory” (Giddens 1979; 1984). The first was Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* and more specifically his theory of evolution. The novel, comprehensive and groundbreaking theory enabled a creative leap in the form of an analogy between social development and organismic evolution.51 To that point, Cosmos and Polis and also nature and history had been foremost separate subject matters (Toulmin 1990; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). Darwin’s theory however bestowed the common understanding of nature with a characteristic that had previously required the postulation of an all-powerful deity, The Creator, namely creativity (Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). “Henceforth, God, and all the substitutes for that conception, could be ignored since nature was conceived not as a finished machine but as an unfinished process, a mechanistic process, indeed, but one generating its own power” (Becker 1932/2003: 161-162).

Nature thus took the upper hand and the hopeful theorists believed that social development could be discovered and described through formal axioms of social evolution (Collingwood 1946). The main proponents that took advantage of this creative leap were Auguste Comte who formulated the notion of positivism based on an evolutionary interpretation of societal development and the cultural evolutionist Herbert Spencer. Intriguingly, Spencer was the one who put an emphasis on the concept of evolution, which subsequently became more highlighted in later reprints of Darwin’s influential tome. At any rate, both of them are named by Burrell and Morgan (1979) when they pinpoint key historical figures in the development of functional and objectivistic social theory.

“The evolutionary metaphysics of the nineteenth century held that all time-processes were, as such, progressive in character, and that history is a progress merely because it is a sequence of events in time: thus the progressiveness of history was by these thinkers merely one case of evolution or the progressiveness of nature.” (Collingwood 1945/2014: 99)

51 The idea of social development and progress was part of the overall climate of opinion during the 19th century (Robin Letwin 1998; Scott 2019; Toulmin & Goodfield 1965/1977). It is therefore somewhat of an exaggeration to say all was caused by Darwin. These types of simplifications are however necessary in giving a short account of historical developments.
Before the publication of Darwin’s magnum opus, history had been a distinct discipline beside for example naturalism, theology and art (Collingwood 1946/2014). Before Darwin, the actions and events created within society – such as war, thought-styles, regimes and power struggles – were generally kept strictly separate from the science of nature (Burtt 1932/2003). Historically, with the rise of monotheism the conceptual scaffolds about the universe became entwined with the workings of the city-state (Toulmin 1990). How the skies and the toils of men work as a single world-picture, has lived an unstable union ever since. After the theory of evolution, they were united once again but in a new fashion. Now scholars could ask questions pertaining to, for example, the evolutionary enablers and constraints of society and assume that the question was both scientific and intelligible. History was substituted for evolution (Collingwood 1946). A natural-scientific world view could proliferate across a previously impenetrable divide, the significance of which, I would suggest, can be compared to religion subjugating science during The Dark Ages or science taking its prior place beside theology as an outcome of the Enlightenment.

The second historically significant event was the rise of systems theory, brought about mainly by mechanical engineering and medicine. A belief in the overall systematicity of nature had already been put in place by Galileo, explicitly advocated by Grotius and carved into stone by Newton (Burtt 1932/2003; Berlin 2013a; Toulmin & Goodfield 1961/1999). In the 19th century physiology and the idea of functionally interrelated parts or organs had taken hold of the collective imagination. Progress within Newtonian physics and engineering spawned a proliferating mechanical worldview, where every part had their function within a bounded whole. Medicine and consequently modern empirical psychology, with the use of the organismic-mechanical imagery, was firmly established in the late 19th century (Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008; Schafer 1976). Albeit it should be added that organismic language use has been part of the Western intellectual tradition since Aristotle. Be that as it may, it was with the success of medicine along with economic progress in the 19th century and the concomitant improvement of standards of living that established the organismic imagery as an inherent characteristic of scientific discourse (Berlin 2013a; Pinker 2011). Societal development and economic improvement have been used as implicit warrants for the correctness of the organismic-mechanical discourse (Toulmin 2003). This warrant is visible in the official narrative of the Enlightenment. The clean slate and discovery of the correct science is said to have spurred all subsequent development, although historical analysis reveal this narrative to be questionable at best (Cassirer 1951/2009; Collingwood 1945/2014; Toulmin 1990).

With the assumed success of the organismic-mechanical worldview it flooded into other disciplines disseminating a novel perception of man, nature and knowledge. It was generally accepted that the original analogies between organisms, machines and society were not only adequate approximations but at least some – according to the tenets of naïve realism – thought the analogies to be the truth. Society and the endeavors and doings of mankind could thereafter be described through an ahistorical and therefore a legitimate and generic natural-scientific vocabulary. In their defense, it should be noted that a sensitivity and understanding of language has been foremost a 20th century endeavor. As an example, Heidegger (1962/2008; 2011) argued that the metaphysical foundation of science was missing the how of persons, i.e. Being, and an understanding of time with the instilled vocabulary of things, entities and their properties. The notion that the academic vocabulary should fit the phenomenon – or more broadly put, that there should be an alignment between the phenomenon and the ontological,
epistemological, and methodological commitments – is to my understanding still not accepted by all in academia.

After the 1950s sociological theory took a sharp turn towards empirical behaviorist research and away from grand overarching theories of society. The necessary antecedent was the invention of a vocabulary that enabled an ahistorical perspective of society, which was provided by an entitative form of systems theory; that is, a theory of organs as a holistic system (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Giddens 1984; Jackson 2003). This systems view stemmed from the Enlightenment doctrine that everything is united in an orderly and ‘given’ fashion. It should not be confused with the epistemologically attuned systems approach developed in the 1930s and 40s (Bateson 1972; Maturana & Varela 1987; Powers 1973). The traditional systems view consisted primarily of units and their characteristic functions contributing to a larger whole (Burtt 1932/2003). It foremost omitted communication and interaction between the entities within the system. Spearheaded by Parsons, functional and empirical sociology gained predominance over prior Continental theorizing (Burrell & Morgan 1979). A blind focus on methodological concerns grew which also contributed to a cascading ahistoricity.

Some scholars astutely noticed and lamented the rapid growth of “abstracted empiricism” (Mills 1959/2000) after the 1950s. Philosophical questions and the acknowledgement of underlying pre-theoretical commitments took a backseat. Meanwhile the use of objectifying methodologies and vocabularies to study phenomena arguably incongruent with such methods began to proliferate. Method took the driver’s seat. Earlier from roughly 17th century onwards the predominant view was to understand contemporary society by tracing its multifaceted development in history (Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). Already back then history was used to question the status quo and the assertions that society is put in place as it is by God (Toulmin 2003). But in the course of a few centuries an empirical worldview interested in generalizable laws, prediction, isolated facts, and control of future events had taken hold (Berlin 2013a; 2013b; Collingwood 1945; 1946). The Enlightenment and especially Newtonian physics brought about a rationale that every phenomenon has an underlying effective cause. One no longer looked at the past as the past, but as discrete tenseless events in causal models and as systems and organism-environment pairs that had underlying causal determinants waiting to be discovered. The circumference was narrowed to the proximal effective cause and the scene of laboratory settings (Burke 1945). Reality became understood as abstracted time-space (Burtt 1932/2003). Given the tragedies of two World Wars, a turn towards the future horizon was likely an optimistic outlook at the time. Also, the scientific advances made during the Second World War certainly put physics as the forerunner of all science.

Considering this backdrop, Kuhn’s (1962/2012) book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* was a bombshell to naïve realism and logical positivism. Kuhn through historical examples of scientific progress convincingly showed that the thought patterns underlying experiment design and the interpretation of data were nonetheless historically and linguistically situated (see also Fleck 1979; Feyerabend 1975; Toulmin 1990; 2003). According to Kuhn (1962/2012), ahistoricity is not an option, only ignorance of one’s intellectual bedrock. There is no such thing as a view from nowhere, to reiterate an already well-known phrase from Thomas Nagel. Or the attempt to be un-metaphysical by its omission meant ignorance of once orientation and its corresponding linguistic form (Burke 1945; 1984). The Kuhnian grand claim is that all studies are situated within an assumptive world of pre-theoretical convictions which are for the most part embedded in the scholarly community’s utilized vocabulary (see also Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1990; 2003).
12.2.1 Concessions in the current notion of science within the management sciences

To portray the theoretical landscape following Kuhn’s work, for the purpose of this study it is fitting to narrow the scope to the management sciences and to how the idea of history has been dealt with within this field of scholarship.

Kuhn’s notion of paradigms and the subsequent paradigm wars within organizational theorizing resulted in a couple of dents in the empirical-objectivistic armor of social science. These chinks have taken the form of significant concessions in social theory more broadly and management theorizing especially. Instead of history regaining its place beside that of natural-scientific science, I purport that four generally accepted amendments portray the modern-day playground of organization scholarship.

Firstly, there is a wide acceptance toward divergent approaches, at least in principle (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010). This stems from a recognition that science is based on communities which share a similar point of view, some of which most likely have hegemony over others. All views cannot be mainstream or “normal science” (Kuhn 1962/2012) at the same time, and there are fads as well as attempts at dethroning critique. The Frankfurt or critical school as it is referred to is usually attributed the rise of postmodern criticism of the status quo and of prevalent power structures (e.g. Marcuse 1964/2002). It is perhaps less well known that these intellectual traditions were already well-known prior to 20th century philosophical developments. They were a sedimented part of European intellectual culture in general and historical analysis in particular and which the French revolution and the rise of democracy testify to (Berlin 1997; 2001; 2013a; 2013b). Nonetheless, a variety of different streams of 20th century scholarship managed to put themselves on the scholarly world map as a new fresh beginning similar to the Enlightenment program. The clean slate doctrine is still prevalent and actively suggested anew in research, which in itself arguably contributes to historical amnesia (Toulmin 2003). At any rate, the advent of the social sciences has to my understanding a varied and forgotten history of emancipation, social critique, respect for past accomplishments, and a love for ancient wisdom (e.g. Berlin 2013a; 2013b; Nietzsche 1999). This paradox of historical amnesia and yet increasing acknowledgement of historical situatedness has in my mind fueled the proliferation of disciplines, paradigms and scholarly communities that became the hallmark of late 20th century scholarship.

The second collective amendment in social theory was to my understanding the incorporation and acknowledgement of the “interpretive paradigm” (Burrell and Morgan 1979) and therefore also qualitative eyewitness accounts, personal histories and case studies which take interest in contemporary mindsets and habitus. Phenomenology and empirical anthropology are usually credited for this development, which is correct insofar as they erupted into existence out of thin air. This particular strand of scholarship has however existed already before the Enlightenment, for example, in the works of Michel de Montaigne and Hume (Robin Letwin 1998; Toulmin 1990; 2003). Anthropology or the study of daily life as a practical engagement of living a life was merely pushed aside by Enlightenment philosophers on their quest for mathematical certainty. After the Enlightenment, certain intellectual traditions laid a new groundwork for the re-establishment of the interpretive paradigm. This new beginning was instantiated by the “sociology of knowledge” (Berger & Luckmann 1966). It should nonetheless be recognized that qualitative interpretive studies became recognized as a more or less rigorous approach in American organization journals as late as early 1990s. Isabella’s (1990) study of managers’ interpretation patterns is often pinpointed as a watershed for qualitative studies in management science.
The third amendment, I would argue, was the reinterest in human action, communication and language use as creative accomplishments beyond the rules and constraints of preordained (human) nature. Discourse analysis, practice perspective, action research – “process” and “relational” orientations more comprehensively (Hosking 2011; Shotter 2010) – offer apt examples of these developments that stretch beyond organismic evolution and the ordered causality of a steam engine. Questions regarding the implicit order of society, the processes that constitute a city-state and intrigue towards the peculiarities of co-inhabitation are arguably again on the rise. An explicit disjunction from Darwinian nature is once again in the horizon.

The fourth and generally acknowledged concession was the acknowledgement of the limitations of an organismic-mechanical view and hence the static and regulatory vocabulary of organization. The recognition of the limits of this and any single vocabulary has hatched multiple “images of organization” (Morgan 1997) or “modes of experience” (Oakeshott 1933/2015). There has been a linguistic turn in organization scholarship (Alvesson & Kärreman 2000; Cornelissen 2004; Grant et al. 2004). The rise of the continuous change perspective (e.g. Weick & Quinn 1999; Tsoukas & Chia 2002) is an apt example built on criticism of a stability-oriented worldview spurring a novel outlook acutely reminiscent of prior historical scholarship (Berlin 2013a). The roots of the continuous change perspective are by some attributed to the ‘process philosophers’ Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947). The original contributions of these philosophers should however be assessed against the intellectual backdrop proceeding them, i.e. the Romantic revolution (e.g. Berlin 1996; 2000; 2001). The allure of the clean slate and the evolutionary sense of progress it endows is arguably at play even though process philosophy could be argued to have its beginning much earlier in the history of philosophy then what the two towering process philosophers suggest.

All these developments might look as if they were unconnected, novel, and advancing organization theory on multiple distant and previously unexplored frontiers. If perceived from a myopic perspective stretching back only to the early 20th century and foremost relying on ahistorical scholarly works published after the 1950s, then this vista might be warranted. However, with an alternative read of historical development and looking back at certain key scholars at least as far back as the 18th century, an alternative conclusion can be purported: History is on the rise.

To show why such a conclusion is plausible, I will turn to the original discoveries of the Counter-Enlightenment, which should be perceived more as a progression and correction of Enlightenment presuppositions (Cassirer 1951/2009) than a pure and lamentable counter-discourse as has been portrayed by some authors (e.g. Pinker 2011). To grasp the significance of the Counter-Enlightenment it is worth a word or two about the Enlightenment itself.

Already in the 18th century it had become clear that an overall epistemological vision would require the marriage of knowledge and nature (Cassirer 1951/2009). Knowledge had its foundation in the mind and nature had its in space, as thought out by Descartes. Dualism and thus the separation between mind and space was an acknowledged problem. Subsequently, understanding of knowledge became broadened into understanding through the seminal works of Locke, and then more specifically pinned down by Kant by the work of his categories by the end of the 18th century. Nature was recast by Newton into a mechanistic and orderly system of change. Conceptualizations such as representations, experience, mirror of nature, sense data were the main bridges across the mind-nature divide which nonetheless persisted. By the end of the 18th century mind and nature were still separate although Locke and Kant and others had done much work to bring them closer together. It was not until the 20th century that they
were arguably united once again by at least the pragmatists, idealists, phenomenologists and a novel communicational epistemology (e.g. Bateson 1972; 1979; Bateson & Bateson 1987; Dewey 1958; James 1912/2003; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1990).

“For it somehow became possible, toward the end of the nineteenth century, to take the activity of redescription more lightly than it had ever been taken before. It became possible to juggle several descriptions of the same event without asking which one was right – to see redescription as a tool rather than a claim to have discovered essence. It thereby became possible to see a new vocabulary not as something which was supposed to replace all other vocabularies, something which claimed to represent reality, but simply as one more vocabulary, one more human project, one person’s chosen metaphoric.” (Rorty 1989: 39)

The concepts of consciousness, experience, action, and mind were and still are the seminal bridges across the Cartesian dualism. But how this leap from a (passive) representational understanding of nature (e.g. Kant 1781/1993) to an active and situated mind in nature (e.g. Bateson 1979; Dewey 1958; Toulmin 1990) happened cannot in my mind be understood without the Counter-Enlightenment and the rise of scientific history.

12.3 The invaluable ideas of the Counter-Enlightenment

“A central concern of the history of ideas, of which the history of science forms part, has to be linguistic change. Usually, linguistic change is a crucial marker of a modification in the way in which people think – it both facilitates the change and makes it easier for us to recognize it.” (Wootton 2015: 63)

The Enlightenment movement in Europe manifested as criticism against superstition and dogmatic and unsubstantiated beliefs, a belief in empirical evidence and as reinterest in thoughts of eternal knowledge of a universal and unvarying nature (Berlin 2013a; Burtt 1932/2003; Toulmin 1990). According to Berlin (2000) the 18th and 19th century successes in mathematics and engineering gave hope and rise to a positive outlook in that human affairs such as politics, morals, aesthetics and the organization of society could be solved once and for all through naturalistic inquiry.

Towards this backdrop, the “Counter-Enlightenment” philosophers and the “Romantic Revolution” of the 18th and 19th century Europe managed to inflict irreparable damage. First formed as a counter-discourse towards the dominance of naturalism and the omnipotence of science, these ideas were subsequently arranged into a cogent form by scientific history. In the interest of this account it is of value to pinpoint what those ideas were and how they were subsequently molded into a way of understanding that complemented natural science and lay the groundwork for “the proper study of mankind” (Berlin 2013b). This first part is discussed in this section and the latter under the next section on the rise of scientific history.

Certain caveats are in order before embarking on a discussion on intellectual and philosophical history. Firstly, I do not intend to render any new interpretations of these historical ideas, I merely gather, condense, and order them so that they can be of further use in this account and hopefully to others who are engaged with similar issues. Secondly, a comprehensive historical analysis of how and when these ideas formed and how they were entangled during the buzzing, boiling, palpitating era of Romanticism is beyond the interest of this account (for such
Part IV: Conducive Proto-Ideas and Theoretical Prototypes

an account see Berlin 1996; 2000; 2013b). The same goes for the connections between all-isms and for instance Enlightenment and the later Romanticism. Some scholars have, for example, argued that Romanticism was an offspring of the Enlightenment and in some ways Herder and historical scholarship built on the foundations built by the Enlightenment philosophers (Cassirer 1951/2009). Consequently, the counter-Enlightenment is perhaps a misnomer and should be perceived as a continuation and development of Enlightenment.

According to Cassirer (1951/2009), history was enmeshed with the development of society, ethics and knowledge of contemporary human affairs already during the Enlightenment and are still taken for granted suppositions of history. In accordance with academic traditions, I will nonetheless try to credit the originators of the various ideas according to and relying upon the erudition of foremost Berlin, Collingwood and Toulmin. Likewise, it is not my intent to expound any philosopher’s system of thought in the right proportions, right context, with the right purposes and intents, or right tone for that matter. These scholarly endeavors do not interest me here beyond that of making the ideas adequately comprehensible and usable and in a light and context of contemporary organization studies and for the purposes of this study. Thirdly, the presented set of ideas are not an all-inclusive list of ideas from the Counter-Enlightenment or Romanticism; the ideas herein have been picked out from the perspective of an organization and management scholar for the use of this particular discipline in its current historical context and for the purpose of this study. It may be granted that taking ideas out of their intellectual and historical context in some ways alter or perhaps even disfigure them. This cannot be helped if one is to be concise and to make use of ideas instead of to merely report them. Fourthly, the minor remarks and associations I make serve the purpose of personal sensemaking and making the discussion my own. This practice and style of writing has been discussed already in the Preface.

Some of the most original, influential, profound, and indispensable ideas that emerged from the Counter-Enlightenment and Romanticism were, in no particular order: a novel theory of knowledge based on self-knowledge and mankind’s creative abilities, a view of human nature springing from the surrounding society instead of being based on biological determination, the distinctions between the general and the particular and between the concrete and the abstract, the percept of man as creator, the percept of language and communication as a foundation for a self-determined human nature, the idea of culture and being rooted in one, life as action and self-expression, man as the creator of himself and the self, man as his own authority, and the plurality and incompatibility of views and values.

In history it can be thought that persons who have relatively independently come to similar conclusions are worthy of mentioning when expounding the roots of certain ideas. In mathematics for example both Leibniz and Newton developed differential calculus independently from each other and giving all the credit to Newton merely because he was the first to publish is excessively harsh, and in some ways inaccurate. A similar situation exists in the history of ideas where Vico and Herder developed relatively similar constellations of ideas independently from one another, if Berlin (2013a) is correct. These ideas were seminal in intellectual history and enabled, I suggest, what is nowadays collectively called social sciences. Vico predates Herder but was left in oblivion for a long time mostly because of an obscure style whereas Herder with some clarity of thought was the one whose ideas disseminated to a gamut of philosophers, playwrights and novelists and onwards to the public consciousness in Europe. To use Berlin’s expression, probably both have a claim to fame and immortality.
12.3.1 Giambattista Vico

“In the night of thick darkness enveloping ancient times there shine the eternal never-failing truth beyond all doubt: that the civil condition is certainly a human invention and that its principles are therefore those of human intelligences.”

Vico (La scienza nuova § 331, cited from Oakeshott 1991a: 108)

Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) was according to the intellectual historian Isaiah Berlin (1997; 2013a; 2013b) the first to formulate one of the most forceful of attacks on certain Enlightenment ideas. Vico moreover did it on what could be called the home ground of the Enlightenment, truth and certainty. Vico was appalled by René Descartes’ (1596-1650; see 1637/2006) notion that history and other forms of humanistic sciences were second rate because they were not founded on a similar basis as the exact science of mathematics and its kin physics. Descartes thought highly of physics because it could render its ideas into mathematical models reminiscent of the exactness of Euclidean geometry. This cast a light of veneration upon physics because of its proximity to mathematics. Thus Descartes perhaps arrogantly dismissed sciences not based on exact models and the quantification of observations. Vico however struck a wedge between mathematics and physics by arguing that mathematics produces certain knowledge only because it is a science based on man-made axioms and on the manipulation of tautologies. Vico’s groundbreaking claim was that mathematics offers truths only because it is man-made.

The criteria of truth according to Vico is to be man-made. Physics cannot offer truths because it is based on observations, it can only get at the ‘outside’ of the phenomenon. It is within the realm of certainty, a class of scientific knowledge that is a posteriori and cannot therefore ever reach the status of truth. Science based on mankind’s own creations is a priori, that which man is the author of and not a mere spectator, can according to Vico however get at the ‘inside’ of the phenomenon. The inside view can apprehend the truth. It is similar to God’s perspective on Nature which is beyond the reach of man. Only from the creator’s perspective is it truly possible to understand ‘why’ and consequently to get at the truth. That is to say, the motives, purposes, intentions of the creator that in effect describe why the creation exists and how it came to be. This puts the humanities and especially the science of history on a superior footing able to achieve knowledge of a superior quality, something that natural sciences cannot accomplish, Vico argued.

Vico posited that any science of humanity should have the ‘inner’ perspective, anything else would be to study humanity as mere animals or objects of nature. To study man as man, not man as something else. The latter is the opposite of anthropomorphism but a fallacy of equal proportions, according to Berlin (1997). A science of man’s creations could understand the phenomenon in-depth in comparison to physics or any other naturalistic science, Vico argued. Knowledge created by man for the use of man was not only useful but certain knowledge. Vico in addition postulated the existence of a form of knowledge that had not hitherto been accepted as such, self-knowledge. Knowing our actions, motives, the innerness of everything we are the authors of, our own inner lives is also knowledge. This category of knowledge is necessary knowledge in communication and in daily life. The knowledge and methods of natural science are a pale comparison to everything of value in life – human experience, daily life, man-made laws, and art.
Vico thus objected to the notion that scientific knowledge as postulated by Descartes and wholeheartedly adopted by positivism would be the only valid form of knowledge. Collingwood (1945/2014: 134) accurately remarks that the Enlightenment claim to knowledge was nothing less than “the methodology of natural science raised to the level of a universal methodology: natural science identifying itself with knowledge.”

Vico delivered a thunderous blow to the notion that only knowledge based on the scientific method of the natural sciences was valid and true knowledge. Vico hence predates and anticipates the Romantic revolution and also laid the groundwork for the Germans and especially Dilthey’s doctrine of Verstehen; a science of understanding.

The web of ideas Vico spun was massive, profound and interwoven. One string of ideas was on communication and language. According to Vico communication necessitates that we assume others to have an inner life of motives and intents, that is, a mind equal to our own. We must understand ourselves in order to understand others. Without the imaginative understanding of other men as creators and whose actions are based on the workings of their minds communication becomes unimaginable. Put differently, communication is not the result of successful inductive or deductive reasoning; it is based on something else entirely. The use of language is self-expression and therefore acts of creation. The capacity to understand is what Vico thought makes man a man. Understanding is what is used in understanding the creations of other men, that is, in understanding others. Language is one of the windows into the workings of people’s minds, be it now or in the past.

Vico posited that language molded the mind rather than the other way around. This was a reversal of the Enlightenment presupposition where it was thought that language can be molded into a mirror of nature (see also Rorty 1979/2009; Toulmin 2003). Language changes throughout history and so does the minds of those who employ it. Language and thus the minds of people are in perpetual transformation; language is not fixed and neither is the mind. According to Berlin, it was Vico who was the first to assert that language is one key to understanding the cultural, social and mental life of societies; language became an indispensable window into civilizations and particular individuals forms of understanding. How people think, act and talk stem from the surrounding society and its institutions, values, stories, literature, laws, customs, rites – anything that constitutes a culture and its way of life. Berlin posits that Vico’s chief claim to immortality lies in the idea that language, beliefs and institutionalized life in general offer the main roads to the study of mankind.

Vico takes this argument to the level of human nature. For Vico, human nature is not fixed, universal, and eternal. Instead, the basis for human nature is birth, growth and development (cf. contemporary developmental psychology, see Seligman 2018). Human nature, according to Vico, is in how people interact with one another and in their relationship with the institutional, created environment. Human nature is the social life. How men have previously thought and acted have left their traces and sedimented in ongoing institutions and in language. The development of a society or civilization is the development of human nature: “The growth of mental life of men is for Vico the growth of the institutional life in society” (Berlin 2013: 107).

Following this train of thought to its logical conclusion, the proper study of mankind becomes man’s historically situated character and the society in which it takes form. Berlin professes that Vico, along the lines of the later movement called existentialism, denied that human nature is located as a fixed essence within individuals but instead placed it in the plenitude and

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52 Cassirer (1951/2009) as a proponent of Enlightenment philosophy reluctantly agrees with this assessment but sees a more nuanced intellectual history bubbling under this concise statement.
richness of social relations and in the body of developing social institutions, as Marx later did. This is also a key tenet underlying the recent Relational movement (Seligman 2018). According to Berlin, the two most ardent of Vico's followers and the ones to develop Vico's thoughts further were Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood, both of whom will be discussed in the next section under scientific history. It should be added that Vico did not deny the physical and biological character of mankind, he just did not afford them the centre stage in what man is and does.

Vico's legacy is commonly not well known but indubitable. To summarize the merits by Vico: Vico's "insights were not merely original: they were beyond the grasp of most of Vico's contemporaries. Stacked together in the paragraphs of the Scienza Nuova, as in the dark dusty passages of some over-stocked antique shop, we can find many of the fundamental axioms of twentieth century anthropology, comparative law, literature, and religion – and even linguistic philosophy" (Toulmin & Goodfield 1977).

12.3.2 Johann Hamann

Berlin gives recognition to Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) as one of the most veracious critics of the Enlightenment and a precursor for the later Romantic Revolution. Although Hamann might be relatively unknown figure in the scheme of things, Berlin claims that he had a considerable impact on more renowned philosophers such as Kant, Herder, Goethe and Kierkegaard. Hamann mounted his attack on the Enlightenment and the doctrine of the natural sciences by pinpointing areas that when thrown into the limelight managed to shake the systemic, rational, empirically grounded and all-penetrating foundation of science. Hamann, did not have a comprehensive system of thought but like Socrates to whom he liked to juxtapose himself to, was the undeluded, skeptical and exposing gadfly that came with multiple assaults on natural science. According to Berlin (2013), Hamann was especially against the notion professed by the French philosophes and especially Nicolas de Condorcet (1743-1794), that quantification of observations could be successfully utilized also in the analysis of human beings. Hamann’s main points of criticism were (a) that the knowledge science produces is nonetheless built on belief, (b) that the rationality every human being is postulated as equipped with is not a homogeneous faculty, (c) that science has a naïve account of language and communication and therefore its claims to knowledge are hollow, and finally and most destructive of all (d) Hamann pointed out the delineation between abstract thought and the concreteness of life. More specifically, that a science based on investigating abstract uniformities could not gain a handle on actual lived life.

Hamann was an admirer of David Hume (1711-1776) and although Hamann was deeply religious and Hume an empiricist, Hamann was impressed, nevertheless. Hamann was especially taken by Hume's notion that even empirically verified knowledge is nevertheless founded on belief, even if there is reason to believe that the belief is the truth. Hamann argued that because knowledge is founded on belief of the external world that cannot be proven, it emits the qualities of a belief system. Researchers do not perceive causes, phenomena, and necessities of nature, they postulate them by the use of their mental habits and faculties. Hamann thus argued that people cannot remove their metaphysical spectacles and thus observations are necessarily founded on unreasoned belief. Anticipating the much later concept of 'paradigm' or 'thought-style', I surmise, Hamann argued that how the empirical results are put together, the foundation on which all thought rests, relies on the faith that the foundation is true (see also Wittgenstein 2009).
Hamann argued that man understood through the lens of science was an empty vessel; a lifeless machine that could not for example eat, drink, marry, enjoy the pleasures and sorrows of friendship. That is, science could not understand man or humanity as creator of his own experience (cf. Oakeshott 1933/2015). Man is not a machine but an artist, Hamann asserted. Thus Hamann inverted one value of the Enlightenment where it is implicitly at least assumed that abstract and eternal knowledge is of the highest value. For Hamann, the only way to get at the real world was through experience, it is the only undistorted data available, or at least as undistorted as it can get. Any distance to experience in the form of abstract thought was for Hamann an escape from reality. Life is action and self-expression; life cannot be captured in abstract words or concepts, Hamann argued. Words and analysis in general divide the real world into boxes and every division is arbitrary, they build arbitrary abstractions that cannot be defended on empirical grounds. We impose a language upon nature, nature has no say in the matter. Thus to believe words and the concepts they represent is a fallacy and a form of self-construed imprisonment (cf. Foucault 1977).

Berlin (2013a) observes that Hamann thus rejected the notion stemming from Plato that concepts represent eternal ideas. Language was for Hamann a self-constructed system that did not mirror eternal essences, categories and their implicit relationships. Language is indistinguishable from art, according to Hamann’s view. The whole world of *a priori* was fiction according to Hamann, aptly showing his tendency toward rigorous, perceptible empiricism despite his deeply religious beliefs. Thought and language are one for Hamann. Thus he came to the conclusion that, according to Berlin (2013a), philosophy was only concerned with issues of language and therefore the use of symbols, because language could never get at the things themselves as Kant had proclaimed. Berlin notes that Hamann thus rejected the correspondence theory of language, that there is a real world to which language corresponds to. In this sense Hamann was a nominalist and clearly went too far in his battle against science, Berlin (2013a) remarks.

There cannot be reason without language, which is the manipulation of symbols according to Hamann. For Hamann, all speech, discourse, communication, reflection, all art, are forms of symbolisms. In communication and intercourse, a person is in the act of self-understanding. Without communication there cannot be speech and language and the use of this singular faculty, according to Hamann, is simultaneously an artistic creation, self-expression, and act of understanding others and oneself. To understand is to be conscious and to clothe one’s experience, the ongoing stream of action and understanding are forms of creation. Understanding does not happen in the mind or the brain, it is something that happens ‘within’ communication. To be human is to communicate. The self was for Hamann the compound of relationships in which communication takes place, a notion later developed further by Fichte and more recently the Relational movement (Gergen 2009; Seligman 2018). A man can be no more and no less than his communication with others and with the all-surrounding nature. If I understand Berlin correctly, Hamann was hence a precursor to relationalism as it is currently called, when he postulated that the external world shows itself only in relation to oneself. Hamann argued that language is indelibly part of reasoning, feeling, and acting. Or to put it as starkly as Hamann did – reason is language. Hamann thought that society was based on language and that the history of a people was always present in the used language, a doctrine developed more extensively by Herder and Vico. Berlin claims that regarding language, Hamann was very much ahead of his time.
Hamann perceived the distinction between reason and faith and moreover that reason would somehow be cut from a different cloth than the fabric of feelings and passion as fallacious. Human beings are more irrational than what the age of reason depicted. Here it is difficult to decipher what stems from Hamann and what from Berlin (2013a). Using the example of other philosophers through history, Berlin shows that the use of reason has led to very different conclusions. If reason is something unitary that happens between postulates and conclusions, then this should not be the case. Thus Hamann brought forth that there is no such thing as reason, merely forms of reasoning. Because Hamann perceived reason as language, it was clear to him that there were as many forms of reasoning as there were of ways to use language. Furthermore, the idea of a singular rationality is as ridiculous a notion as a universal or ‘natural language.’ An argument reminiscent of the later incommensurability thesis presented by Feyera-bend, I suppose. Existence precedes reason, there thus must be a form of pre-rationality, Berlin portrays as Hamann’s central thought. Berlin notes that this same argument was used by later existentialists and phenomenologists such as Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Reminiscent of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), Hamann thought that language is a lifestyle grounded in the unique pattern of experience constituting each and every person’s particular individuality and the set of relationships constituting their life-world. At any rate, if I understand the gist of Hamann’s argument correctly, then he was perhaps the first to argue that in science epistemology precedes ontology, a doctrine later heralded by at least the anthropologist, and philosopher Gregory Bateson (1904-1980).

It was Hamann who articulated the distinction between the abstract and the concrete. He argued that abstract knowledge created by natural science cannot really provide anything of worth in understanding anything of value, for instance in understanding another human being. Abstractions, generalizations, theories were all secondary to the primary qualities of life. To understand another person, one needs to speak to them and communicate with them. Generalized knowledge was lifeless whereas real life was inexplicable in the sense that you had to live in order to know what life is. Science could tell about commonalities but never of particular persons or, books or works of art; all the particularities that Hamann saw as of value in life. To understand another person, it is necessary to understand their intents, meanings, and wishes expressed through their unique use of language and in all the ineffable qualities taking place in face-to-face communication. Creation is communication. This became a seminal starting point for Heder. Hamann thus, according to Berlin, came with similar arguments but well before the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941). As a curiosity relevant to process theorists within organization studies, Berlin (2013b: 9 ff) perceives little originality in Bergson, especially compared to Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854), who was within the influence of Hamann.

12.3.3 Johann Herder

The creative tendency of man, just to name those whom Berlin in more than a passing credited, was developed further by Hamann’s followers Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). Of these Berlin perceives Herder as the more original and insightful. Berlin credits Herder as the father of self-expression, of value pluralism, particularism (with his mentor Hamann), incommensurability of cultures, the unity of practice and theory, and as the one who delivered a thunderous assault on organizations, the State, science, really anything advocating or propagating “shallowness in theory and a tendency to impose a crippling uniformity in practice” (Berlin 2013a: 247). That said, many of Herder’s ideas are
reminiscent of Vico’s and to the extent that they are virtually identical, for an organization scholar at least, they are left unexplored in the context of this account.

Herder was along the lines of Hamann against abstracted and general propositions produced by the natural sciences. They mislead and distort from the wholeness of life and blind people to all the existing particularities and varieties inherent in a manifold reality. Herder in other words rejected monism or the idea that there was a single mold for everyone or society in general. In this subject Vico and Herder were of two minds. Vico believed in the objectively definable progress of society whereas Herder rejected any such notion. According to Herder, all cultures and civilizations are valuable in their own value system and a God’s eye evaluation of cultures is not only impossible but unsophisticated and arrogant. That is not to say that Herder did not believe in progress. According to Berlin, he did believe in the progress of a community ‘from within’ the culture and according to its own standards of expression and self-creation. Herder believed in the values of Humanität which are also evident in the Enlightenment; that is, the values and goals of “reason, freedom, toleration, mutual love and respect between individuals and societies” (Berlin 2013a: 270). If this seems as a contradiction in Herder’s thought perhaps it is, Herder did not subject himself to the Enlightenment ideal of a neat, orderly and harmonious system of thought where everything has their unequivocally determined correct place and relations.

Herder was the one who conclusively brought into the limelight the idea that people continuously express themselves through action and thought, which are an indivisible whole and acts of creation. A doctrine certainly derived from Hamann but made known by Herder. A person was an indivisible whole; thus rejecting one of Enlightenments central tenets of reductionism. According to Herder, people should foremost seek to be and express themselves; to be authentic to their experience and to their unique surroundings. Herder was thus the forefather to the artistic doctrine of true, unhindered, non-copying self-expression, according to Berlin. People use the power of creation in no small part through invented words and through their use of language. Rationality cannot exist without language, Herder insisted and thus echoed Hamann. In Herder’s view language is a double-edged sword; it is both an expression of creation, but it also arrests and freezes expression. New expressions in language are based on past expressions and the creative acts of men long gone. In this Herder differed from Hamann. The products of creation live on as survivals through the medium of language and in physically manifest artefacts of creation such as art, song, and conduct. We create inventions on top of inventions; we create words from words and as expressions stemming from our unique historical present. To create is to communicate. It is worth noting that dissimilar to Marx, Herder held inventions and technical apparatus in the highest regard, as manifestations of human creativity and not as sources of alienation.

Herder also prompted the idea of belonging to a group which along with language, communication and the inheritance of expressions laid the foundations for an understanding of culture. Herder thought that there was an impalpable sense of community in a group that was brought about by the use and similar understanding of acts and words. To understand a person, one needs to understand the community he belongs to. Humans are both creators and the products of their community; humans are affected by the surrounding climate (Klima) encompassing the physical and geographical environment. Berlin argues that Herder’s doctrine of unity between theory and practice is only understandable in the context of his belonging idea, that theory which takes away the context becomes devoid of real value. In this way Herder is neither an individualist nor a social determinist but something in-between, Berlin argues.
Giddens’ (1984) *theory of structuration* comes to mind as a modern-day equivalent, I might add. Anyhow, Berlin (2013a: 245) describes Herder as a relativist, but not based on subjectivism or any doctrine based on dualistic barriers but on the basis of “objective pluralism”, a view to which Berlin also adhered to.

For Herder there was nothing subjective about societies, cultures or in the actions and thoughts of individuals within them. They are objectively real historical structures that require some amount of empathy, imagination and understanding to get at. Herder, somewhat similar to Vico, was a through and through empiricist disqualifying any categorical or conceptual barriers not found in the real observable world. According to Collingwood, it was Herder who originally objected to the notion that human nature was something uniform and unvarying. In other words, Herder is the first proponent of multiple distinct cultures, of the significance of peculiarities (cf. uniformities), and of manners and customs as a source of human nature. Or as Collingwood puts it, Herder was the “father of anthropology”; and according to Berlin of historicism as well. Berlin posits that it was Herder who first expressed the notion that to understand persons and their thoughts you need to understand their context, meaning that you have to be able to imagine yourself in the same shoes at their point in history. Here Vico and Herder seem to differ in emphasis albeit there is considerable overlap. Vico stressed understanding of historical patterns of thought manifest in language whereas Herder emphasized the historical context and the community where people are rooted.

Herder thus instigated the notion that people have their roots in a particular society at a particular time and place laying the foundations for the present-day concept of cultural pluralism and to the idea that every culture is valuable in their own right and according to their own standards of valuation. According to Berlin, the notion of separate historical roots effectively dismantled the hitherto undisputed idea that natural scientific methods could find a universal answer to all woes and questions of mankind. Further, Herder disrobed the notion of perfection inherent in the universality doctrine of the Enlightenment and revealed it as incompatible with value pluralism, Berlin argues. By showing that science can pose questions to which there cannot be intelligible answers to, Herder managed to deal an even larger blow to Enlightenment presuppositions. That all questions do not have answers and that there is not necessarily a single correct answer to a particular question was built on a novel understanding of language, on the appreciation for lived experience, on understanding a person, of the particular, of communication, and on historical situatedness.

12.3.4 Two movers and shakers of Romanticism

According to Berlin, an intellectual of the first order who was an adamant defender of science but nonetheless managed to undermine it’s taken-for-grantedness was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Berlin pinpoints Kant as one of the fathers of the Romantic revolution and especially his moral philosophy adumbrated in the surprisingly lucidly written essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment” (Kant 1784/2009). Kant argues for self-authority and maturity as the essence of Enlightenment, which according to Berlin managed to dethrone science as the highest authority to which each and every one should subject themselves to. In Kant’s mind man is exempt from the mechanistic causality of nature. He is in other words free and has the freedom of choice. In Kant’s view, the aim of Enlightenment was for people to determine their own lives without reliance on external authorities, artifacts of faith or dogmas. Kant formulated an idea of maturity as liberation from paternalism and from the authority of others, the State, and traditions of all kinds.
According to Berlin, it was Kant who was the first to articulate a secularized notion of dominance, dehumanization, and exploitation of others as acts of immorality or evil. Kant argued for self-authority, self-determination, self-commitment, even if the choices were based on ignorance or faulty reasoning. Kant was against the superiority of some above others. Nothing, not even science could decrown the person from his moral obligation of making his own choices, thus foreshadowing existentialism and Sartre's notion of “bad faith” (*mauvaise foi*). The idea of self-authority and unavoidable authorship of one's life was also vividly present in Nietzsche. The Nietzschean form of existentialism, in part based on his historically attuned *Untimely Meditations* (1997), is formulated as unshackling of oneself from one's historical context. In my mind, knowing Nietzsche's understanding of history puts his depiction of the *Übermensch* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2008) in a more secular light. Foucault (1977) in *Discipline and Punish* astutely reversed Nietzsche's take on history and the existentialist idea when he argued, with the help of Bentham's panopticon, that when an assigned model of thought becomes embodied and taken-for-granted it is an exercise of the most devious and potent form of power. That is, the general idea underlying enculturation, education and historical inheritance was recast as dominance and oppression. Furthermore, without Kant's notion of the evils of exploitation Marx's doctrine of bourgeois exploitation of the proletariat would not have been morally condemning (Berlin 1996).

Life begins with action and not from knowledge, argued Fichte. He perceived, according to Berlin (2000), human beings as creators and if they were not creating and generating then they were empty and dead. Perceiving action and creation as paramount and knowledge as subservient of effective action, Fichte was moving toward a novel theory of the self. In the act of creation how the self came into being was through resistance of the not-self. Of course, there was a “Me” that could be introspected and scrutinized but, according to Fichte’s doctrine, the true elusive and always to some extent ineffable “I” was only perceptible in creation and through resistance towards it (see also Macmurray 1957; 1960). It was how the self got to know the world, through resistance against its act of creation, and concomitantly also the self showed itself in the world. The self came into being only through effort and the ordeals of creation. Thus, the self became created instead of being something assigned by nature; especially, the self is not a single fixed mold of human nature. The self was not a pure imaginative invention, but nonetheless man's artistic creation. This is a culmination of the Romantic revolution. That human being becomes its own creation that is in perpetual transformation and on the move: “Effort is action, action is movement, movement is unfinishable – perpetual movement. This is the fundamental romantic image” (Berlin 2000: 106).

Given the breadth, the criticality of tone, and sense of finality these ideas emit it may be surprising that they can be ordered into a constellation worthy the label of science. As clever and original as each and every one of these ideas was and still is, to arrange these into an orderly doctrine is an achievement of equal proportion necessary of erudition, inventiveness and mastery of disciplined thought. This development and its architects are expounded in the next section.

### 12.4 The rise of scientific history

“A scientist may detect a set of conditions which compose the necessary and sufficient conditions of a hypothetical situation denoted by the expression ‘combustion’ or ‘oxidation’; when these are present, and nothing else is present to hinder their operation, combustion takes
Many of the scattered ideas that were given birth during the Counter-Enlightenment and Romantic Revolution were later put in relation to one another as a coherent perspective through what can be called scientific history. The idea of history as distinct from nature has a vivid past formed by a gamut of notable thinkers and scholars (e.g. Berlin 2013b; Collingwood 1946/2014; Oakeshott 1999; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). They have all provided a vast accumulation of insights and valid objections on what history is concerned with, how it should be conducted, and how it differs from other scholarly fields such as natural science and theology. Despite the fact that the conception of history and the description of historical events can be traced at least far back to the pre-Socratic Ionians and Herodotus (5th century BCE) (Collingwood 1946/2014; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977), what took place after and during the Enlightenment period is of special significance. There were a number of key insights that contributed to the rise of scientific history. It may be enlightening to begin with some tentative tenets of scientific history. According to Collingwood (1946/2014: 8-10):

1. It is conducted with a philosophical or self-critical mindset – thinking of one’s own thinking – the interpretation of experiences and evidence is nonetheless of primary concern.
2. The aim of history is to ask questions and the discovery of something previously unknown.
3. The principal object of study in history is human action done in the past.
4. The method of scientific history is the interpretation of evidence.
5. What is scientific history “for”, is better left for Collingwood to describe:

“My answer is that history is ‘for’ human self-knowledge. It is generally thought to be of importance to man that he should know himself: where knowing himself means knowing not his merely personal peculiarities, the things that distinguish him from other men, but his nature as man. Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.” (Collingwood 1946/2014: 10).

To be relatively concise about the rise of scientific history, it is worth beginning from Kant and Hegel. Herder influenced his teacher Kant, who tied history with human rationality. In Kant’s mind rationality did not obey to the unvarying laws of nature; rationality had to be exempt in order to enable moral action, which showed themselves as phenomena of political action. But this exception and the acknowledgement of human rationality as a source of freedom from nature meant that there was something that could be called a historical process. History became the progressive development of human rationality, which Kant nonetheless thought did
have universal and *a priori* elements. History, for Kant, could be studied from the armchair, a philosophical doctrine that culminated in Hegel. Nature and history were considered distinct to the level that nature was perceived as without history and history lacking nature. The idea that nature lacks history was demolished by Darwin’s theory of evolution (Toulmin & Goodfield 1965/1977), which did not refute the idea that history does not have a nature despite cultural evolutionists such as Spencer. Anyhow, Collingwood (1946/2014) considered Hegel’s distinction between nature and history as significant, because it enabled the distinction between historical *events* and *acts*. Historical events can be the movement of mountain ranges and tides (see also Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). Acts however require human intentionality and motives. “Thus Hegel’s conclusion is right, that there is no history except the history of human life, and that, not merely as life, but as rational life, the life of thinking beings” (Collingwood 1946/2014: 115). Thus history became the history of thought, and more specifically, that of philosophical and political thought. According to Collingwood, this was the stepping-stone Marx built on, by arguing that philosophical and political thought was determined by materialism and class differences. From the point of view of the development of the idea of history, it was a step backwards toward a naturalistic form of explanation, according to Collingwood.

A second and more effective back-step originated from the proliferation of positivism and the growing interest in the production of facts. During the era following Comte history became less philosophical, no more concerning humanity’s acts, motives and thoughts. The notion of interpretation was downplayed while objectivity in the form of brute facts was up. History became the production of historical facts about *events* specifically concerning political history. Moreover, historical facts were troublesome and thought of as less valid facts as they were not based on observation and subject to repeatable laboratory studies for verification. For the development of history, what positivism brought with it was an increasing interest in method and evidence whilst devaluing historical facts and the process of putting them together to form an understanding. The newly founded discipline of sociology was portrayed as interested in natural-scientific facts about human life. Sociology thus became a natural-scientific frame of reference superimposed on a previously historical understanding of the doings of man. With Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) social facts took their place among the other natural-scientific disciplines *sui generis*. The social was no longer a historical perspective of past doings and human civilization. Now, it was argued to be an ontological level on its own right. Durkheim’s well-known argument was based on the organism metaphor, that the smaller parts cannot explain the functions of the larger entity. In term of society, the facts about society cannot be reduced to facts about individuals. Positivism, sociology and the uncritical use of the theory of evolution as analogous to human civilization pushed history into the shadows.

The development of history nonetheless continued in the shadows. According to Collingwood, in German philosophy it was Kant and Hegel who established History side by side with Nature. The distinct character and method of history was still however unclear. Advances were made in Germany, Britain, France and Italy. The French brought back the sentiment of Enlightenment that had cast doubt on supernatural, religious and dogmatic beliefs. This time the French – Collingwood highlighting the works of Félix Ravaisson (1813-1900), Jules Lachelier (1832-1918) and Henri Bergson – threw their critical gaze on natural science and its dominant position. I might add that the French critique of natural science that started already in the 19th century is currently labeled postmodernism or post-structuralism, although it should be noted that some significant advances have been made since then by later scholars such as Michel Foucault (1926-1984).
In Britain the divide between subject and environment – as it was left by Kant (1781/1993), divided into divine and knowable reason and uncertain and partly unreachable environment – was accepted as a starting point for logicians and analytical philosophy. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), perhaps the most eminent of these past scholars embraced in his book *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912/2018) this distinction between the object and the apprehension of the object in the mind. The Kantian subject-object distinction prevailed. Collingwood credits Michael Oakeshott (1901–1990) for dismantling this trail of thought and refocusing the issue on history and its creative process. Oakeshott (1933/2015) argued that experience was not a picture of the object in the mind but experience was in itself an indivisible whole comprising thought, judgement, and assertion of reality. Oakeshott in other words brought forth ideas reminiscent of Vico, Hamann, and Herder. The agentic person was reintroduced and the mere observer of the spectacle of nature was dismissed.

The second advance stemming from Britain was on the historical method. It was F. H. Bradley (1846–1924), if we take Collingwood to be correct and personally I see no reason not to, who put forth the idea that the measure of truthfulness in deciphering informant testimonials and other historical evidence is the historian himself. This echoes Kant’s notion of self-authority. Evidence and interviews were not to be accepted without critical doubt. In the case of for instance biblical narratives of miracles, the historian is forced to make a judgement on whether to belief such accounts or to dismiss them. Bradley and Collingwood both advocate the view that the historian is to re-imagine and re-enact the presented evidence from his own point of view and based on his own experience and critical thought.53 Berlin (1996, chapter 1) refers to this as “imaginative insight” and that the understanding of historical particularities and difference “plainly needs far more sympathy, interest and imagination, as well as experience of life, than the more abstract and disciplined activities of natural scientists.” Said plainly, if the evidence makes sense then it is trustworthy. Coming from another angle, the historian was no longer the objective presenter of unitary historical facts as it was postulated by positivistic scholars, but the one who put facts into a larger whole in order for the facts to become understandable in the time and vocabulary of the historian. For the historian truth is “what the evidence obliges us to believe,” as Oakeshott (1933/2015: 112) put it.

Collingwood develops Bradley’s original idea further. According to Collingwood, a critical historian cannot draw on past or present authorities neither to bolster nor to verify any point of view or piece of evidence. When the historian is his own authority, he is in effect authorizing the authorities he relies on, be they scholars or witnesses (see also Toulmin 2003). Given that every scholarly work is produced at a particular time and place, the historian is implicitly arguing that the authority’s arguments and views also hold at the time and place of the historian. That is to say, that there is nothing in all the natural and acquired endowments – experience, knowledge, all the mental faculties – possessed by the historical scholar that would contradict the authority. Put more softly, that there is nothing remotely questionable that would make the historian want to put the authority on the fallible witness seat instead of on the infallible pedestal with God and Socrates. The view Collingwood professes is one in which all the mistakes of the historian – given that he chooses to disseminate them further – are his own regardless of any and all authoritative figures and giants upon whose shoulders he may more or less knowingly stand on. Successively, the notion that rationality has a distinct character at every single

53 Rorty (1989: 190) argues for the seminal importance of the same faculty of “imaginative identification with the details of others’ lives” as a man-made creation that enables “human solidarity.” From Rorty’s (1989) point of view, human solidarity, the view of “we” instead of “they” is key to “moral progress” (p. 192 ff) in society. For a similar account see von Wright (1993).
point in time also brought about the idea that history as well as rationality was always perceived from a specific point of view:

“The historian (and for that matter the philosopher) is not God, looking at the world from above and outside. He is man, and a man of his own time and place. He looks at the past from the point of view of the present: he looks at other countries and civilizations from the point of view of his own. The point of view is valid only for him and people situated like him, but for him it is valid. He must stand firm in it, because it is the only one accessible to him, and unless he has a point of view he can see nothing at all.” (Collingwood 1946/2014: 108, italics in original)

The Germans with Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915), Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) at the fore continued where Kant and Hegel had left off. It was Windelband who coined the terms nomothetic and idiographic research to clarify the distinction between natural science as interested in generalizable laws and historical science as interested in the value-laden particularities of humanity. Windelband moreover conceived of history along with his countrymen as the science of culture. Apparently, this conceptual maneuver was to put history on the same pedestal with the science of nature. Collingwood argues that it was a regrettable mistake because it confounded the methods of natural science with that of history. Nonetheless, German scholars produced several significant clarifications to the study of history, which goes beyond the interest of this account.

This point in time concerning the idea of history is of particular relevance to concurrent organization and management scholarship. The general ideas and thought paths underlying the most well-known paradigms, those relying on German idealism, postmodernism or positivism were formulated well before the 20th century. Still the division between nomothetic and idiographic research subsists unchallenged. For example, case studies are principally perceived as non-generalizable and quantitative studies are granted generality from the outset. The widely embraced divide and seemingly insurmountable divide between generality and particularity was however already dealt with by the Italians and especially Benedetto Croce (1866-1952).

It was Croce who took on the challenge to clarify the relationships between history, science, art and philosophy. Croce argued that art was an expression of intuitive apprehension of the particular whereas natural science had the general at its focus. Thus Croce begins relatively close to Windelband’s position. In comparison to art and science, history is the narration of facts. The problem that emerged from this tripartite conceptualization was that history became a ‘descriptive science’ which upon closer scrutiny is not much different from art. In an early essay Croce argued that the seminal difference was that history had an obligation to the truth. The obstacle that still remained and lay unanswered both by Croce and by the Germans was how a science of the particular could at all be possible. If science had its interest in the general, then a science of the particular is a self-contradiction.

To solve this contradiction Croce was to defuse the demarcation between the individual and the universal. Croce argued that judgements about particulars and universals are not divisible at all but inseparable elements in actual thought. Everything universal must take place as individual occurrences and thus universality has a hold in a particular time, place and phenomenon. Coming at it from the other side, Croce argued that historical judgements have implicit ideas of universality in the form of predicates and concepts. The judgements about individual subjects become infused with universality when any judgement about the subject is crafted
through the use of universal concepts. Collingwood explains the thrust and ingenuity of Croce’s argument:

“This is Croce’s doctrine of the mutual implication of the universal or definitive judgement, and his solution of the problem how philosophy (i.e. the universal judgement) is related to history. Instead of trying to place philosophy and history outside one another in two mutually exclusive spheres, and thus making an adequate theory of history impossible, he brings them together into a single whole, a judgement whose subject is the individual while its predicate is the universal. History is thus no longer conceived as mere intuition of the individual; it does not simply apprehend the individual, in which case it would be art; it judges the individual; and hence the universality, the a priori character, which belongs indefeasibly to all thought, is present in history in the form of the predicate of the historical judgement. What makes the historian a thinker is the fact that he thinks out the meanings of these predicates, and finds these meanings embodied in the individual he contemplates. But this thinking-out of the meaning of a concept is philosophy; hence philosophy is an integral part of historical thinking itself; the individual judgement of history is a judgement only because it contains in itself, as one of its elements, philosophical thinking.” (Collingwood 1946: 196)

Croce arrives at a point which gives the relevant background to Thomas Kuhn’s (1922-1996) Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1962/2012) and its predecessor Ludwik Fleck’s (1896-1961) The Genesis of a Scientific Fact (1979). Croce’s position and the one adopted by Collingwood is that history is the science of facts and that all knowledge of the world is historical in character (see also Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1990; 2003). No facts can be asserted or produced without being done so in a historical context. In this view the science of facts and the understanding of facts as the real world are historical and therefore philosophical judgements that precede natural scientific endeavors: “History is secured against the encroachments of science not because it already contains science as an element within itself, but because it must be complete before science begins. Science is a cutting-up and rearranging of materials which must be given to it at the start; and these materials are historical facts. When the scientist tells us that his theories are based on facts – observations and experiments – he means that they are based on history, for the idea of fact and the idea of history are synonymous.” (Collingwood 1946: 201).

Thus conceived, history becomes a joint endeavor of mustering evidence and its critical analysis. Here evidence may be called evidence only if it has gone through the scrutiny of critical thought. And critical thinking is what is utilized and honed in the practice of interpreting historical evidence. Scientific history thus conceived through Croce’s and Collingwood’s eyes becomes a self-sufficient or autonomous system of thought not relying on the authority and eminence of natural science. It becomes scientific history.

The question arises if all knowledge is according to the historians then historical knowledge? Collingwood’s (1946/2014) and for example also Oakeshott’s (1999; 1933/2015) answer is a decisive no. According to Collingwood, historical knowledge has the characteristic mark of investigating human understanding in the service of self-knowledge. The abbreviated argument goes as follows: to understand the actions of man one needs to understand his thoughts and mind and not only the external circumstances. To understand another person’s mind it is necessary to re-enact and imaginatively reconstruct the past in the historian’s own mind. In other terms this is the same as an exploration into what a person has done and is capable of doing.
If this thought process or re-thinking is performed critically, as it should by any standards, understanding and self-knowledge will follow. The “historical inquiry reveals to the historian the powers of his own mind. ... The only way in which I can know my own mind is by performing some mental act or other and then considering what the act is that I have performed.” (Collingwood 1946/2014: 218; also see Ryle (1949/2000). Collingwood argues that the methods of natural science have not been able to understand understanding itself because it cannot grasp thought as such. Understanding of the functions of automated responses and instincts are what natural science can at best attain. The proper study of human nature is according to Collingwood through the historical process. “Thus the historical process in which man creates for himself this or that kind of human nature by re-creating in his own thought the past to which he is heir.” (Collingwood 1946/2014: 226).

My main grievance with Collingwood’s argument is on the part where I think he exaggerates what scientific history could accomplish on issues of understanding and human thought. Why does not Collingwood show what history has thus far to say about thought if it is claimed to be the foremost path of inquiry into the subject matter? If I understand Collingwood’s argument correctly, history pertains to what people have done and their thoughts; nothing can be abstracted from those actions and thoughts without losing the particular and therefore the scene of history. Abstraction would leave the scene of history and become a work of natural science or literary imagination. If this is in fact his position, then thought in general cannot be discussed by history directly (cf. Ryle 1949/2000). What thought is and its manifestations are, are left implicit in the background because if it were handled directly then thought would become a generalized abstraction of thought which because of its generality is not history but reminiscent of natural science.

Personally, I am unsatisfied with this chain of reasoning. I think it is possible to deal and use abstractions with fruition and without alluding to natural laws or unusable generalizations. It should be possible to talk explicitly of, for instance, thought and human nature without losing the sense that the talk and evidence used in it are historically situated. Collingwood is most likely too preoccupied with his cherished dichotomy between history and the natural sciences, ‘what one is the other should not be.’ I think the key is to understand that abstracted parlance in the form of descriptive theory is a creative accomplishment of its own type which can be a sufficiently accurate description, that is, the “territory-as-mapped” (Wilk 1999; 2010a; 2013). A description can teach people how to think and map the territory and is accordingly an accomplishment in its own right. It is commendable that the historian should try to avoid loose conjectures and interpretations and thus risk the whole becoming imaginary fiction. Organization science, as I understand it, is on the other hand interested in improvement and history-making in liaison with understanding ongoing history. That is, to map a timely territory in order to change and improve from within history the territory-as-mapped (see also Berlin 2013b; Oakeshott 1933/2015).

Perhaps it is also of value to pinpoint certain other possible exaggerations as well. Toulmin and Goodfield (1977) argue that the line between history and natural science has already been blended in astronomy, geology, biology and other disciplines. When history and natural science have been blended, new insights and a novel understanding of the world has emerged (Bateson 1972; Toulmin & Goodfield 1977). Berlin (2013b) thinks that Collingwood despite being able to develop Vico’s insights further, is overly optimistic on how far historians can reconstruct and re-enact in their own minds the lives and thoughts of people they study. Oakeshott (1999) would in all likelihood make a similar comment and in addition, argue that a historical
vantage point is only one possible mode of understanding. All past thought is not necessarily re-constructible and for instance practical thought has a different mode of understanding than historical thought (Oakeshott 1933/2015). Put succinctly, mankind’s thoughts and actions are not rendered understandable by historians alone. In my mind the study of mankind’s thoughts and actions is a multidisciplinary endeavor.

12.5 From history-making to contemporary organization studies

For anyone familiar with qualitative scholarship within organization studies, the short account above about the thoughts stemming from the Counter-Enlightenment most likely feels like a recap of the basic tenets of the field. For example, the chief methodology in qualitative studies is arguably that of the case study methodology, which is beyond dispute of historical origin (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The tension between natural science and history is however still tangible within organization studies (Cunliffe 2008; Flyvbjerg 2006; Shotter 2015). This tension is worth a few comments in connection with this study, even though it would deserve an even longer account and a separate discussion, which goes beyond the scope of this study.

As an example of the tension between nature and history in the management sciences, in case study methodology, generalizability has become an overt issue (Yin 1994). Consequently, rhetorical argument for generalizable findings have been added to give the methodology a natural scientific crusting (see Yin 1994; for similar criticism see Flyvbjerg 2006). It is as if the argument for history on its own account has gotten lost while generalizable findings echoing a natural scientific attitude – i.e. timelessness, certainty and universality – has gained momentum. Croce’s idea that the generality in a historical case comes from the employed language and the implicit judgement used in the analysis of the cases may have been lost or not given its due attention (Collingwood 1946). The longing for generalizations and where they should lie is thus one issue of tension.

Generalizability is however connected to other facets of a sought-after theory. One well-received metatheory within organization studies on what is and is not possible by a theory, is the forced substitutions between generality, simplicity and accuracy (Weick 1999). It is argued that adding one dimension will diminish at least one of the two others. Weick (1999) contributes this theory of commensurate complexity to Thorngate and his commentary on the discussion by the social psychologists Gergen and Schlenker in 1976. The debate began when Gergen (1973) argued that social psychology studies phenomena of contemporary history. Gergen summarizes his position:

“In light of the present arguments, the continued attempt to build general laws of social behavior seems misdirected, and the associated belief that knowledge of social interaction can be accumulated in a manner similar to the natural sciences appears unjustified. In essence, the study of social psychology is a historical undertaking. We are essentially engaged in a systematic account of contemporary affairs.” (Gergen 1973: 318-319)

Gergen’s chief point is that social psychology studies people and the theories are used by people to alter their behavior. But this in fact entails that social psychologists are never actually studying pure behavior, but applied behavior based on received knowledge and the prevalent forms of common sense. Moreover, Gergen argues that social psychology is a discipline rooted in history. He argues that it is myopic to succumb to artificial disciplinary borders between other
historical sciences such as sociology, economics, and political science. According to Gergen, the study of contemporary affairs calls for some level of interdisciplinarity (see Boas 1928/1986; Elias 1998; Toulmin 1990 for similar arguments). Gergen in effect presents similar conclusions and points of view as the Counter-Enlightenment philosophers. One notable difference, however, is that the Counter-Enlightenment philosophers had and were developing an entire \textit{Weltanschauung} while Gergen for understandable reasons makes a confined set of remarks about social psychology. Nonetheless, returning to Weick and Thorngate, the historical accuracy of Weick’s (1999) depiction of where his and Thorngate’s ideas stem from can be disputed. Especially, on where the credits are rightfully due. Already in 1960, that is 16 years before Thorngate’s article, Isaiah Berlin discussed the relationship between natural science and history in strikingly similar terms:

“It follows from this [natural scientific model building] that the greater the number of similarities that we are able to collect (and the more dissimilarities we are able to ignore) – that is to say, the more successfully we abstract – the simpler our model will be, the narrower will be the range of characteristics to which it will apply, and the more precisely it will apply to it; and, conversely, the greater the variety of objects to which we want our model to apply, the less we shall be able to exclude, and consequently the more complex the model will become, and the less precisely it will fit the rich diversity of objects which it is meant to surmise, and so the less of a model, of a master key, it will necessarily be. … Hence it begins to look as if, given the world as it is, the utility of a theory or a model tends to vary directly as the number of cases, and inversely as the number of characteristics, which it succeeds in covering. Consequently one may, at times, be compelled to choose between the rival rewards of increased extension or intensification – between the range of a theory and the richness of its content.” (Berlin 1960/2013b: 35)

Here Berlin approaches the issue of history from the perspective of the natural sciences. He does this in order to show what the natural sciences necessarily miss with language use that is aimed at generalizability and simplicity. He does this to show how plural, many splendid, and multifaceted lived life and experience in reality is – which each and everyone’s experience should testify to. What Berlin is arguably doing in the essay is to give an account for history and of its philosophical bearings and interests. To be explicit, Berlin does not argue for mixing natural scientific and historical methods, nor is he against it, but argues for a more inclusive view of knowledge and science, where uniformity, laws, commonalities and the like are not the only criteria of value regarding a phenomenon (for similar and equally forceful arguments see Rorty 1989; Toulmin 1990; 2003). The linguistic and intellectual blending of methods and vocabularies between history and natural sciences, and what kind of philosophy such research would stand on, Berlin leaves undiscovered, as does Toulmin (1990; 2003). This is the philosophical frontier they leave to others to explore and to show its possibilities and intellectual fruits (see Rorty 1989: 3 ff).

To me it seems to be an inescapable conclusion that the contestation between the methods and interests of a study of nature and that of history are part and parcel of theorizing within management research. It is with a sort of historical irony that this would be the case, as this realization is distorted by much historical inaccuracy. Much has been done to transpose historical methods and models of thought to afford it the veneer of natural sciences, as if history would not on its own account have a good claim to science or be of value. Most likely the
Cartesian values of eternal and certain knowledge underlie this development (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Toulmin 1990; 2003).

The subject matter of history and consequently its product of historical knowledge, we should not forget, concerns according to Collingwood the subject of human thought or more broadly, the mind (Ryle 1949/2000). What I would add to this view is that historical thought cannot be distinguished from (historically) situated action (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). History is a thick concept. The principal method of history is the imaginative recreation and re-enactment of past thoughts and actions; that is, to understand the minds of other persons as they performed their actions. The chief philosophical challenge with this perspective is to understand mind as something beyond the enclosed and isolated subject (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008; Ryle 1949/2000).

An understanding of organizations and the accomplishments of organizing, communicating and managing are properly perceived only from the point of view which enables a leap into the shoes of the people involved. It is not actually a leap, but a state to which human beings are born into, that is, that human beings can understand the minds of others. As Berlin (2013a) argued, it is a form of reasoning beyond that of induction or deduction. This is the method of how one may understand a human being as acting with intelligence; how one takes certain considerations into account in the performance of distinct acts. It is the intentionality within acts that define action as action and not as impersonal activity or amoral robotic behavior (see also Bakhtin 1993; Ghoshal 2005; Mills 1959). The understanding of these considerations is in my mind vital to understand action as an act of a certain kind instead of postulating action as generic ‘behavior.’ It is an understanding of the particular and historical situatedness which can best be described as a philosophical outlook of the “personal” (Macmurray 1960; see also Berlin 1996; Rorty 1989).

To understand another human being as similar but distinct from oneself, to be able to relate to that person as a person with particular kinds of relationships, habits, thoughts, considerations and world is what the method of the personal by far and large comprises. In psychotherapy this is called “metacognition”, to recognize that other people can have differing views from oneself and neither of which are necessarily an objective reality (Seligman 2018). It is the use of human sensibilities and the ongoing intellectual inheritance to understand human beings (see Flyvbjerg 2006). Giddens (1984) has in principle argued for the same phenomenon as “double hermeneutic.” Macmurray (1960) argues that the personal is to some extent necessarily a philosophical outlook beyond that of scientific discourse, because it is a perspective from within a relational epistemology (see also Shotter 2016). Whereas scientific discourse is an attempt to describe persons at a distance through a somewhat rigid and timeless technology of institutionalized words and concepts.

I have no quarrel with the view that for social sciences to be a proper study of mankind it is necessarily to some extent philosophical (Berlin 2013a; 2013b). The description of history is always formed within history (Toulmin 2003), understanding of another’s language is necessarily from within one’s own language system (Rorty 1989), and similarly any account of human beings is formed through the expression of human capabilities and accomplishments that may support or undermine that account. That is to say, historically minded scholarship is philosophical if it is personal and it is personal if it even partially studies the lives of conscious moral agents or persons.

The epistemological poise of history is to understand that an inquiry in being philosophical and personal does not revert into epistemological solipsism or relativism. It is a reliance on
personal and self-critical judgement and on one’s own totality of experience (Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1958/2003), which as I see it, cannot be philosophically or methodologically sidestepped in research. But on the contrary, is the chief method for how one can at all understand another person and his world (see also James 1890/2016). Knowing from within does not make the perspective unscientific (Flyvbjerg 2006; Shotter 2016) but rather acknowledges the fact that human beings are incapable of observing themselves from a disconnected and untimely outlook from outside, from the view of the Platonic skyhook (Rorty 1989; Wittgenstein 2009). Berlin (2013a; 2013b) put it rather aptly when he said that the study of humans as something else than humans is a fallacy of its own kind, the opposite of anthropomorphism and thus is not a consideration worth pursuing in the study of history-making.

The recent turns in organization theory – the linguistic turn, the practice turn, the discursive turn, the relational turn, and the material turn – could be strengthened by an overall transposition of the overarching intellectual roots of management scholarship. Without delving into these different turns and their internal discussions, based on our short review on the ideas that gave rise to history and history-making, one could argue that these turns signify the rise of scientific history once again. Although the various turns are to my knowledge conceived as isolated discussions and concerns, my suggestion based on the history of ideas is that it could be beneficial to look at them together as a whole. Be that as it may, the truthfulness of this outlook and thus the historical distinctiveness of these various turns is better left for subsequent studies to determine.

12.6 A forward-looking summary of history-making

In this summary we draw together those insights – proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes – from this chapter that we later on implicitly and explicitly build on in our second encounter with the empirical material. These ideas concern an array of subjects ranging from method, epistemology, and ontology that concern the subject matter of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. These issues concern key pre-theoretical convictions that undergird and inform one’s choice of vocabulary, its implicit theoretical perspective and its surrounding world of experience (Kuhn 1962/2012; Oakeshott 1933/2015). Moreover, in the views presented above the ideas are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, but here for the sake of simplicity and brevity it may be acceptable to list these ideas separately as individual statements:

1. Human beings are creators and their nature as authors, self-authorities, artists and creators can be illuminated by investigating their actions, thoughts and conduct as purposeful man-made attempts and accomplishments within a man-made society (Vico)
2. To understand another mind requires a mind. To understand another person as a creator requires a special kind of self-knowledge or inside knowledge about creating and everyday human creations that puts the analyst and analysand within the same medium of communication and frame of reference of having and using a mind. In other words, the analysis of persons is not approached through a Kantian (1781/1993) epistemology as an enclosed subject (one frame of reference) analysing the thoughts of another enclosed subject (second frame of reference) through the medium of expressed language and interpretation (sources of error and third and perhaps fourth frame of reference), but as a single unity and inside view that is built on and requires the creative accomplishment of understanding other minds as equal to oneself. (Vico)
3. The form of reasoning used in understanding a person’s actions and surroundings is neither inductive nor deductive, but of an alternative form of reasoning here called the mode of the personal. It is a form of reasoning that re-enacts, re-imagines, and relates to the world of experience described by other persons. (Berlin, Collingwood, Macmurray, Oakeshott)

4. Employed language and communication are crucial windows into the created, co-constructed and mutable man-made human nature, a person’s self-created life and experience, and the created society. (Vico, Hamann)

5. Empirical observations are founded on a scholar’s historically situated system of pre-theoretical beliefs and convictions. Theoretical assertions are also man-made and are thus historically situated in the time and place of the scholar and against the backdrop of those beliefs and convictions. A scholar is morally responsible for and the final authority for the beliefs and convictions he holds and disseminates through his research. (Hamann, Collingwood, Bradley, Kuhn, Fleck)

6. To understand a person, one needs to understand the enlivened culture and historical surroundings (scene) to which the person belongs to and in which he acts and lives. (Herder)

7. The analysis of a person’s acts within their historical scene is the analysis of mind. Mind is irreducible from a person’s actions and the scene of action. (Oakeshott, Ryle)

8. There is bidirectionality and circularity between past creations of mankind and the novelty of self-expression and self-creation. Mankind is both a product of past accomplishments and a creator of future survivals. (Herder, Oakeshott)

9. Human beings have freedom of choice and action and are thus morally responsible for their choices and actions. They are conscious moral agents who are capable of choosing differently. (Kant)

10. Action is self-expression, it creates novel information and employs past knowledge. A person’s self is created through the processes of action and self-expression within surroundings that variously resist the actions of the self. (Fichte)

11. Action is a creative accomplishment within a local scene. The definition of action is that it is a historically situated act infused with intentionality and motive (purpose). (Collingwood, Oakeshott)

12. Experience is infused with judgement, thought and assertions about the local realities. (Oakeshott)

13. Testimonials and interviewee accounts are trusted based on the scholar’s self-authority and judgement and thus how the account corresponds with the totality of experience familiar to the scholar. (Collingwood, Oakeshott, Toulmin)

14. Historical process is an amalgam of generality and particularity concerning chiefly the enduring possibilities to mankind through timely and situated thoughts and actions of conscious moral agents. The generality of a historical account or case description is embedded in the concepts and corresponding judgement and reasoning employed by the scholar to describe the historical events and actions. (Croce, Collingwood)

We will come across several of these proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes in connection with the next chapter, which deals with the how the other coordinates in the dramatistic pentad come together in the “act” and its ability to construct and alter man-made “scenes” (Burke 1945). There some of these same ideas are approached, reiterated and extended through works
that more specifically focus on the act and its relation to other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008; Macmurray 1960; Searle 1995; 2009).
13. A grammar of management

“A human life is composed of performances, and each performance is a disclosure of a man’s beliefs about himself and the world and an exploit in self-enactment. He is what he becomes; he has a history but no ‘nature.’” (Oakeshott 2001: 63)

“The things that matter most to us, problems of individual and collective human relations, remain the hardest to forecast; worst of all, a Newtonian view of the human sciences confuses two misleadingly named but entirely different kinds of events – happenings we expect in the World of Nature, and actions we expect of our fellow humans – and calls both kinds of expectation ‘prediction’ regardless of their differences.” (Toulmin 2003: 207-208, italics in original)

13.1 Foreword

Through the coordinated acts of many conscious moral agents notable historical and often enduring accomplishments have come into being in the history of mankind (see e.g. Harari 2014; Morris 2011; Scott 2019). What people often read of in history books is of occasions and achievements when persons have coordinated their efforts and come to accomplishments beyond the possibilities of a single individual. Approaching man-made achievements from this angle brings coordination, organizing and management to the center stage of “history-making” (Hosking 2011; Spinosa et al. 1997).

If history-making is taken as making a difference in a pre-existing, ambiguous, man-made and historically unstable state of affairs in all walks of life, a grammar of management will most likely have a somewhat narrower focus. In this chapter we approach the “act” in history-making (Aristotle 2005; Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945), in relational and organizational settings. Hence our focus on the grammar of management.

This chapter has three overarching aims. Firstly, to show that a relational understanding underpins an array of commonsensical albeit probably not often reflected upon ideas about social life. These seminal ideas concern the practical living of a life within social arrangements like an organization and civil society more broadly. The discussion will show how the “big three” of “agent,” “act,” and “scene” are intertwined; all three are thus inseparable from and exposed in the act (Burke 1945). This is what makes prudent action both intelligent and difficult. Persons endowed with minds – “symbol-making, symbol-using, and symbol-misusing animals” (Burke 1984: 299) – act purposively and perform more sophisticated and intelligent actions than straightforward instictual behavior. Here we take the view that communication builds upon “relational constructionism” (Hosking 2011); that communication and creation are indivisible notions for understanding human conduct (Burke 1945; 1984; Searle 2009).54

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54 I prefer to use the term “relational constructionism” (Hosking 2011) instead of social constructionism or social constructivism mainly for two reasons. Firstly, to distance the concept from Cartesian subjectivism inherent in Berger & Luckmann
Part IV: Conducive Proto-Ideas and Theoretical Prototypes

Put differently, the first aim of this chapter is to expound how the scene of history and oneself within it is made into being all the time in the performances of everyday life, most of which are enacted in and through relationships. Acts are consequently investigated from the perspectives of the disclosive, communicative and performative standpoint (e.g. Oakeshott 1991a) and a relational-developmental vista (e.g. Maemurray 1960; Seligman 2018). From the point of view of the present study, the purpose of these considerations is to root the key theoretical prototypes – Berne’s (e.g. 1964/2010) and Goffman’s (e.g. 1967) interactional vocabularies – into a more encompassing relational understanding, fortifying the position that their theorizing provide a fruitful relational platform to further investigate interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. This lays out a broader theoretical context and vocabulary underneath the empirical investigations. The broader relational circumference is brought to the fore by exposing how the coordinates of the dramatistic pentad come together, from the point of view of the act.

Secondly, the aim of this chapter is to show how relationships work. The rudimentary and general building blocks inherent in relationships shed light on how coordinated action and thus relational coordination is achieved (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009; Orlikowski 2002). The discussion goes into the miniscule details of how coordination is an interactional and relational achievement co-created by conscious moral agents. Hence the second aim of this chapter is to understand the basic building blocks that are involved in the construction of a social “interactional arrangement” (Goffman 1981, cf. interaction setup) – the basic requirements of mutual coordination and management – that surround interactions and thus encompass also the creation and enactment of different setups. This investigation is built on the premise that the relational act cannot be understood properly without a rudimentary understanding of how interaction setups can be constrained, enabled and are able to modify and construe relationally co-constituted scenes (for a similar account see Giddens 1984).

This discussion shows that in an organizational context, the “big three” of “agent”, “act”, and “scene” become infused with considerations about “agency” and “purpose” (Burke 1945). The tension and bidirectional influence between the act and the relationally constructed scene thus shed light on agency and purpose (e.g. Giddens 1984). The tension and the concomitant connections to agency and purpose are made palpable especially through the concepts of intentionality and deontic powers (Searle 1995; 2009). These considerations build directly onwards from the previous chapter on history-making by pinpointing key aspects of what is constructed and how in acts that can and do change the historical and man-made scene.

Thirdly, the aim of this chapter is to elaborate on the relational structure and especially the relational dynamics of Parent, Adult, and Child communication within interaction setups (e.g. Berne 1964/2010). Herein we synthesize a way of thinking that shows, for example, how interaction setups can evolve into relationship and organization setups. The purpose of expanding the relational structure is to show its versatility and usefulness beyond the limits of Berne’s (1964/2010) psychotherapeutic uses and purposes.

(1966) and secondly, to distance the background assumptions from Durkheim’s sui generis argument in the concept of the ‘social.’ Both in my mind contribute to fuzzy conceptualizations. Relational constructionism also highlights that the constructions are actively achieved and reproduced in interactions (Giddens 1984), not mere social facts about society or elusive intersubjectivity.

55 In the construction of this chapter I have used several helpful questions in order to narrow the circumference of this investigation. The questions that I have used are: How does an order function? What is the smallest agentic system in which systemic disorganization can be accomplished? Why is the organizational hierarchy such an enduring characteristic of organizations? Why a group of people who interact with one another cannot not have a culture?
When we combine the three aims of this chapter, we can say that the topic of this chapter is a grammar of coordinative interactions from the point of view of the creative, performative, relational, communicative, and cooperative act. These many faces of the act indeed show its connection to all the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad, thus animating the entire pentad from the point of view of the act (Burke 1945).

This brings us to the first conundrum. How to study the construction of man-made history given that the phenomenon is not stable, universal or fixed by natural laws? How to study the making of that which is principally man-made? The answer given to us by the Counter-Enlightenment philosophers is language, expression, action and communication (see the previous chapter). To study these is to study the mind, consciousness, and performance (Bateson 1979; Berlin 2013a; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1991a; Ryle 1949/2000). What unites these concepts is that they foundationally instill an act within a scene (e.g. Bateson 1972; Dewey 1958; Ryle 1949/2000). Moreover, within a malleable man-made scene that is altered by the act (e.g. Giddens 1984).

This chapter will proceed as follows. Firstly, I investigate action as a “mode” (Oakeshott 1933/2015) of language which has certain general characteristics. Action is communicative, performative and expressive, thus displaying elements of the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad, i.e. “agent”, “scene”, “agency”, and “purpose” (Burke 1945). This interconnectedness and the inextricable character of the act makes action difficult, and consequently underlies the notions of intelligent action and skillful performance. Action is performed amidst and through social relationships; the unavoidable character of communication embeds a man-made act within a man-made scene.

Communication between two persons include all the essentials for communication to work in larger collectives and therefore the dyad will work as the basis for our analysis, as is typical in cybernetic and psychotherapeutic theorizing (Bateson 1972; Seligman 2018; Watzlawick 1990). The family unit and its specific relations has historically, religiously and philosophically been the primordial device for understanding – not only of human beings and intercourse but originally also mother Nature and the like (Jaynes 1976; MacMurray 1960; Mead 1934; Seligman 2018). Such relationships can also become habitual and institutionalized into relatively stable patterns of conduct (Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Macmurray 1960; Seligman 2018). People live within socially constructed interactional arrangements and setups which are organized according to deontic powers, that is to say, expected and enacted rights and obligations (Searle 1995; 2009). This means that in social arrangements the scene of action is a man-made ethical scene where the walls and doors are built by evaluative concepts like should, should not, may, may not, must, must not, can, and cannot (see Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945; 1984; Nussbaum 2001; Oakeshott 1991a).

Children and Parents often have vastly different sets of rights and obligations (Berne 1964/2010), often due to their different capabilities (Macmurray 1960). This developmental and relational background is key to deciphering the going-ons in the communication between two conscious moral agents even in more developed organizational settings. In this investigation the concept of “intentionality” (Searle 1995; 2009) becomes seminal in order to understand the key differences between the acts of Parents, Children, and Adults. The agreements which constitute a more enduring relationship structure between Adults, Children and Parents are also what a civil society is by far and large built upon (e.g. Berlin 2013b; Hobbes 1651/2008; Milgram 1974/2009).
In this sense and for this reason, political, social, and moral philosophy unite as one topic, which can be portrayed as attempting to describe how it is at all possible to create a working society or a purposively designed ‘good’ social organization (see Robin-Letwin 1998). Due to these connections – the intertwining of act with ethics, man-made interaction setups with broader social arrangements – I discuss the notions of negative and positive freedom stemming from political philosophy (Berlin 2013b). The point of this discussion is to build a common language of acts, how deontic powers are embedded in the act and can thus be used as a window into all of the coordinates of the dramatistic pentad, i.e. the agent, act, scene, agency and purpose.

In the second section I investigate language as a “mode of action” (Burke 1945) which utilizes the same necessary language ingredients that are inherent in cooperative action. Thus, how “speech acts” (Searle 1995) can produce, uphold, enable and be constrained by relational institutions and enduring man-made arrangements. This section describes language as a constructive capability and thus sees language as something that is purposively used to accomplish sought-after ends (Wittgenstein 1953/2009). The section ends with a synthesis of the uncovered building blocks inherent in communicative action and shows how they can become entangled into relational “knots” (Seligman 2018) and other constellations that can significantly impede action.

The next two sections of this chapter expand on the Parent, Adult, Child relational structure. It is argued that the employed vocabulary is much more versatile than merely confined to the topic of interactions from a psychotherapeutic point of view (e.g. Berne 1964/2010). Consequently, the threefold structure of relationality is presented, which is argued to be a widely adopted “meta-framework” (Seligman 2018) used to discuss the self, consciousness, culture, the inhabited world, and the like in a non-dual and non-essentialist manner (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008; Lewin 1948; Mead 1934/2015).

This discussion thus situates the relational structure presented in Part III in a broader and more inclusive relational frame of reference. It is also possible to visualize larger constellations of Parent, Adult, and Child relationships beyond the dyad, which makes this vocabulary relatively simple to convey and can most likely be used to theorize of many relational and interactional phenomena, that are however for the most part beyond the interest of this account. This capability nonetheless shows the theoretical reach of this vocabulary and its way of thinking.

This chapter ends with a return to the scene of the act. Here we advocate the position that an act is inseverable from its local scene of action. We show several lines of thought to support this position, which in general show how the scene is implicitly employed in different kinds of acts (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008; Searle 2009). For example, when one aims to depict the act as a particular kind of act, like a skillful performance, it is necessary to imbue the scene with qualities that make such an act possible (see e.g. Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). Thus, the scene, equally to the act, is connected to the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad (Burke 1945). In this frame of reference, the concept of “trust” is of special significance (e.g. Luhmann 1988). It is argued that trust in the broadest sense of the term is a phenomenological embodiment of the relationship between the act and the scene. To act requires trust in the scene.56

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56 This view about trust will be elaborated further in the next chapter and especially in the discussions concerning trauma and posttraumatic growth.
13.1.1 Precursors and sibling accounts

It should be noted that the kind of “grammar” of the act that we are seeking in this chapter is in a fashion an everyday account of human action. For this reason, this account indubitably has a long and multifarious intellectual history. It would be surprising if there were not partially similar expositions spread across multiple disciplines and philosophies, especially in the hands of those who have been able to provide comprehensive and compelling accounts regarding the minute workings of action and communication. In this chapter I at times evoke insights from some these astute scholars, but it should be noted that some scholars have managed to give even more comprehensive and insightful accounts than what I can give them credit for in this account. In the account that follows I frequently credit Macmurray, Oakeshott, Berlin and Searle for particular insights, but there are four others that deserve to be named in this context:

For example, the renowned sociologist Norbert Elias (1998), probably thanks to his knowledge of Foulkes group-psychoanalysis (see Wilk 2013 for an introduction), in his “figurational” theory of society presents a strikingly similar view of relationships and relational configurations. Elias was keen on investigating how social development works from a non-dual and relational standpoint and thus through the workings of action and communication. The similarities between his “civilizing process” and interactional wellbeing as it is understood herein make him worth mentioning in this context.

I would however credit Sir Thomas Hobbes (1651/2008) as probably the first who explicitly articulated the basic tenets for a grammar of management in his description of the Leviathan. To my knowledge, Hobbes was perhaps the first relational constructionist, which for him was the essence of civil philosophy. In his masterpiece the Leviathan he describes a relatively well-developed theory of language and especially speech, shows penetrative insight into relationships and civic manners, explicates how social institutions are instituted through agreements, and comes to the conclusion that society is based on restriction and assignment of deontic powers. From our present-day perspective, these insights were formulated three centuries ahead of their time.

Hobbes for example described in detail how the powers of a sovereign are to be considered as the powers of an “Office” instead of the person. And that that Office is given its powers through mutual agreement as a formal compact between associates. “This covenant, then, purports to create an artifact composed of a sovereign Ruler authorized and empowered by covenanters who thereby become ‘united in one person’, transform themselves into Subjects and thus release themselves from the condition of war of all against all. This artifact is called a Commonwealth or civitas.” (Oakeshott 1991b: 260). This is a condensed description of a process of relational constructionism. It is the construction of a social arrangement as a man-made society through language use, action, commitment to past actions, and communication.

As another example, Anthony Giddens (1984) has in his Theory of Structuration utilized a very similar understanding of human action and focus of interest as is the case here. In his theory Giddens zooms in on “agency” (what we here call act) by utilizing a variety of theoretical views found also partly herein, and consequently, he has managed to muster an influential sibling account. Furthermore, an emphasis on history is essential also in Giddens account albeit he uses the term “structure” to discuss and situate history in the present as something learned and reproduced through action, and to give it socio-material connotations. Albeit this conceptual move gives agency and structure conceptual wings and imaginative leeway, it also, I believe, obfuscates issues by overloading conceptual frames of reference on the concept of structure and somewhat severs it from an understanding of co-constituted and historically
situated action. Put differently, I prefer to see “agent”, “act”, “agency”, “purpose”, and “scene” as separate but related concepts without uniting them too strongly into only a dialectic between agency (act) and structure (scene). A full analysis of the similarities and differences between the views presented shortly and Giddens’ theory are beyond the interest of this account. Suffice to say, that they attempt to deal with similar theoretical problems with similar tools of thought, but with different theoretical purposes in mind.

A fourth sibling account comes from the acclaimed social psychologist Stanley Milgram (1974/2009). It is relatively well known that Milgram in his seminal “studies of obedience” found that in the standard setting of the experiment usually over two thirds of naïve participants administered electric shocks up to lethal 450 volts according to the instructions of an experimenter, who was recognized as an authority figure. The layman conclusion, and yet by no means trivial, was that almost anybody could have become a Nazi collaborator participating in genocide. More generally, that most are capable of cruelty if they are put in a situation where they consider it their “duty” (see also Arendt 1977). It is less well known that Milgram utilized a relational and cybernetic theory to explain the functioning of a conscious moral agent who had of free volition entered an “authority system” (cf. interaction setup).

Based on the replicated and consistent experimental results, Milgram theorized that once a person enters an authority system by their own free will where they have subjugated themselves into an “agentic state” with the duty of satisfying the commands of an authority, the pact of the relationship becomes stronger than any action ascribed within it (cf. Hobbes 1651/2008). In Milgram’s (1974/2009: 175, italics in original) words, “relationship overwhelms content.” Milgram astutely recognized that subjugation to authority is the glue that holds society together, one that members of society are indoctrinated into from birth (see also Dewey 2011; Foucault 1977). Based on his research he admirably pointed out that a definition of ‘civility’ cannot be defined only on the basis of subjugation to the rules and authority of society, but ought to comprise also the ability to deliberately break away from such systems (cf. Kant 1784/2009). How relationships and “authority systems” are formed, (re-)negotiated and broken is to my understanding a key ingredient to understanding life in and management of organizations. This issue penetrates and surrounds what occurs in interaction setups.

One significant difference between this account and the four above mentioned classic studies is that here we have attached the discussion and theoretical insights to Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad. Consequently, the vocabulary of agent, scene, act, agency and purpose will be used to bring a variety of insights together whilst making this theoretical vocabulary more familiar and useful by using it in this and the next chapter.

### 13.2 Action as a mode of language

In this section I provide a short account of action as a mode of language that can be understood to convey much information about the act, the agent and the scene, that is, the “big three” (Burke 1945). Action perceived in this manner is understood as performative, communicative

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57 Milgram’s classic studies into obedience have since their publication been questioned on numerous grounds. Despite the criticism, I think his name deserves to be mentioned as a notable precursor to a relational understanding concerning the dynamics and pressure that can develop between a person and the surrounding authority system. In terms of this study, Milgram’s studies can be viewed as a set of initial experimental studies into extreme cases of designed interaction setups. Arendt (1977) in my mind also comes to very similar conclusions as Milgram, albeit from a somewhat different vantage point.

58 In this chapter we mainly discuss how an authority system is formed, upheld and enacted. In the next chapter on understanding interactional wellbeing we deal with how and why it is at times broken.
and expressive all at once. This understanding of action and its implicit connections to “agent”, “agency”, “purpose” and “scene” (Burke 1945) draws from a variety of sources that are mentioned in passing. As discussed in the Preface, especially here the style of writing mimics some of the key referenced authors and presents the arguments as a single account fitting the purposes of this study. The point, to recap, is to make this way of understanding tangible through examples and comparisons and by highlighting particular perhaps even self-evident pragmatic truths of life.

It can be said to be an experientially indisputable fact of life that action is a “mode” of language (Oakeshott 1933/2015). This statement mirrors the often-repeated truth in cybernetic research that one cannot not communicate (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1990). For a person to stand still, giving out no reactions, holding their arms in, keeping their eyes closed, is nonetheless despite their best efforts giving out information about themselves through their actions. A person has a form and probably the features corresponding to a human being. Not just a human being, but a human being with a distinct set of particulars. That person might be meditating, concentrating, memorizing, thinking etc. What the intention of that person’s action is may be unclear, but that person is nonetheless emitting crucial information about his actions. The person is doing this instead of that (Oakeshott 1991a).

The person is in a particular place, which might give clues to what the doing is. The person might be standing instead of sitting, which at the very least tells that the person is alive and capable of muscular control. Breathing tells a similar story. If touched even gently the person might either hold back and resist the touch or react to it in some other manner, both of which tells something merely by the fact that there are options to act differently (Bateson 1972). Options provide freedom of choice (Taleb 2013). Within those options the doing of this instead of that expresses the action in question. The same is true of noise and smells and how that person might react to possible inquiries about what the person is doing. A spectator cannot know for certain what exactly another person is attempting to accomplish with their ‘doing’, their “intent-in-action” (Searle 1995), they can nonetheless form a sensible understanding of the action as a particular sort of ‘doing.’

A person cannot not communicate in the presence of a sentient being, including themselves. It can be said that persons are constantly monitoring themselves in relation to their surroundings and correcting their posture and demeanor so that their ‘doing’ conforms to their intent-in-action (Powers 1973; Schon 1984; Watzlawick 1990). In all action some self-disclosure can thus be said to be unavoidable (Oakeshott 1991a; see also Holt 2006). Granting this, the issue becomes how to control or master the communication, the self-disclosure, which every human being is unavoidably giving out in their doing all the time. How in other words to give out an understanding of what one is at least not doing, so that one’s actions do not prompt unintended reactions in others (see Goffman 1963a). And at the same time to disclose a sensible purpose and monitor its progress in one’s actions.

Following this line of thought, human action is responding intelligently to a situation with the intention to accomplish a desired or wished for outcome (Heidegger 1962/2008; Mead 1934/2015; Oakeshott 1991a). Through the inherent intent-in-action the action itself gains communicational elements concerning “purpose” (Burke 1945) and becomes a performance of human “conduct” (Oakeshott 1991a; see also Hosking 2011). According to this account, action

59 Csikszentmihalyi (1975; 1990; 2003) has provided evidence that in a state of “flow” a person is fully engaged with the act and the information in the scene surrounding and instrumental to the intelligent performance of the act. In these examples a sense of self is reported as disappearing. In the vocabulary presented here, we would state that in those instances the self-disclosure part of action does not require monitoring, and thus the self disappears from thought.
and communication are two sides of the same coin. Both pertain to the same phenomenon of mind – acting intelligently and heedfully to one’s surroundings and simultaneously communicating and monitoring heed and intelligent responses to relevant circumstances in and through one’s actions (Heidegger 1962/2008; Ryle 1949/2000).

“We acquire habits of conduct, not by constructing a way of living upon rules or precepts learned by heart and subsequently practised, but by living with people who habitually behave in a certain manner: we acquire habits of conduct in the same way we acquire our native language. ... Further, the education by means of which we acquire habits of affection and behaviour is not only coeval with conscious life, but it is carried on, in practice and observation, without pause in every moment of our waking life, and perhaps even in our dreams; what is begun as imitation continues as selective conformity to a rich variety of customary behaviour. This sort of education is not compulsory, it is inevitable.” (Oakeshott 1991b: 468-469)

A singular performance of a broader and often habitual conduct can be considered as the everyday art of agency (Emirbayer & Mische 1998; Oakeshott 1991a). It is self-expression, communication and performative action all at once. It is art because the canvas of particular choices in conduct is virtually endless. That a person is ‘doing’ this instead of that on their own accord encompasses reflective consciousness and therefore exhibits intelligence and understanding (see also Schon 1984).

“An agent is one who is recognized to have an understanding of himself in terms of his wants and his powers and an understanding of the components of the world he inhabits; and an action is an illustrative exhibition of this understanding. The attribution of agency and the recognition of action is already the attribution and the recognition of reflective consciousness” (Oakeshott 1991a: 32).

The actions of agents in other words exhibit intelligence about the surrounding world by carrying a response to those circumstances in the inhabited world (Heidegger 1962/2008; see also Cunliffe 2008). Action is not the consequence of a singular choice but the home of understanding and judgement about the world one inhabits. Action thus carries understandings about the “scene” and especially about oneself and one’s actions within that scene (Burke 1945). The doing of this instead of that is a prudential act of self-disclosure and self-enactment – of intended accomplishment and communication entwined. Action perceived in this way can be taken as a form of vocabulary or grammar, that works as communication, especially about the “agent-scene”, “agent-act” and “act-scene” ratios (Burke 1945). This language consists of singular performances, more enduring practices and characteristic conduct.

To have a specific intention of self-disclosure and self-enactment – to balance the agent-act and act-scene rations (Burke 1945) – while accomplishing an aimed for doing is to engage in a skillful “performance” (Oakeshott 1991a). A performance is not merely an instinctive reaction to a situation and state of affairs, it also contains a desired for future state of affairs which is to be accomplished through the choice of action. This unites the “act” with the “purpose” of altering the “scene” (Burke 1945). Thus a performance is the active, purposive and performed connection between a current state of affairs and a future state of affairs. Action emits

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60 To be clear, human conduct is not a performance per se but an ideal type of the characteristics which all real live performances are examples of.

To repeat, engagement in self-disclosure and self-enactment connotes a language of performances. The language of performances is understood as relationally and historically constituted (Holt 2006). To perform requires training and “training always means an infusion of historically transmitted ideas” (Boas 1928/1986: 195). The relational constitution is enacted in a performance in the form of a co-constituted “practice” (Oakeshott 1991a). A single performance is an enactment of a practice, which puts the performance in relation to other performances and practices. This is how a performance gains its intelligibility and therefore the rudimentary conditions of language. It is recognized as doing this instead of that.

The action can be understood as a particular intent-in-action because it is an intelligible and recognizable performance – an act with the purpose of achieving a desired state of affairs. A practice “prescribes conditions for, but does not determine, the substantive choices and performances of agents” (Oakeshott 1991a: 55) Prior performances thus accumulate into knowledge about practices, which is utilized in subsequent performances (cf. Giddens 1984). Practices can be identified as sets of manners, customs, rules, obligations, standards, uses, and considerations which manifest relational considerations between the person and his inhabited world. An understanding of oneself in the world is inherent in any and all intelligible performances (Heidegger 1962/2008). Thus the recognition of the intent-in-action and the overall practice is the immediate context for understanding and assessing the quality of the performance.

Practices are learned and inherited from past performances constituting the social inheritance of a language community (see Holt 2006; Wenger 1998; Wittgenstein 1953; 2009).

“This so-called ‘social inheritance’ is an accumulation of human understandings and is composed of the moral and prudential achievements of numberless individuals expressed in terms of the rules and conditions which specify a multiplicity of particular practices. It is a collected, not a ‘collective’ achievement. It can be enjoyed only in being understood and understood only in virtue of having been learned, and it is explored and re-enacted in a reflective consciousness whenever any part of it is being used” (Oakeshott 1991a: 87; see also Dewey 2011; 2012).

In sum, action is a mode of language by being a language of performances. One context for these performances is the backdrop of more general practices and the culturally characteristic conduct they give rise to. Acts are understood through other acts, as words are understood through other words. Action is however also inextricably connected to purpose, agency, agent and scene (Burke 1945), and these unbreakable connections are communicated and expressed in the performance. In a performance one can for example discern certain considerations toward one’s surroundings and particular outcomes that are cared for. This caring is self-expressive and self-disclosing. This language of action thus postulates that all performances are performances of “mind” (Ryle 1949/2000) by seeking a heedful balance or pattern between “agent”, “act”, “agency”, “purpose” and “scene” (Burke 1945) in every performance that takes oneself from a current state of affairs to a desired state of affairs.
13.2.1 The relational ‘You and I’ as a foundation for communication

A relational approach is closely connected to a developmental approach to human capabilities and communication (Seligman 2018). This connection is utilized, for example, when infant research is used as a source of inspiration to inform clinical psychotherapeutic practice (Seligman 2018). This section describes on a general level why and how the relational and the developmental approaches are entwined, which essentially throws light on the process of historically transmitted ideas embedded in co-constructed conduct in and through human relationships. This section in other words sheds light on why and how relationships are seen as “the primary motivators and organizers of psychic life” and why it can be considered prudent to take the “dynamic transaction between people, rather than within individual minds” as “the primary context for theory building” (Seligman 2018: 83).

Humans are born and thus in effect thrown into a matrix of personal relationships (Macmurray 1960; Seligman 2018). Being alive in material terms means a physical body and movement. Size and superior development brings physical dominance or conversely, the infant’s size and undeveloped physique and mental capabilities make it dependent of others. A newborn human being is born with a deficit of instincts and capabilities to sustain life. It is the most obvious fact about the infant that it is helpless. The infant and later child is in dependence of another. The deficit in capability is offset by a nurturing relationship (Macmurray 1960; Seligman 2018).

Infants and therefore all persons come into being and survive by the act of nurturance and through provided security. The first months of childhood have shown to be of considerable influence later in life in sustaining and developing relationships (Seligman 2018). The child can be thought of as at the very least endowed with the rudimentary capability for communication of what feels ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and a will to do so. These communicational acts are attended to by the nurturing parent, who lends his foresight, know-how and reasoning to uphold the existence of the relationship and consequently the child. The child is brought up into a relationship where the intentions and rationality stem completely from the parent and to which the child learns to adapt to. They form a parent-child dyad.

The first knowledge the child gains is about the relationship and what is accomplished through it. The child through its almost total helplessness thus submits to a dominant and yet nurturing other and to his rationality of the person-world relation. All human beings are brought into a relationship in which there is a rationality at work to which the child through his unavoidable immaturity is naturally subservient to. The child’s wants, desires and eventually hopes are the first years of life secondary to the will, desire and intentions of the parent.

“All this may be summed up by saying that the unit of personal existence is not the individual, but two persons in personal relation; and that we are persons not by individual right, but in virtue of our relation to one another. The personal is constituted by personal relatedness. The unit of the personal is not the ‘I’, but the ‘You and I.’” (Macmurray 1960: 61)

There is thus a parent-child or provider-provided relational dyad which all infants are brought into. They are ‘socialized’ into a variant of an “asymmetric relationship” (Bateson 1972). The helplessness of the child defines the role of the parent, and by providing care for the child the parent accepts the dominant, responsible provider role of the parent. In this relationship the child is not entirely powerless because the child can communicate and the parent has prescribed to certain obligations such as feeding, comforting and cleaning. These obligations,
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which may or may not be put into law, but are nevertheless man-made considerations, show a particular rationality at work. The obligations of the parent are self-imposed instead of purely instinctual and beyond choice. Humans are born and brought into these patterns of relationships, where every human being has been subservient and been provided for. What the child gets is a satisfaction of material and tactual needs, but the child cannot contribute to the intent of how those satisfactions are met. The parent is the principal designer of what happens, how and when. It is the parent who imbues intelligence to the relationship by formulating its joint intents and actions. The parent designs and performs joint practices which satisfy certain life supporting and acquired desires of both parties within the relational dyad. The child learns to perform actions that contribute to joint intents before he has learned the rationalities that are embedded within them. The ingrained knowledge in action is foremost in the background and is brought to the fore only in explicit communication and in deliberation of self-chosen action.

As the child grows up, changes in the child-parent relationship are instigated. As the helplessness of the child begins to dwindle the child begins to form intents, articulate desired states in the world and form corresponding actions on his own. He is allowed and expected to do so (Erikson 1959/1994; Haley 1986). Individuality is gained through the resistance to the general Other of which the parent is the most significant exemplar (Macmurray 1957; 1960). The child’s self-identity is formed through noticing sameness and difference to others. These observations about the self cannot be made without the Other (Mead 1934/2015; Harré 1998). One cannot be tall, handsome, extrovert, polite without the Other being similar or different. The ‘I’ is what it is only by contrast to the ‘You’ (Macmurray 1960; see also Buber 2010). In the asymmetric relationship the ‘I’ is consistently separate and distinct from ‘You.’ In this way self-identity is relationally constituted (Giddens 1991; Mead 1934/2015).

Maturity is accomplished when the child can resist the will of the parent and choose, taking the significant ‘considerations’ into account and thus forming a new rationality and personal-world relation. The child can choose whether to go along with the joint intent and rationality formulated singlehandedly by the parent or to resist it to the degree of (often temporary) relational withdrawal. Maturity can be seen as the opposite to blind obedience (Kant 1784/2009; Milgram 1974/2009; Rogers 1961/2004). It becomes apparent that there are two ‘levels’ of communication at play (Bateson 1972). In the interaction setup the parent can be disgruntled with not being obliged whereas on a relational level and the relationship setup it can be a relief and proudness that the child has matured beyond the will of the parent.

The act of complete relational withdrawal is imbued with a sense of fear because breaking away from the relationship that has nurtured, provided and protected oneself is conceivably the most daring act possible in life (e.g. Macmurray 1960; Milgram 1974/2009). Breaking away from the parent-child relationship is a jump into the abyss. Most if not all the considerations the child has learned have been learned within the caring relationship. To break away from the relationship with intelligence is to have gained an understanding of life beyond the confines of that relationship in accordance with self-prescribed, self-determined, and self-justified considerations. That is, to use one’s own mind according to one’s personal understanding of the world. In sum, the mature self has grown into moral responsibility, i.e. a conscious moral agent. For a conscious and morally responsible agent withdrawal and non-compliance are true options in all intercourse. Adolescence and the rebellious attitude usually assigned to teenagers manifest a transformation of the relationship. When children and parents develop the asymmetric provider-provided relationship towards an egalitarian relationship model, there is a change in the constitution of the relationship (Bateson 1972; Haley 1986). The change in the
relationship is sometimes attributed to a transformation in the teenager, his rebellious attitude. The change is however in the relationship, which relationally requires changes by both parties of the relationship.

The dominance given by size or other characteristics such as authority and the according threat of violence may uphold asymmetric dominant-submissive relational pairs even in cases where submissiveness is not determined by natural constraints such as the stage of ontogenic development. Hobbes (1651/2008) developed his seminal treatise in the *Leviathan* on the logically coherent idea that without social institutions the outcome is war of all against all and the strongest will most likely prevailing. Taleb (2013) in a similar vein agrees that the impetus and main function of a nation-state is to maintain a rule of law in which agreements are made and upheld due to agreed upon obligations rather than the threat of violence. In a world where there are scores of mature morally responsible agents that can exert and assert their volition at will, besides war, agreement is the only possibility of organization and resolution of conflicting wills, desires and actions.

Therefore, any society as a prerequisite for its existence necessitates a regulation of dominance through agreement (see Harari 2014; Oakeshott 1991a). It is an arrangement of how disagreements are settled that forms a cornerstone of a civilized society (Goffman 1959; Harari 2014). In archaic mutual relationships regulation is accomplished through retributive acts. Bateson (1972), as an anthropologist studying tribes in Papua New Guinea noticed that even groups of people enact the same phenomenon of dominance and submission as individuals do in relationships. Similar capabilities and size between tribes may lead to a symmetric relationship, where for instance a hostile act from one nation is repaid by a retributive act of the same proportion. Even in considering a tribe, according to Bateson, it is untruthful to study it as an isolated unit.

There is no dearth of scholars who have noted that the institutionalization of authority structures through schools for children is paramount for keeping society united and thus similarly enculturated (e.g. Dewey 2011; Milgram 1974/2009; Foucault 1965; 1977). Children learn to obey teachers. Teachers are endowed with the authority to tell what is and is not correct knowledge and a fitting way of life. In this fashion every newcomer to society is indoctrinated into obeying authorities and disseminated an authorized and relatively uniform worldview. The relational understanding within that worldview is most significant. That authorities and past man-made agreements especially concerning authority should be respected and obliged. It can be argued that the most important lesson is to respect the surrounding social structure and to learn the rules of conduct for particular social positions, practices and contexts. In this manner younglings grow into a regulated “authority system” (Milgram 1974/2009) where the practices of dominance and submission are legitimized and normalized through historically enduring and actively upheld laws and rules of conduct.

In sum, persons are brought into relationships, they mature within and in relation to other relationships and they express themselves in and through relationships. A parent-child dyad in which the intents and rationality of the relationship is formed by the parent can be presumed to be a familiar form of interaction to everyone in society. In a civilized society the relationships that constitute authority systems are crucial for social conformity and in upholding the rule of law (see Oakeshott 1991a). To respect and live by the social authority systems and thus according to past man-made agreements about institutionalized relationships can be considered pivotal for successful life within society (see Foucault 1965; 1977; Goffman 1961b/1991; Milgram 1974/2009). These global understandings of relationships and human development, the
relational movement suggests, are enough to consider relationships and the acts within relationships as primary to intra-individual concerns for theory-development (e.g. Seligman 2018).

13.2.2 Symmetric and asymmetric relationships

Considered in more general terms, there are “asymmetric” or complementary, and “symmetric” or mutual relationships (Bateson 1972). The previous section suggests that a key component of these relationships is the formation of intent and a more encompassing rationality into the relationship. Berne’s (1964/2010) typology – which shall be expanded at the end of this chapter – suggests that there are three relational positions when considering the formation of intent and a rationale for action, and thus what is morally right: The position in which one may assert intentions (parent), the position in which one is subservient to intentions imposed by others (child) and finally, the position in which intentions are mutually negotiated (mature adult). The typology suggests that the exact form and features of a particular relationship may differ, but the underlying relationship structure stemming from the intentional stances of the participants remains intact. For example, parent-child, teacher-pupil, mentor-adept, domina-trix-slave, big brother-smaller brother, bourgeoisie-proletariat, supervisor-subordinate, king-subject, supreme court-regional court, are all examples of the asymmetric relationship structure. The dominant role is complemented by a submissive role, both of which define and enable each other. There cannot be a dominant role without a submissive one and the same is true in reverse. This means that the roles are relationally constituted.

The differences between the asymmetric relationships stem from the performances, practices and conduct within each relationship. Each and every relationship can be considered unique and providing alternatives to how to live in other relationships (Gergen 2009; Seligman 2018). In each relationship the manners, obligations and considerations may differ, but the relationship structure is arguably the same. It is important to notice that to ‘play’ or perform acts of submission without the presence of a dominant party in such cases requires its invention as a social construction. Thus, the invention of a dominant, nonphysical party is in a relational sense necessary to enable thoughts and acts of submission. From a relational perspective, the invention of deities, idols, God, Mother Nature, spirits, and the like can all be seen as inventions that expand the performative repertoire in the absence of a corporeal agent taking the dominant position (see Jaynes 1976/2000).

The same is true in reverse. Playing the part of a sports idol requires a fan, to act as a lord necessitates a subject, and to behave as rich requires the poor. For good or bad, class or any enacted power differences enable an expanded performative repertoire in intercourse. Without the complementary Other in the relationship the performance of submission or dominance is incomprehensible (Mead 1934/2015). In mutual relationships the relationship cannot be mutual without a submission to the implicitly negotiated rules of mature of respectful conduct which imbue the relationship with the feel of mutuality. Adult relationships are consequently subject to rules of conduct that enable both parties to engage each other on equal terms.

Symmetric relationships are based on equal terms – reciprocity that is of equal proportion. Equal terms do not mean that it is ‘good’ or ‘bad’, it is only a statement about the structure of the relationship. During the Cold War, The United States and the Soviet Union were in a symmetric and equal relationship, where one act of military supremacy was countered with an equally sized act of a similar kind (Gottman 2011; Watzlawick 1984; Watzlawick et al 1967). The nuclear arms race was the result. In Berne’s (1964/2010) language this is an instable or
escalating Parent-Parent dyad where each participant is trying to upend and dominate the other. It is a case where the other is not willfully taking the submissive role but instead communicates defiance with a symmetric response to acts of dominance.

If an act of dominance is not acted upon, quiescence in itself becomes the response, which is complementary and therefore often interpreted as submission. The symmetric relationships are in terms of colleague-colleague, teacher-teacher, brother-brother, king-king, slave-slave and so on. In these relationships one act of, say kindness, is symmetrically reciprocated in order to uphold the symmetric relationship. This form of relationship can be called economical (e.g. Schein 2009), which is not to be interpreted literally (cf. remunerative relationships in Etzioni 1975). It is merely a description of the reciprocal and proportionate relational dynamic in the relationship.

For common day-to-day communication to work it is necessary that at times someone suggests actions and others agree and act according to the suggested actions. One may call this “coordination” (Okhuyzen & Bechky 2009). If, however, this pattern of one decides and the other agrees is repeated systematically, then, the relationship (setup) becomes understood as asymmetric. This is why a mutual relationship is constituted on checks and balances of symmetric and asymmetric actions (Schein 2009). Equality is determined on the background of history. Equal relationships can at times give rise to interesting patterns of conduct. In a single encounter of a symmetric kind if someone instead of showing dominance ‘downplays’ themselves, then the other should ‘up’ them back to the same level or ‘downplay’ themselves as well (Goffman 1961a; 1963a). To keep the relationship balanced is the responsibility of both participants. It is therefore relatively accurate to describe the symmetric relationship as a kind of economics of social status (see Goffman 1967). Hobbes in 1651 commented on this relational characteristic as being the accrual of “honor” and “dishonor” through (in)appropriate action according to the tenets of the specific relational context.

The symmetric and asymmetric pairs that have been used as examples hitherto (e.g. teacher-teacher) are however already institutionalized forms of relationships. They are roles performed within certain professional practices and within specific contexts that give the performances some specificity. However, we do not yet have all of the necessary vocabulary to understand what an institutionalized form of a relationship means (we will come to this later in discussing deontic powers). Our current interest is to understand how such relationships are formed through the language of action. I will try to explain this by way of an extended example similarly to, for example, Searle (1995) and Elias (1998).

Take the example of meeting a human being from a distant culture never encountered before, perhaps similar to the Pirahâ in the Amazon rainforest. There is no shared vocal language to speak of, but that does not mean that there could not be successful communication. On the very first encounter, without a shared symbolic or vocal language, how do you communicate? If you are greeted with spears and hostile behavior, do you drop to your knees or take to your arms? If you are approached with curiosity and gifts, do you take the gifts and offer others in return, or take without reciprocating? Or turning the tables, do you approach the indigenous people with arms, gifts or bent knees? At any rate, the act-response pairs utilized are the form of communication. The memory of prior act-response pairs quickly becomes the institutionalized foundation or background for the relationship. If spears are met with more advanced weaponry, the latter always winning a conflict, after a couple of encounters the relationship probably turns rather quickly into an asymmetric relationship.
These action-dominant encounters are worth a more detailed analysis. For instance, in the case of getting greeted with spears and hostile behavior, how do you know that the behavior is hostile? Firstly, a hostile act upon a first encounter would not be all that surprising. Hobbes (1651/2008; see also Pinker 2011) articulated three rationalities for hostile behavior: to protect what you have, to diminish your enemy’s capability just to be sure that they won’t later take what you have, and to gain wealth through conquest. At any rate, shouting and waving spears in midair and other similar qualities of behavior and the carrying of a sharp object are sensibly assigned the meaning of hostile behavior. This requires past experience of different forms of behavior and the ability to read the situation for possible harm. Because a human being or an agent in other terms, is presumably commanding his bodily movements and therefore also the spear, it is assumed that there is an “intent-in-action” (Searle 1995).

The intent-in-action is what the person with the spear is ‘trying’ to do. He is trying to accomplish a deliberate transition from one state of affairs to a wished-for state of affairs. Not only that, if the spears point at them then a person can assume that the intent is at least in part directed at them. This can be ‘read’ from the direction of the shouting, gestures, gazes and also the spears. Therefore, there is something that the tribesmen ‘want’ from the person. Or more specifically they want the person to perform or do something so that there is a shift in the state of affairs. That ‘want’ is their intent. Moreover, the fact that the person hasn’t immediately been impaled by a spear is probably a strong message that the ones holding the spears have other wants and intents than the person’s immediate demise. That ‘something’ that the tribesmen want from the person is for him to perform a “function” (Searle 2009). Not only is the person to perform a function, but the person is conveyed a status in a newly founded relationship. The person’s status is that of performing the functions assigned by those holding the spears. By trying out different actions as a way to respond – that is, obedient responses in the form of performances to possible intents – one can begin to formulate a more careful reading of the intent and desired function (see Milgram 1974/2009; Powers 1973).

When the person’s action conforms to the intent it is probably greeted with a sign of calm and the opposite with increased aggression. In more general terms, the more resistance the person’s actions draw forth the less likely it is that the person is reading of the intent and the performance of the ‘correct’ function has been successful. To understand the word ‘correct’ one needs to understand that there are two different “conditions of satisfaction” inherent in understood communication (Searle 2009).61 According to Searle (2009) the necessary capacity for language is the ability to put conditions of satisfaction on conditions of satisfaction. This may sound nebulous but is in fact a general statement of the ability to have an intentional stance (e.g. desire) imposed upon a particular state of affairs. A state of affairs to be a particular state requires conformity to certain ‘conditions of satisfaction.’ To, for example, want to change that particular state is to put novel ‘condition of satisfaction’ upon that particular state of affairs. In short, conditions of satisfaction on conditions of satisfaction. That is, to formulate a path of action between one state of affairs to a desired state of affairs.

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61 Bateson (1972) in his theory perceives communication to have several levels. He approached language through the analogy with a patterned signal which can be punctuated in different intervals, to emphasize different levels of the signal. In his analysis the information about a relationship was metacommunication. I prefer Searle’s notion of language as Intentionality (I) plus a propositional (p) content (I(p)). This does not necessitate a discussion of language on several levels, which unfortunately gives the idea that language has an underlying depth structure, instead of being in plain sight. Moreover, Oakeshott’s terminology of practices, performances and conduct corresponds with amazing accuracy to that of Searle’s, which is not surprising if it is acknowledged that they discuss the same phenomenon using different vocabularies.
“Intentionality” denotes the overarching category of being purposefully directed at something which can be designated as a characteristic of conscious life-forms (Heidegger 1962/2008; Thompson 2010). Entities and things such as stones do not have intentionality and all life-forms do not necessarily have the same variety of intentionality (Tomasello & Carpenter 2007). Intentionality encompasses wants, desires, intents, beliefs, purposes and the like. The study of autism has showed that the ability to read other people’s minds – what Seligman (2018) refers to as “metacognition” – and thus to recognize intentionality, is in part a physiological faculty (Baron-Cohen 1997). Infants already have the ability to enter into and act intelligently within an as of yet ineffable relationship (Saarinen & Hämäläinen 2010). It is arguably one of the chief endowments that merit humans the title human being (Searle 1995).

But how is a ‘correct’ reading of a desired action accomplished? One is the apt reading of the communicated intentionality so that the appropriate function can be performed and thus signal that one has understood the intentionality with adequate satisfaction. One has in other words understood the difference between the current state and the desired state of the world in the communicational act. Thereby communication can be said to have been successful. This concerns the understanding of the intentional content of the communicational act.

A second way is to understand that the intent is unilaterally put in place within the relationship. This second ‘correct’ understanding is about the “condition of satisfaction” for the relationship. This conveys a status to each person participating in the relationship, which is in relation to the other in the relationship. The second condition of satisfaction in this case is that the relationship is asymmetrical. The person may not reciprocate with a similar measure, but he may and should complement the asymmetric relationship by assuming the status of a subjugated role and perform accordingly. This is the relational condition of satisfaction to which the person is to conform, the intent itself is in this case non-negotiable. Non-negotiability is enforced with other actions and in this example probably with the spears. It is to signal that the ones with the spears are the ones who have the power to assign joint or “collective intentionality” (Bratman 1992; Seale 1995; 2009) – mutually complementary performances.

The person’s assignment is to understand the communicated intents and through enacted performances show appropriate signs of obedience. Both are communicative actions within an asymmetric power-relationship. These powers can be considered deontic or made into being through agreement (Searle 2009). Put more plainly, they are mutually agreed upon rights and obligations. In the relationship the dominant takes on the right and obligation to form and communicate joint endeavors and assign relational roles. The submissive in turn agrees to the right and obligation to communicate submissiveness to the joint endeavors and to perform the assigned function in the relationship.

In time through trial and error a mutual and more complex understanding of the relationship can form. With even more time and practice a shared language or understanding based on past act-response pairs is enacted with increased ease. A language of action in the form of performances, practices and conduct takes mold. Practices based on past understandings are utilized to perform new practices. To put it differently, a shared language of action is formed through shared past experiences and trial and error. Through communication individual performances may become part of a larger collective endeavor (Searle 2009). Collective performances become sedimented into recognizable practices.

This language of action merely requires the ability to read the others’ intentionality and to respond to it in an intelligent and fitting fashion. The reading of one another’s actions and having an inside knowledge of past experiences of similar actions and situations enables an
elementary language equivalent to: “Sit down.” and “I will.” The difference is that intent-in-action shows the communication through enactment whereas uttered directives (sit down) and commissives (I will) communicate not what they are doing but what they are about to do in the immediate future.

Deliberate joint cooperation is born when one is able to act with intentionality and to fit one’s actions with the intentionality of others. A cycle of communication is formed in which both can monitor themselves and the other and how their actions correspond to the joint intentionality (Searle 1995; 2009). A characteristic of this joint intention is that it does not have to assume the same actions for all parties. The ones with the spears can have the intention to ‘I will guard and escort this intruder to the village council’ whereas the escorted person may think ‘I will walk in the direction where the spear points.’ The sum is that all are in collaboration walking in a specific direction even though their specific intents may differ to some extent. In other words, the enactment of a collective intentionality does not require a shared or exact understanding of that collective intentionality although it might make cooperation more effortless.

A practice does not necessitate that everyone acts the same or with similar intents or explicit knowledge of what the practice is. The collective intentionality is in this case reaffirmed and reinforced by the dominant party upon intentional and inadvertent transgressions by the submissive party. In the case of a symmetric relationship it would occur through a process of communicative performances reminiscent of negotiation.

The structure of particular relationships is of course not carved into stone. No practice is because it is based on learned action and language that keeps on molding itself with every performance. There is always a context in which the agreed upon relational obligations are valid and consequently enacted. All communication is context dependent (Wittgenstein 1953; see field-dependent in Toulmin 1958/2003). In the scenario of the native tribesmen and their spears, it could be that the proximity of the spear is a valid contextual marker when the familiar relationship structure is accepted and validated through corresponding action. Perhaps both the tribesmen and the person in that case would feel that if the spear would disappear then the relational “condition of satisfaction” is no longer valid or in other words becomes an invalid agreement, and thus no longer enacted upon. Or it might be in the person’s case the knowledge if there was a more lethal arsenal hidden somewhere which could in an instant turn the tables on the threat of violence. The contextual possibilities that can affect the ‘conditions of satisfaction’ of the relationship are in principle endless.

In some cases, perhaps there could be instances when there is symmetric treatment of one another, for instance, show of mutual respect. With time and accumulation of mutually enacted experiences of the relationship, the cues to when one is to enact the dominant, submissive or equal in relation to the other become habitual. For example, at campfire it could be acceptable to be friendly and show symmetric mutuality, but during walks one should enact or ‘play’ the relationship according to its prior dominant-submissive condition of satisfaction (see Goffman 1959).

Because the relationship and when it should be played out by both parties is based on the situation, this gives birth to the distinction between public and private sphere or in Goffman’s (1959) terms “in front” and “backstage.” In public sphere it is expected that everyone plays their ‘part’ or role whereas there can and usually are instances where the dominant party does not have an intentionality to direct the part of the submissive. That is to say, where a publicly subscribed practice is not in effect. These are considered the private sphere. Even in cases of symmetric relationships, the private sphere would be those instances where there is no
collective intentionality to organize performances and conduct. The private and public spheres are not dependent on physical obstacles such as enclosed private spaces but are more generally context dependent.

The compilation of contexts in which one assumes a dominant position, when a position of equality and when a position of submission in relation to other persons can be considered the foundation for the relational dynamic underlying a ‘role.’ In a social arrangement it is impossible for one to have a role without others having one as well. A role can be understood as an entire and encompassing social arrangement described from the point of view of a single person. One does not have a role unless it is validated by complementary acts from other involved parties in the arrangement. For example, in a situation where it is generally known that a particular person has the best know-how about for example hunting birds, in the situation when a tribe is hunting birds that person may be given the right and obligation to form collective intentionality and others chose to follow suit and oblige the relational understanding (see Sveiby 2011). In other words, the first person is given the right to lead and the others agree and obligate themselves to follow while hunting birds. In other situations, other compilations of relations and deontic powers might apply. It should however be noted that best know-how or anything of the kind does not ‘naturally’ lead to being given the right to form collective intentionality. The formation of collective intentionality is always a collective accomplishment in which every participant plays their role with its corresponding and contextually ascribed deontic powers. A social arrangement is consequently an institutionalized set of enacted relational positions and contexts according to which those relational positions are considered appropriate to be enacted. Deontic powers and institutionalization require accepted legitimacy (Giddens 1984; Suddaby & Greenwood 2005). From a relational standpoint a role is, consequently, derived from and understandable only in the light of the encompassing social arrangement constituted in past man-made agreements that are enacted in the present.

In sum, the formation of collective intentionality, in the relational structures of Parent-Child and Adult-Adult pairs and larger similarly formed constellations, coordinates complementary performances. Collective intentionality gives rise to “cooperation” (see Tomasello & Carpenter 2007; Tomasello & Vaish 2013). In cooperation there are two levels and their distinct conditions of satisfaction, one is the content level and the second is the relationship level. This is how coordinated action and social arrangements are born. When a relationship becomes sedimented and habitual it takes on properties that signal the presence of enduring deontic powers, that is, rights and obligations in the relationship which are relationally co-constituted. In institutionalized settings such as organizations and other authority systems, roles can be understood as a description of the surrounding relational matrix through the lens of the particular rights and obligations in each relationship. The above given extended example and relational process thus in practical terms depicts the evolution of an interaction setup to a relationship setup and onwards to an institutionalized organization setup.

13.2.3 The character and enactment of deontic powers within social arrangements

Searle has made an important observation that directly relates to the man-made character of actions within social institutions. According to Searle (2009) deontic powers – rights and

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62 It may be good to note that this description of the microfoundations (e.g. Felin et al. 2015) of interaction, relationship, and organization setups provides a “conceptual and analytical architecture” (McEvily et al. 2014: 335) that conjoins the informal and the formal organization. From a relational standpoint, the informal and the formal have a joint origin in the “patterns of interaction” (McEvily et al. 2014: 305), and this account provides one account of those patterns of interaction.
obligations to act in a certain way – are “desire-independent” reasons for action. Once there is an agreed upon relationship and corresponding forms of conduct in place enacted by persons into the form of a mutually agreed upon and enacted social arrangement, the agreement and the corresponding conduct cannot, according to Searle, be in a reductionistic manner traced to biological urges, desires, wants and the like. It can only be traced to the agreement.

The agreements and their correlates are “self-referential” (Searle 2009). Agreements exist only because it is agreed that they exist, and people show agreement about their existence by acting according to the existing agreement. In this account I use the term agreement synonymously with institution, which exists only if there is agreement that the institution exists and therefore the institution and the agreement of its existence cannot be separated. In contemporary society one cannot go without attachment to a gamut of established agreements, and experiencing some “commitment” (Drath et al. 2008) to their upkeep:

“The bonds that tie the individual to social entities of different sorts themselves exhibit common properties. Whether the entity is an ideology, a nation, a trade, a family, a person, or just a conversation, the individual’s involvement in it will have the same general features. He will find himself with obligations: some will be cold, entailing alternatives foregone, work to be done, service rendered, time put in, or money paid; some will be warm, requiring him to feel belongingness, identification, and emotional attachment. Involvement in a social entity, then, entails both a commitment and an attachment.” (Goffman 1961b/1991: 159, italics in original)

The agreements one is attached and committed to can be the reason for one’s conduct. Desire and will to act can stem from wanting to uphold an agreement (Searle 2009). For example, that there is such a thing as a nation-state is based on an agreement and not on the laws of nature. To want to defend and to be prepared to die for the sovereignty of one’s motherland can stem from the very fact of wanting or considering it one’s duty to uphold that institution, the existence of one’s country. It would be ludicrous to posit this desire as stemming from genes or biological instincts. Similarly, before duels became unpopular in Europe in the 19th century many people died defending their honor (see Elias 1998; Pinker 2011). An honor is also a social institution (Hobbes 1651/2008), which in this case gave rise to desires to act in a way that resulted in some people’s deaths.

Practices are institutions that can give rise to forms of self-disclosure and self-enactment that elicit wants and desires which make no sense beyond those practices. Someone might for example want to become the president of their nation meaning that the existence of the institution of the presidency can bring about particular and novel desires and motives for action. This aspect of desire-independence can however be masked by a social convention about how to respond to particular questions (see Bateson 1972; Wittgenstein 2009). One can be asked ‘why did you uphold or act according to that agreement’ and in such an instance there is often an implicit social convention not to say the obvious ‘because there was an agreement’, to avoid circularity. Thus, according to one common social convention a person can be asked ‘why’ about his actions until a naturalistic desire-level psychological explanation is manufactured. Once this is obtained then the questioning often stops, according to the convention. This convention does not however make this commonsense theory of action correct about where the motive for action came from. Wittgenstein (2009) was thus very prescient to advocate care and courage to stop asking and thus stop the answer at the appropriate level.
To put the matter differently, it is impossible to deduce deontic actions from naturalistic intentionality such as hunger, need for air, and the like. If one could, then natural causation would apply to persons in all instances and situations and consequently they would not by definition be moral agents who can choose differently (Kant 1784/2009). Using algebra as an analogy, the axiom of symmetry \((a=b \text{ and therefore } b=a)\) does not apply. That is to say, even if one were to postulate theoretical relationships from deontic acts to underlying urges, needs and wants as many notable social psychologists have done and theories postulate, those theoreticians and theories are not able to deduce specific deontic acts from those urges. The deontic acts elicit and require more information than the fulfillment of naturalistic needs postulate. For example, a question of this kind: ‘In that situation, why did you do that’ cannot with any precision be answered by an all-encompassing need such a need for security or relatedness (on these needs see e.g. Baumeister & Leary 1995; Deci et al. 2017; Maslow 1987). As discussed previously, in co-constructed scenes acceptable precision to this sort of question comes from understanding the relevant circumstances related to what is going on in the situation. On the level of actual situations and acts, the reasons for action are arguably based on an understanding of the setting rather than following biological urges or needs.

At any rate, that agreements can be “desire-independent” (Searle 2009) is not an entirely new suggestion. This is the chief conclusion from Milgram’s (1974/2009) experiments on obedience (see also Arendt 1977). Milgram’s series of experiments comprised over 1000 subjects in total with multiple variations in the experimental setting. In the original experiment a naïve subject was through a rigged lottery assigned the task of being the “teacher.” The teacher’s task was to push down levers to inflict electric shocks to a “learner” (an accomplice) if the learner answered incorrectly to posed questions by the teacher. The subjects were told the experiment concerned memory and learning. In the original mock setup, the voltage was increased incrementally with 15 volts with every incorrect answer up to 450 volts (level 30). The subject was given a 45 volts shock in the beginning of the experiment to give the illusion that the shocks were real. In case of disobedience, obedience was prompted with directives from the experimenter by saying “the experiment requires that you continue” and other either less or more forceful variations thereof. To prompt disobedience the learner shouted and grunted painfully at different voltages according to a precise protocol. At 150 volts the learner cried “Experimenter, get me out of here! I won’t be in the experiment any more! I refuse to go on!” At 180 volts “I can’t stand the pain!” An agonizing scream at 270 volts. And at 300 volts a desperate shout that he refuses to provide answers and thereon stays completely silent to the end of the experiment. To remind of these famous results, most often over two thirds continued to administer up to the lethal voltage of 450 volts according to the instructions of the experimenter.

Milgram controlled his experiment for aggression and the desire to inflict harm by making a small adjustment to the standard experiment. In one of several control experiments Milgram allowed subjects to choose for themselves what level of voltage to administer. Most stayed at the lowest three levels (15-45 volts). In another control experiment the experimenter, who gave the orders to continue with the experiment if a teacher showed hesitance, was absent from the room but reachable by phone. In this case many subjects disregarded the protocol of increasing voltages and lied about it to the experimenter. The reasonable conclusion Milgram makes is

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63 This is in some quarters countered with the imaginative account and the well-known analogy from biology; atoms, molecules and organs, that at a lower-level one cannot predict larger system-level effects. Searle’s (2009) argument is that this analogy is plain and simply wrong when it comes to the social world. In many cases the reasons for people’s actions are the agreements and ensuing deontic powers they enact. Arguably the diverse and often thick network of complementary deontic powers are an integral part of what makes the social organization into an organization (Podolny & Page 1998).
that people do not want to hurt others, but in the face of authority do so nonetheless because of the agreement they enter into at the outset of the experiment. That persons follow through their obligation and do their duty according to the agreement they have entered by their own volition. In other words, the obligation becomes the reason for action, just as Searle (2009) argues. In the presence of the experimenter the relational obligation was for most subjects the dominant reason for action overriding overt and implicit moral convictions. Afterwards in post experiment interviews some subjects were even proud of doing their duty to the very end, even if it required the administration of a lethal voltage in the name of science. Milgram summarizes what he learned from his series of experiments:

“The net result of this experience is the internalization of the social order – that is, internalizing the set of axioms by which social life is conducted. And the chief axiom is: do what the man in charge says. Just as we internalize grammatical rules, and can thus both understand and produce new sentences, so we internalize axiomatic rules of social life which enable us to fulfill social requirements in novel situations. In any hierarchy of rules, that which requires compliance to authority assumes a paramount position.” (Milgram 1974/2009: 138, italics in original)

In this experiment the subjects had agreed on the relational conditions of satisfaction and the duties that came with the agreement. The Milgram experiments can hence be seen as concerning extreme forms of conduct once an authority system is entered. Goffman (1961b/1991: 172) calls the cooperative contribution of required activities in accordance with explicit agreements as “primary adjustment.” In Goffman’s terms the Milgram experiments were illuminating about the extent and power of primary adjustment. However, according to Goffman, the agreements between an organization and a person go both ways, the organization is adjusted to the person as much as the person is adjusted to the organization. In this context, the important concept of “deontic powers” (Searle 2009) deserves some elaboration to be understood in full.

Isaiah Berlin’s (2013b) acclaimed essay *Two concepts of liberty* introduced a distinction between positive and negative freedom to give an overview of the history of the political debate about the relationship between the individual and society (however, see also Fromm 1941/1994). Positive freedom denotes “freedom to” and negative freedom means “freedom from” (Berlin 2013b). According to Berlin, the central question in political theory – which is in the history of philosophy and for all practical purposes an outgrowth of moral philosophy (Robin Letwin 1998) – concerns that of obligation and coercion and consequently that of positive and negative freedom. Berlin argues that many notable philosophers and political philosophy in general, have discussed the nature of the relationship between the individual and the state from these perspectives. In this relationship, the private autonomous sphere of the individual (negative freedom) and their rights to self-direction and self-mastery (positive freedom) are juxtaposed. According to Berlin, how these two freedoms are reconciled given their inherently “irreconcilable attitudes” (Berlin 2013b) is of cardinal importance in society.

Without delving into the depths of Berlin’s argument it is worth noticing what Berlin does not discuss in the essay. Berlin does not comment how in modern society positive and negative freedoms have been reconciled in a pluralistic fashion through established social roles and conventions (e.g. Goffman 1961b/1991). The institutionalization of occupations is one example. To become a police officer, a medical doctor, a fireman, the president of a nation, an electrical

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64 Emirbayer (1997) also notes that a relational view changes how freedom is perceived, and thus brings the issue to the forefront of relational analysis.
engineer, a fighter pilot, an accountant, all have different compositions of legitimized rights and obligations to what they should do and are authorized to do, and not to do in the ‘role’ of their profession (e.g. Searle 1995; 2009).

The president of a nation may not legitimately do the same acts as an electrician, and the same is true inversely. The medical doctor (MD), as another example, is free from control and surveillance to practice her profession as long as there are no incidents of malpractice and the MD has her accreditation in order stemming from the legitimate educational background. Only an MD may write prescriptions for drugs, but also this legalized practice is regulated through terms and conditions. An MD may not manufacture drugs.

In more general terms, person X is authorized to or has the right to do Y in the context C (Searle 2009). This is a deontic power. The term C may take on highly specific forms in the form of specific terms and conditions. Goffman (1961b/1991: 171, for example, has noted that explicit agreements are valid only under “required conditions”, which take into account the standards of welfare associated with the occupation. Conditions may however also work the other way around, that a person is obliged to step in under certain conditions. For example, in case of an accident or medical emergency an MD has the obligation to step forward. Again, person X is obligated to do Y in context C. Or in the case of the accountant, who has the positive freedom of access to privileged information, has as an accountant the obligation to follow accounting rules and practices which for instance inhibit spreading of sensitive information. In this manner every profession and position in a social arrangement has legitimized and regulated deontic powers.

The modern-day society has managed to construct an amalgam of different social roles with their corresponding compilation of deontic powers. The duties within organizations are probably more fluid and often agreed upon or assigned on a case by case basis. Obligations can be understood as negative powers whereas rights can be described as positive powers. It is general knowledge that in a developed society positive freedoms and therefore positive deontic powers are enabled through choice of profession, economic means, education and career advancement and restricted through laws, agreements, customs and traditions. Negative freedoms and correspondingly negative deontic powers similarly depend on profession and not only the individual-state relationship as often is the unit of analysis in political theory (see e.g. Giddens 1984). In a limited and shared world, autonomy in the form of ‘freedom from’ can most likely be granted only if people act responsibly. That is to say, according to their obligations as citizens of the limited and shared world. According to Goffman (1961b/1991), any set of formal obligations and agreements brings with it a set of informal expectations which are not explicitly mentioned:

“In agreeing about what they owe and do not owe each other, the parties tacitly agree about the general validity of contractual rights and obligations, the various conditions for invalidation, and the legitimacy of types of sanction against breaking one’s contract; the contracting parties also tacitly agree as to their legal competency, their good faith, and the limits to which trustworthy contractees ought to be trusted. In agreeing to give up certain things and hold back others, the individual tacitly agrees that he is the kind of person who has these sorts of things to give up and hold back, and that he is the kind of person who considers it legitimate to enter into a contract regarding these matters. In short, to enter into a contract is to assume that one is a person of a given character and being.” (Goffman 1961b/1991: 159-160)
In a practical example, career athletes can have mandatory doping tests where their negative freedom is more limited through negative deontic powers (obligations) than in other professions. Complete ‘freedom from’ is impossible in a society because all have assigned obligations. The amount of negative deontic powers can vary enormously between occupations and contexts such as in restaurants, shops, meetings, production lines, and airplanes. Perceived through the lens of occupations and the concept of ‘safety’, incalculable amount of cases, contexts and occupations can be fingered as where the lack of negative freedom is not straightforwardly a sign of oppression by the state but, for example, a sign of tightly coupled “high-reliability organizations” (Weick & Roberts 1993). Consequently, lack of autonomy or equivalently a mountain of obligations is not unequivocally lamentable but can be a sign of a tightly coupled organization. To summarize, civic and personal relationships are constituted by formal and informal agreements. The formal agreements make sense and exist only if they are enacted and affect all involved parties with either rights or obligations in the situated life of a social arrangement (Goffman 1961b; Searle 2009). Assigned duties would thus seem to be the hallmark of deliberately coordinated cooperation or organizations for short.

The case of positive deontic powers or positive freedom is by far the more problematic one, according to Hobbes, Searle and Berlin. Hobbes (1651/2008) landmark book the Leviathan is an outgrowth of the idea that unrestricted positive freedoms results in everyone having the right to transgress other’s rights. Goffman (1961b/1991) refers to this form of action as “private coercion” in which the strongest rule. It is a state of war of all against all. According to Searle (2009), universal positive deontic powers based on an encompassing category that subsumes all persons, situations and times, for example universal human rights, does not really make sense.

Searle is very perceptive in putting all deontic powers in relation to situations and other people. It is all too easy to think of instances where any positive power could impinge upon a negative freedom. For example, freedom of speech can impinge upon a person’s freedom to not listen. And freedom of speech can be restricted. For example, uttering ‘bomb’ or ‘Heil Hitler’ in the wrong context can be punishable by law. Searle argues that positive deontic powers if truly enacted come hand in hand with negative ones. That if person A has the right to X, then person B has an obligation not to interfere while person A does X. This makes issuing of universal positive deontic powers impossible, according to Searle.

According to Berlin, and to which Searle also comes to, assertions about the right to positive freedom have historically built their argument on an underlying view of human nature. This is very interesting given the prior conclusion that agreements cannot be traced to a biological level, and nonetheless positive freedom is historically argued based on human nature. That it is only human to do such acts and therefore people should have the right to do it. This is of consequence considering wellbeing theory. Historically, the most forceful arguments for improving wellbeing in society have been efficiency and economic utility (Danna & Griffin 1999; C. Wright Mills 1959/2000).

More recently, the argument has turned back to the politically loaded discussion of human nature (Goffman 1961b/1991; McGregor 1960/2006; Schein 1992). For instance, that it is in people’s nature to want or need certain positive freedoms (e.g. Deci & Ryan 2000; Deci et al. 2017; Maslow 1971; 1987). This is how wellbeing discourse is still in all likelihood used to influence policy and everyday organizing, by arguing that people should have certain freedoms because it is in their nature and wellbeing to have these deontic rights (see Goffman 1961b: 159 ff). Equivalently, not to have such positive freedoms can be argued to diminish them as human
beings and, for instance, turn them into extensions of machinery (Foucault 1977; Giddens & Held 1982; Marcuse 1964/2002).

How arguments for positive deontic powers are formed is however distinct from their historical development in society. The interconnections between positive and negative freedoms in organizations might be similar to societies, that is, more of an accrual of rights and obligations based on corrective actions instigated by happenstance and unplanned historical development (Robin Letwin 1998). I believe this sort of development to be familiar to most. In these cases, rights and obligations often come hand in hand or in some cases even retrospectively. Arguably extant positive rights in organizations do not stem from an understanding of human nature, instead they are well-known to be of historic and man-made origins (Oakeshott 1991a).

For example, a manager may have the right to assign bonuses to his team, but in most cases this is also an obligation to perform the same action. Because positive deontic powers are usually assigned with obligations and other terms and conditions related to the specifics of the situation, with the development of a social arrangement there may be an inevitable trend towards a strangling ‘bureaucracy’, to use the term in the colloquial sense (Kärreman et al. 2002). One obligation for example in the form of a role or position can consists of a multitude of concrete obligations. Furthermore, new obligations can be incorporated after the fact with past obligations seldom explicitly withdrawn. Becoming a supervisor and the development of supervisory duties is a case in point.

A social arrangement is probably not developed by declaring that a member of that arrangement has the right to this and that, but mostly through obligations to certain activities. It could be argued that the sophistication of an organization is developed through a network of particular duties and thus obligations that are organized to accomplish organizational ends. This is straightforwardly tied to the fact that in any situation a person can ask ‘What are the valid and significant agreements that should be taken into account in this situation.’ A person can perform intelligently in that particular setting by having an intricate understanding of those agreements (Goffman 1961b).

Searle (2009) has astutely recognized that the assigned positive freedoms we have in society live with the times. Duties and rights are in other words historically situated. For example, with the rise and proliferation of the internet Parliament has given all citizens of Finland the right to have a working internet connection regardless of where they live. As another example, given that the internet never forgets, what you put there stays there, people have recently also been given the right to be forgotten. In these cases, it would seem that the underlying rationale for positive deontic powers comes from the right to be a part of society and humane ethics. A misconduct uploaded on the internet can result in ongoing and thus disproportionate social punishment through continuous shaming or ridicule. Freedom from unauthorized and disproportionate social punishment, seems to require assignment of new rights. Other positive rights such as the right to education, right to safety, right to exercise a self-chosen religion, right to equal opportunity all seem as detailed rights that actually give the right to be a part of society. It is the assignment of rights into a positive capability associated with citizenship and a man-made society (Searle 2009). It is conceivable that these rights do not stem from an understanding of human nature, but from the development of the ongoing society (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b).

The constellation of granted freedoms and how they are enforced or withheld for the least able is, as Dostoevsky famously suggested, an apt measure of development of a constructed society. Rorty has in a similar vein argued that the last couple of centuries in political
philosophy has not managed to add much to J.S. Mill’s assertion, that the function of governments can be summarized into “optimizing the balance between leaving people’s private lives alone and preventing suffering” (Rorty 1989: 63). Rorty elaborates on his view by stating that “the point of social organization is to let everybody have a chance at self-creation to the best of his or her abilities, and that that goal requires, besides peace and wealth, the standard ‘bourgeois freedoms’” (Rorty 1989: 84).

Rorty (1989) also defends Berlin’s view, that there is no one eternally right solution to how the negative and positive freedoms should be combined. Rorty draws on the private and personal philosophies (cf. public and political) of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida and others to argue, that the freedoms are not only instituted and assigned on the level of government, but also partly created on a personal level:

“Autonomy is not something which all human beings have within them and which society can release by ceasing to repress them. It is something which certain particular human beings hope to attain by self-creation, and which a few actually do.” (Rorty 1989: 65)

This means that the relationship between the agent and the scene of action is a two-way street. There are both explicit and undisclosed agent-governed and scene-governed freedoms inherent to every scene of action. The scene can impose duties and rights on an agent, but an agent also has the creativity to find and craft new freedoms within the local scene of action. The Nobel laureate in economics, Edmund Phelps (2006; 2017), refers to the man-made development of society especially though bottom-up discovered opportunities and freedoms as “indigenous innovation” which gives rise to economic “dynamism” that he argues has recently been stagnating in developed economies. Phelps (2017: 26) posits that the vital ingredients of dynamism are “individualism, vitalism, and expressionism.” It is worth taking note that these values arose to prominence during Romanticism (Berlin 2000). That is to say, with the paths of thought that privileges self-creation, expression, and action where freedoms are created and grasped instead of merely assigned seems to be crucial in the functioning of the created society.

To summarize, actions are imbued with an implicit language that conveys an understanding of the local social setting and its matrix of relationships. The social setting can be understood as constituted by the rights and obligations in those relationships and in different recurring situations. Acts disclose information about the scene and about the agent and his deontic powers within that scene. There is knowledge-in-action, important information hidden within the act concerning agreed upon and mutually upheld deontic powers like duties and other rights and obligations. An agent nonetheless always has some measure of agency and self-created freedoms in any scene (Alinsky 1971; de Certeau 1974/2011; Phelps 2017; Rorty 1989).

By way of enacted deontic powers, the act thus discloses information about the act-scene, agent-act, agent-scene, and agency-act ratios. Through agreements especially concerning duties and other combinations of positive and negative freedoms persons organize their actions and finetune coordination in organizations. This both enables and constrains routine performances (Giddens 1984). The sheer number, variety and ease by which agreements are arguably upheld, integrated, constituted and improvised every day in novel actions and continuous conduct shows the processes of mutual coordination, learning and organizing (see Okhuysen & Bechky 2009; Orlikowski 2002; Schon 1984).
Although implicit agreements constitutive of joint coordination can be accomplished through trial and error in the above discussed fashion, a more efficient way is to articulate at least some explicit agreements from the outset of the relationship. To swiftly constitute and enact well-developed relationships requires the use of prior knowledge structures implicit in a shared language. Past and other relationships in the surrounding relational matrix are used to form new ones (Gergen 2009). Next we shall look at how this is enabled and expedited through language as a mode of action.

13.3 Language as a mode of action

Language was for a long time viewed in a Cartesian sense as a form of representation of the outer world – a mirror of nature (Janik & Toulmin 1973/1996; Rorty 1979/2009; Toulmin 1990; 2003). Despite the fact that at least Hobbes (1651/2008) had early on argued that language is used for communication in state formation instead of mirroring, and the emphasis on self-expression that arose during and before Romanticism, only in the past century how language is used became a focus of interest. For example, the acclaimed philosopher and famously lucid writer and Nobel laureate Bertrand Russell (1912/2018) was still at the turn of the century engulfed with questions concerning the mirroring-point of view, whereas his student Wittgenstein (1953; see also Janik & Toulmin 1996) turned to the creative and situated uses of language. In general terms philosophers noticed that language is not limited to only description, but one can do things with it, or more accurately, perform acts through vocalized use of language (Searle 1995; Toulmin 1958/2003; Wittgenstein 1953). For example, an order such as ‘Go get me a glass of water’ is not a description of the world that can be true or false, but a directive speech act that is followed by an expectation of action corresponding to the given order. It should be self-evident that this point of view that delves into the constructive and directive capabilities of language is crucial for understanding history-making and thus also management.

In speech acts that order or direct another person, the two previously introduced “conditions of satisfaction” (Searle 2009) are still present (see also Bateson 1972). One concerns the relationship and thus the relational context of the speech act and the second concerns the content of the speech act. First, that the relationship is of the kind that the one giving an order can in fact give an order to someone who is obliged to fulfill that order given by that specific person. In Searle’s terms, it is a condition of satisfaction about the relational context C for the speech act of an order. And secondly, that the order has its inherent conditions of satisfaction meaning that the glass of water should probably be fetched within a near future, be at least a couple of deciliters of water, be within a range of an expected temperature, be from the tap and not bottled, be untampered in a clean glass, and so on. The second condition of satisfaction is in relation to the content of the order. Language can in other words be used as performative acts which in our everyday life easily goes unnoticed because of its transparent or self-evident character. One should also take note of how much implicit information or taken-for-granted assumptions are inherent in even the shortest of orders both about the relationship and the conditions of satisfaction for fulfilling the order in an expected manner.

To understand the full gravity of what performative speech acts enable and how, it is illuminating to contrast an order to the example above with the Pirahâ where communication is

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65 Without diminishing the unique contributions of J. L. Austin (1911-1960) I draw foremost on Wittgenstein and his later disciples in this discussion.
accomplished through sequences of enactments. In the above example the communication works only if both parties are present at all times. The asymmetric dominant-submissive relationship is upheld through the presence of the spear and the intentionality of the dominant party can be understood only through enacted trials and errors, where the dominant party must be present to correct errors. The desired future state of affairs is difficult to communicate merely through action. With a joint language such as English that can be used to communicate the intentionality (‘Go get me’) and the institutionalized conditions of satisfaction within language use (‘a glass of water’) the same can be accomplished with less effort. The same result can be accomplished without time consuming rounds of trial and error where one party actively needs to enforce the fulfillment of all conditions of satisfaction. Language is itself institutionalized through past uses of language, which have in turn given the use of words and sentences relatively stable institutionalized meanings within particular settings (e.g. Wittgenstein 1953; Searle 1995; 2009).

Put succinctly, there is an understanding of the world or “form of life” embedded within language which gives it its understandability and efficiency (Wittgenstein 1953). A ‘glass of water’ is radically under-defined as to what it is; ‘background’ knowledge is needed to understand even the simplest of speech acts. These embedded meanings as fragments of world-understanding and the act-world relation can be and are employed to effectively communicate a call for a specific action, for example an order. Moreover, once a speech act such as an order has been performed, the order-giver does not have to be present during the enactment of the order. If the conditions of satisfaction are clear, mutually agreed upon and understood, then the order-taker will be able to perform the order without hesitation and return with a glass of water according to institutionalized expectations (norms or conditions of satisfaction) of what getting a glass of water comprises of.

Speaking strictly about the organizing capability of an order, an order is an effective means of communicating collective intentionality that enables the order-giver to free himself from the time-consuming real-time supervision of the ordered action. The order-giver is only required to, in time, to respond to what extent the order-receiver has been able to fulfill the conditions of satisfaction of the order. In other words, the order frees the order-giver to deal with other probably more pressing issues and the desired task nonetheless gets done by virtue of successful communication and successful performance of the order.

In the case of a simple order, collective intentionality is established by an order-taker assuming the formulated intentionality of an order-giver. It should be noted that the collective intentionality inherent in an order does not have to be the fulfillment of the desires and wants of the order-giver, it can be subordinated to a more encompassing collective intentionality like a “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993). For example, ‘Give this to John when you see him’ could be a case of where the order is not given to satisfy the personal desires of the order-giver, but to satisfy an obligation of the order-giver based on a more encompassing collective intentionality (e.g. ‘John needs this to do X and X is important for Y and Y to Z and X and so on’).

From the perspective of the order-taker, the situation of getting an order looks a bit different. Firstly, the order-taker has to consider if the order concerns him, that is, if there is a “standing agreement” (Searle 2009) like an employment contract that defines the context in which it is given, by whom it is given, and that the content of the order conforms to the standing agreement meaning that the person has already committed to obliging the order. Scrutinizing the relational conditions of satisfaction means to analyze if the order is given in accordance with the prevalent “authority system” (Milgram 1974/2009).
Given the content and situational context of the order, the order-taker should be able to understand the situation as of the kind in which the relational conditions of satisfaction are met. That is, to be able to understand that in that instance oneself is the order-taker and the one giving the order is an order-giver and that the speech act was in fact a legitimate order in that relational setting. If this is the case, then the order-taker perceives himself as having the duty to fulfill the order. This is not a result of in-depth algorithmic or robotic reflection (see Mills 1959/2000) or instinctual behavior based on dominance but instead concerns recognizing a speech act as a legitimate performance within a relational matrix of institutionalized deontic powers. The order-taker does not have to like it, want it or desire to serve the order-giver, but nonetheless wields his entire being to satisfy the order because he considers it a duty stemming from the standing agreement (e.g. employment contract) that puts the order-taker as a subordinate to the prevalent authority system.

Depending on the institutional, i.e. historical familiarity of the order or more specifically lack of, the order-taker may need specifications about the conditions of satisfaction, or in other words, the intentionality of the order. One should in this context remember that the conditions of satisfaction that concern the content of the order thus concern the intended sought-after state of affairs. Understanding the intent and its conditions of satisfaction enables the order-taker to fulfill the order according to the uttered intent or will of the order-giver even if it requires improvisation and tackling unforeseen circumstances (see Orlikowski 2002; Weick 1989).

During the completion of the order, the order-taker can monitor himself and the outcome compared to the communicated conditions of satisfaction and its relevant background knowledge. He forms his own feedback process (Powers 1973). Because the monitoring is done by him and in the absence of the order-giver, the will or intent of the order-giver is effectively present in the reflective process or “reflection-in-action” (Schon 1984; see also Yanow & Tsoukas 2009) even though the actual person is not. The order-taker has incorporated the ‘mind’ of the order-giver by being a carrier of more than one’s own intentionality. This of course requires the use of memory, aptly showing how memory and the use of “survivals” (Oakeshott 1999) is a necessary ingredient in all more sophisticated forms of social arrangements (Boas 1928/1986; Giddens 1984). Thus, through a successful communicative act where conditions of satisfaction have been communicated, understood and accepted, the mind of one person can become the mind of two or more, a “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993), which can be taken as an incredible communicational achievement. Persons can share and accomplish the ‘mind’ of another through the formation of “collective intentionality” (Bratman 1992; Searle 1995; 2009). This process and concomitant relational understanding thus depict how an order functions within a relational setting.

The simplest form of collective intentionality, which is a *sine qua non* for division of labor to be possible, is that of other people taking orders or assuming the intentionality or “endeavour” given by a single person (e.g. Hobbes 1651/2008). In this case it is a single person who decides what the collective intentionality is. The person decides what the distinct assignments are and the joint purpose and thus the desired state of affairs. In more sophisticated organizational forms of how collective intentionality is formed there may not be a single person who decides what is done and how. In these cases, there are nonetheless agreed upon relational conditions of satisfaction to how collective intentionality is formed. It is in other words not a submission to a single person but to a practice or set of more or less implicit and institutionalized ‘rules’ of
negotiation (see Giddens 1984; Suddaby & Greenwood 2005), as for instance in a team. To be more precise, it is submission to conditions of satisfaction on how language is used collectively and to the relational conditions of satisfaction that describe how collective intentionality is formed in such a setting. If these conditions are met, then it is most likely clear to the participants that there is a collective intentionality.

To repeat, the achievement of collective intentionality requires, at the very least, the fulfillment of relational conditions of satisfaction. These may and probably do differ depending on the context. The relational conditions of satisfaction, which are not set in stone, determine the conditions of satisfaction for speech acts within the relational figuration (e.g. Goffman 1961a; 1961b; 1967). For example, person A giving an order to person B in context X may be illegitimate or unauthorized from the relational point of view while still fulfilling the content-related conditions of satisfaction of understandability of the performed speech act. Both forms of conditions need to be met in order for successful communication and organizing to occur.

To go deeper into the performative potential of language, it is fitting to take a closer look at speech acts. According to Searle (1995; 2009; see also Quinn & Dutton 2005), there are five categories of speech acts:

1. Assertives (statements, descriptions, assertions etc.)
2. Directives (orders, commands, requests, instructions, advice, suggestions, questions etc.)
3. Commissives (promises, commitments, vows, pledges, offers etc.)
4. Expressives (apologies, thanks, congratulations, sentiments, emotions, etc.)
5. Declarations (the making of constitutive facts)

To understand the character of each and every one of these forms of speech acts, it is helpful to introduce the concept of “direction of fit” (Searle 2009). The typical relationship between mind and the world is that mind, through language, attempts to ‘represent’ or mirror the world. In this case, the direction of fit is so that the mind has the ‘responsibility’ to fit the world, or mind-to-world direction of fit for short. The opposite is that of intentions in the mind. There is an intent on how the world should be, a desired state of affairs. Here the direction of fit is world-to-mind, meaning that the world in a sense has the responsibility to fit the mind. Intentionality sets conditions of satisfaction which are to be satisfied through later action. Assertives have a mind-to-world direction of fit. Directives and Commissives have a world-to-mind direction of fit. Expressives have a “presupposed fit” with the world where the fit is of neither mind-to-world or world-to-mind (Searle 2009); Expressives are inherently creative acts in character. Declarations on the other hand have both directions of fit. A declaration is a constitutive act which puts in effect a standing institution or agreement in the inhabited world (Searle 1995; 2009).

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66 Intelligent collective conduct can be described as rule-bound, but the rules should not be understood as propositions which in full describe the form of intelligent collective conduct. That is to say, the reduction of conduct to implicit rules devoid of its context to the surrounding world and other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad can be problematic and inaccurate as to how history-making works. For a more in-depth discussion about the use of the word rule in this fashion see Winch (1958/2007).

67 This concept is helpful for a Cartesian language user in order to understand the notion of intentionality, but once it is understood, it should be clear that the concept of “direction of fit” in itself propagates the Cartesian dualism. It is a ‘scaffolding’ concept, not to be taken literally. In this study we most often use the term “mind” in reference to intelligent and situated conduct in which the dramatistic coordinates are not reduced into the agent (e.g. Ryle 1949/2000).
Assertives, Directives, and Commissives are so common in day-to-day language use that they seldom need further description. Assertives are what is generally regarded as information about the world which is more or less accurate. This ‘more or less’ is the reason Assertives are at times referred to as perceptions about the world instead of facts about the world. The intentional state of beliefs corresponds with Assertives. That is to say, Assertives are linguistic expressions of world-understanding. Directives and Commissives usually go hand in hand because an order from one person is responded with a commitment to the order by another. Both Directives and Commissives refer to accomplishing a change in a state of affairs in the world so that it corresponds to certain conditions of satisfaction. The intentional state of desire and others of similar kind correspond with Directives and intents with Commissives.

Expressives refer to the expressing of attitudes and feelings that are in most cases presumed to be extant states of affairs. An interesting facet of these speech acts is that they are not available to anyone else for verification in the same way as the surrounding world is. This category of speech acts – such as ‘I am in pain’, ‘I am hungry’, ‘I feel saddened by...’, and ‘I am happy for you...’ – is so intriguing that it received the interest of Wittgenstein (1953) and special attention from Searle (1995) as well. Wittgenstein’s famous question referred to knowledge about emotions: How do I know that the ‘pain’ I feel is similar to the ‘pain’ you feel, or more exactly, how can I know that we use the term ‘pain’ similarly? Today someone might answer “mirror neurons” (Iacoboni 2009; Seligman 2018), which might solve the problem to some extent, but the general idea remains that linguistically emotions and feelings are offered as factual states of affairs. We will return to feelings and emotions and their connection to Expressives and render a more detailed discussion of their use in the next chapter on interactional wellbeing.

Declarations have both directions of fit and therefore represent changes in institutional states of affairs (Searle 2009). For example, ‘I declare you husband and wife’, ‘This is our strategy’, and ‘This is my property.’ Declarations are constitutive of the inhabited world whereas regulative agreements such as ‘Drive on the right side of the road’, ‘It is prohibited to talk about X’ regulate but do not constitute new institutions in the inhabited world (Searle 2009). Declarations put in place standing agreements of legitimate deontic powers. They make an X into an institution Y and the difference is that the institution conveys deontic powers with it. Searle (1995; 2009) calls this the assignment of “status functions.” Consequently, Declarations are more specifically “status function declarations.”

According to Searle the general recipe to all declarations is of this kind: X counts as Y in C. X is the object, Y is the institution and C is the context. In the case of marriage, X is husband and wife, Y is marriage and C is the legitimate context for performing a marriage ceremony. Entering a marriage conveys certain obligations and rights to both parties entering the institution. It is important to note that if the context is not of the kind where a specific declaration can be performed, then the utterance of “now X is Y” does not count. The conditions of satisfaction for performing a declaration are based on the context C. In the case of marriage, the ceremony has to be performed by an authorized person, the place can be restricted to a church, there may have to be witnesses, a valid marriage license, both parties entering the marriage may need to be fully conscious and so forth.

The complicated and nested character of the inhabited world becomes apparent in this example. A church is an institutionalized building, the authorized person is perhaps an institutionalized priest, a marriage license is a marriage license only if it is granted by an institutionalized authority such as a magistrate. Without these the uttered words ‘I pronounce you man and wife’ do not establish a new replication of the institution of marriage. Institutions are built
on top of institutions. According to Searle, that X counts as Y in C is a recipe for all agreements and institutions such as money, rules, words, laws, contracts and the like.

Institutions can form hierarchies of institutions. An institution can be part of the C for another institution or it can be deliberately constructed on other Ys. The consequence of this is that a ground level institution can cause a systemic collapse of other institutions. The Soviet Union is a case in point. If all the people in the world would suddenly stop agreeing that nation-states exist, it would be utterly impossible to predict which other institutions would also lose their legitimacy. Probably most related to property, money, at least political occupations, legal contracts etc. Contractual institutions are interconnected to an astounding degree.\(^{68}\)

Searle (1995) as an adamant advocate of an objective external reality claims that "X counts as Y" shows that almost all human institutions (Y) are grounded in material objects (X) and therefore the inhabited world is built on top of a physical reality instead of constituting a second or third world or 43rd world separate from physical existence. Searle (2009) does however acknowledge that there can be “freestanding Y terms” that are systemic fallouts of multiple hierarchically and contextually interconnected and jointly functioning institutions. Examples of this could be recession, gender discrimination, tax loopholes etc. These do not have to be deliberately agreed upon institutions that exist by deliberate design, but some institutions can stem from a complicated intertwining of institutions and give rise to emergent and unintended consequences (Merton 1936). These are the freestanding Y terms. In any case, the inhabited world inclusive of deontic powers is in other words not an enclosed unit separated into individual minds from external reality but is so to say ‘built into’ a commonsensical and joint understanding of the surrounding social arrangement. All the Xs, Ys and Cs are in the same inhabited world, which is susceptible for re-defining speech acts.

A central tenet of the relational movement is that mind cannot be separated from its environment (Bateson 1972; Ryle 1949/2000), and in the case of language that the use of language cannot be separated from its local context (Wittgenstein 1953). According to Searle (2009) common language use becomes impossible if the surrounding world is not taken for granted and assumed available for all. The local world needs to be assumed as relevant background knowledge available to all involved parties. To use Searle’s (1995) concepts, agreed upon institutional facts (agreements) are ontologically subjective, they exist only through collective agreement and are not observer-independent but observer-relative.

Institutional facts such as marriage and money are however epistemically objective. The features that the institutional facts convey, its deontic powers, are socially constituted facts that can be observed independently without subscribing to the collective agreement. This is of consequence because ‘ontologically subjective yet epistemically objective’ in essence describes the constitution of cultures, a constructed social world, a social arrangement and “objective pluralism” as described by Berlin (2013a). It is distinct from mere subjectivism or relativism. As Vico and Herder argued, the constitution of cultures and people’s ways of life is inherent in their language use.

A characteristic of speech acts is that they can be performed with different measures of “illocutionary force”, a term originating from J.L. Austin (Searle 1995; 2009). A Directive can, for example, be given with a force ranging from suggestive to polite to assertive and finally to an all-out order or threat. According to Toulmin (1958/2003) the force of a speech act can be

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\(^{68}\) This has been recently noticed in the financial sector with the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Banks and their chief instruments of bonds, loans, insurance and stocks in essence operate on trust. If this trust collapses, then the institutional existence of a bank is threatened. It is common knowledge that in recent years much efforts have been put into building trust in the financial sector in Europe and globally. The same is true of political institutions such as the EU.
field-invariant whereas the criteria for its assessment is necessarily field-dependent.\textsuperscript{69} The wanted illocutionary effect, the content the speech act conveys, may stay the same but the forcefulness of the utterance may differ depending on how it is put forth. The common pleasantries of ‘Could you’ ‘Would it be possible’, ‘May I’ and so on, are ways of downplaying the force of the utterance. ‘Could you please pass me the salt’ is in relational terms different from ‘Pass me the salt’ (cf. Pinker 2007).

Depending on the relational conditions of satisfaction, different degrees of illocutionary force can be deemed appropriate in its context of use. In the context of a simple relational dyad, the dominant person may use more force than the subjugated party. This is of course also dependent on other situational characteristics. For example, in the case of sudden outburst of fire at the office, even submissive parties can appropriately use considerable illocutionary force, ‘Fire! Get out!’, or even physical force may be accepted as legitimate and appropriate.

In Milgram’s (1974/2009) obedience studies the illocutionary force used by the experimenter increased systematically. There were four levels:

Level 1: Please continue, or, Please go on.
Level 2: The experiment requires that you continue.
Level 3: It is absolutely essential that you continue.
Level 4: You have no other choice, you must go on.

In his book \textit{The Stuff of Thought}, Pinker (2007) is in part perplexed and partly amazed by the fact that humans have an inherent instinct, as he calls it, to be able to read the power differentials between people in a meeting. He seems to be forced to postulate this property as an instinct, because he does not subscribe to ordinary language philosophy but rather to Chomsky’s Universal Grammar. An innate instinct does not however need to be postulated if it can be accepted that humans can and do learn to read and use different forms of speech acts. Moreover, with different measures of illocutionary force based on learned and institutionalized conditions of satisfaction. To learn to read these differentials can become “second nature” (Elias 1998). In my mind there is no good reason to assume that this capability would be a straightforward naturalistic endowment in the form of a language instinct.

In sum, coordination and management more broadly can become quick and easy through performative language use. Language is however radically under-defined and thus assumes a vast amount of shared knowledge about the surrounding relational matrix, the surrounding world, the implicit deontic powers and about particular conditions of satisfaction related to the prevalent and wished future state of affairs. The effectiveness of language in part stems from this presumed pre-existing and often unarticulated knowledge. These conditions of satisfaction can conform to “field-dependent” criteria, which means that in different and local communities of language use like organizations the use of language can draw on and convey different meanings and understandings (Toulmin 1958/2003). That is to say, in different locations and between different people ‘a glass of water’ can have more or less different conditions of satisfaction.

In Directives and Commissives, speech acts that concern future actions, there is arguably always an intentionality present, which pertains to the difference between the current and the desired state of affairs. When an intentionality becomes shared and performed through complementary actions it becomes a performance of “collective intentionality” (Searle 1995; 2009)

\textsuperscript{69} Toulmin (1958/2003) uses the term criteria for assessing reasoning very much in the same sense as Searle uses conditions of satisfaction for understanding speech acts. Both highlight their context dependent character.
which I here use synonymously with “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993). Thus, a collective mind can be formed and coordinated efficiently through the use of written or vocalized language. It is a coordinated understanding of the act-scene relationship within the co-constituted relational matrix, in which the collective intentionality is directed at accomplishing a mutually sought-after future state of affairs.

13.3.1 Some special cases in relational communication: relational knots, escalation patterns, impasses, and the “we”-form

The Parent-Child relational dyad is of special significance. It is the stereotypical asymmetric relationship everyone is brought into and thus learns to emulate and play. The relational dynamics of the Parent-Child dyad is however perhaps best apprehended through what kinds of speech acts both parties are according to their deontic powers allowed to communicate. The Parent being the Parent in principle does not take Directives from the Child. Questions can perhaps be considered a special case because they are weak Directives that have the intent of prompting Assertives, which belongs to the Parent. The Parent is nonetheless the one who mostly gives Directives. The communication of Commissives is foremost left to and expected from the Child. Similarly, it is the Parent who may make Assertives about the world and how the world works. Assertives are probably not entirely forbidden from the Child, but usually the Child may not make Assertives about areas which belong to the ‘ownership’ or know-how of the Parent. In childhood this most likely and usually comprises most of the inhabited world, but in modern organizations between responsible moral agents it can be more limited according to agreed upon deontic powers between for example a manager and an employee.

Moreover, it is probably only the Parent who may make Declarations such a regulatory rules. In childhood these may concern bedtime and eating, or in the modern-day organization how work ought to be performed. Although the issue of emotions is still premature, it should be noted that anger is a classic case of ‘this does not conform to my will’ and thus concerns acceptable conditions of satisfaction. If a Parent asks rhetorically ‘Do you want me to get angry’ is in principle to signal the other to fall in line and assume the position of the Child. Anger can be a communicative act of heightened illocutionary force that conveys oneself to be endowed with the correct understanding of the situation (intentionality) and therefore with the right to perform Assertive and Directive speech acts which the other should accept due to the terms of the relationship. Therefore, the angered person has the right to dictate joint action.\footnote{Therefore, it can occur that a person gets angry because the other is angry. It is in principle the communication of a relational position in which one considers oneself to have the proper considerations of the circumstances and therefore is the one with the legitimate right to dictate action or that the other at least is not in that position. In the case of where anger is met by anger, it can be to signal symmetry or reversed asymmetry.} In any case, there is categorical asymmetry between allowed speech acts in the Parent-Child relationship.

If Searle (2009) is correct and that there are only five types of speech acts, then the category of Expressives takes an important position in the Parent-Child relationship. Given that Assertives, Directives and Declarations are practically allowed only by the Parent, Expressives take a heightened importance in the Child’s communication. Expressives such as descriptions of their internal state (hunger, pain, sadness, happiness, etc.) or aesthetic judgement (good, bad, ugly, lovely, pleasing, etc.) become a principal form of communication for the Child to alter the overall state of affairs. For example, if something is frightening, then the Child has the deontic right to feel and express fear. The aesthetic and the expression go hand in hand. Expressives
take the form of aesthetic and emotional facts about the world, that is, about themselves in the world, that the Child may assert. Through the use of Expressives the Child may indirectly try to influence the conduct of the Parent by altering the relational situation in which the Parent finds himself in. Especially so, because it is often an inherent consideration in the Parent-Child relationship that it is the Parent’s responsibility to correct the internal state of the Child. If a Child begins to cry, it is the Parent who has the responsibility to see to it that the aesthetic or internal emotional state is corrected. This is because it is the Parent who decides the relational intentionality of what is done.

Albeit it is somewhat premature to venture too deeply into communicative “pathologies” in relationships (e.g. Watzlawick et al. 1967), one example is directly related to this issue. In cases where there is a sedimented Parent-Child relationship, if it is the Parent that uses Expressives instead of Assertives and Directives, the relationship can be prompted into a relational knot (Watzlawick et al. 1967; see also Laing & Esterson 1964; Seligman 2018). Knots are a known concept in psychotherapy and indicate a situation in which there is no good option available, all alternatives leading to a negative and worse situation than the current one (see e.g. Seligman 2018). For example, if the Parent utters ‘I am not happy’ without giving Directives or Assertives on how to correct the situation the Child is prompted to take the Parent’s position. But the Child cannot take the position of the Parent, because it is occupied by the Parent in accordance with the relational conditions of satisfaction. The Child is thus prompted to resolve the knot by taking a Parent and a Child position simultaneously. It is in practice to suggest remedies, but every suggestion may be a transgression of the Parent-Child relationship. Thus, the Child is in principle put into an impossible position where he can be chastised for whatever action and non-action he decides to take. Non-action means the Child does not try to remedy the emotional state of the Parent and therefore does not comply with the will of the Parent and thus suggest actions as a Parent.

Intentionality to rectify the emotional state of the Parent on the other hand means violating the original conditions of the relationship where it is the Parent who forms the intentionality in the relationship. The Child can be punished either way. In other words, through an inconsistent speech act (a “game” if there is an ulterior motive of actually wanting to punish the Child (Berne 1964/2010) by a Parent the Child can be put in a situation where either the rules of the relationship or the content conditions of the elicited response cannot be met. This example gives a glimpse of some of the trickiness that communication and relational theorists have noticed to be inherent in particularly vexing relational knots (e.g. Bateson 1972; Watzlawick et al. 1967; Seligman 2018).

It would be an Adult position of communication if there would be a symmetrical balance between Expressives and other forms of speech acts. As a basic example, the difference between ‘I am hungry’ and ‘I need to go get something to eat’ is that the latter utterance has a self-constructed Directive within it. The latter in essence communicates that the person himself is responsible for correcting his internal state and situation. A person who is in an Adult position and relationship may use such speech acts without inducing relational knots.

This brings the important topics of autonomy and responsibility to the fore. In a relational setting these are important topics that directly relate to the workings of a rule-based authority system. How speech acts are utilized to direct oneself, for example, ‘I must’, ‘I ought to’, ‘I am going to’, ‘I intend to’ and so on communicate relational positions and therefore to what degree their actions are self-chosen or dictated by others. To put it differently, when it is said that someone should take more responsibility and act more autonomously, it is perhaps not to say
that they should act in isolation and independently of the rest of the organization, but perhaps instead to perform acts that show self-chosen intent and congruent Directive speech acts that communicate self-direction. That is to say, that they do not elicit or require a response of the Parent in order to partake in cooperation.

Conversely, if a person who is used to self-direction is talked to as a Child, implying them being devoid of responsibility, then the speech act in essence communicates that the person should not take responsibility beyond that of performing according to given Directives. To talk to someone as to a Child and thereby assuming the position of a Parent prompts them to take the position of the Child and not that of the Adult. For example, the utterance ‘Take responsibility’ is inherently ambiguous because the content of the speech acts would prompt one to take the position of the Adult, but the relational condition of satisfaction inherent in the speech act is ‘Do as I say.’ It is in other words impossible to unambiguously command a Child to act as an Adult or Parent (see Lewin 1948; Watzlawick et al. 1967).

That taking ownership and responsibility in antithetic to taking Directives from another has been observed since Mary Parker Follett (e.g. Pugh 1973) and described in more depth by Douglas McGregor (1960) in his groundbreaking book The Human Side of Enterprise. In the book the well-known distinction between Theory X and Theory Y is presented. In short McGregor argues, and using the vocabulary developed here, that if you use Theory X assumptions about employees – that they are lazy, irresponsible, unintelligent and unmoved by anything other than punishment and reward – then they are treated as Children. Consequently, they will perform like Children. Conversely, if Theory Y is assumed – that employees are self-directed, self-motivated, trustworthy, and responsible – then you treat employees as Adults, and they will perform accordingly as Adults. Although McGregor did not frame his research in the sense of the asymmetric and symmetric relationship structure or action and collective intentionality or that of the Parent, Adult and Child for that matter, in my mind it does not demand a great leap of faith to perceive his work in this furniture and lighting.

McGregor (1960) in fact had an informed understanding of psychotherapy and utilized it in his theorizing. The theory presented herein may shed light on why Theory X and Theory Y are necessarily mutually exclusive, which McGregor could only postulate as stemming from the implicit assumptions that managers had about their employees. I would argue that the same structural phenomenon is at the heart of Lewin’s (1948) original study of leadership styles and most subsequent leadership theories that focus upon relations between persons (e.g. Drath et al. 2008; Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995). As I see it, any percept of collective action necessarily and unavoidably deals with the formation of collective intentionality (Bratman 1992; Searle 1995). The performance of management pertains to cooperative practices and relational modes of co-constructed action. It is consequently a relational impossibility that only managers would partake in management.71

Also, Parent-Parent and Child-Child exchanges are inherently unstable relationships (Berne 1964/2010; Gottman 2011), that have a tendency for escalation (Bateson 1972). Because the relational dyad is constituted by the relational positions a Parent-Parent or Child-Child are unstable relational structures. Assuming the position of the Parent in effect entails that a person performs a ‘one-up’ in comparison to the other. Common examples would be ‘I have more experience’, ‘I know better’ and the like, which have the illocutionary assertion of claiming ‘I am better than you regarding this topic and in this context.’ By both partaking in self-serving “one-upmanship” (Potter 1986) an escalation pattern emerges as a result of multiple exchanges.

71 Management is too important to be left to managers is an oft quoted expression.
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(see Gottman 2011). It is equivalent to the nuclear arms race where neither party gives in to the other’s relational assertions of dominance (Watzlawick et al. 1967). Escalation patterns do eventually end, but how that occurs is usually dependent on contextual factors. In typical relationships it is often accomplished by one or the other withdrawing from the exchange until things have cooled down and cooler heads prevail (Gottman 2011; Watzlawick et al 1967).

The Child-Child dynamic is essentially similar by both trying to one-down themselves or equivalently one-up the other. Examples such as ‘You know better, you decide’ or ‘I am by far worse in this than you are.’ Although it might be seldom a Child-Child escalation dynamic emerges, it is nevertheless possible in principle. A discussion of the sort ‘No, you decide’, ‘No I absolutely insist you decide’, ‘No it is imperative that you decide’ can escalate through increased illocutionary force without necessarily ever coming to an end. Thus the Parent-Parent and Child-Child dynamics are examples of how relational and communicational impasses are accomplished. That is, by assuming a relational position that is not accepted by the other. This is one way to accomplish, not disorganization but arguably non-organization.

The Parent-Parent and Child-Child interactions are however possible forms of stable exchanges if a third person or entity is present in the discussion (Berne 1964/2010; 1961/2016). As discussed earlier, a dynamic of submission-submission is possible if there is an invented or real dominant third party that does not need to be physically present in the encounter (e.g. God, contract or Sovereign). Similarly, Parent-Parent exchanges can occur in a balanced fashion in a discussion if the personal one-ups are relationally directed at a third party that is consequently assigned the position of the unknowing and immature Child. Example of this is how employees can by themselves rant about the deficits in ‘management’ without actually knowing who that is (see postplay in Goffman 1963a; 1981). The imaginary feat of constructing others into a position of Child or Parent thus enables the expansion of a relational repertoire and can be considered a co-constructed achievement (e.g. Hobbes 1651/2008).

Adult-Adult interactions are sparingly discussed by Berne (1964/2010; 1961/2016) because in this framework Adult communication and corresponding ego state pertains to successful reality-checks according to the Freudian reality principle. The reason may be simple in that if both parties are doing reality-testing and neither is trying to one-up the other, then there cannot really be a communicative pathology nor game at play. The transaction is complementary, transparent and stable. To gain further insight on this relational dynamic, it might be worth discussing Lewin’s (1948) ideas of democratic leadership instead.

As will soon be described in more detail, Lewin (1948) noticed considerably more we-centered statements in democratic groups with Adult-Adult interactions in comparison to autocratic ones in which the I-form prevailed. Lewin notices this but does not analyze it further. If one may speculate, the we-form is interesting in the sense that with statements like ‘We should...’, ‘We are...’, ‘What should we...’ the Directives refer to both the utterer and the receiver. The Directives are thus self- and other-directed simultaneously meaning they do not prompt asymmetric understandings of the relationship. It would also seem that Assertives come out in the form of statements about the world in which both of them find themselves in, instead of instructing the other about the other’s world as a Parent would. This might be a way to deliberately not prompt Parent-Child interaction patterns. Thus, it might not be a coincidence that we-statements predominate in “democratic” teams and organizations (Lewin 1948). Rorty (1989) also highlights the significance of the “we”-concept for human solidarity. According to Rorty, moral progress in the public sphere can be assessed based on how extensively “we” is used in comparison to “they.” Identification and the use of “we,” the kind of
“imaginative insight” (Berlin 1996) that it requires, may indeed be a good way to assess to what extent a community is democratic instead of autocratic or indifferent.

In sum, the hitherto discussed basic building blocks inherent in everyday communication and performative speech acts, can give rise to special cases of communication in which relational pathologies can emerge (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gottman 2011). Assigned deontic powers, performed speech acts, different conditions of satisfaction, and asymmetric relational positions can become entangled, and they can give rise to escalation patterns and impasses within a relationally constructed scene. There is reason to believe that there can be different forms of speech acts like low levels of illocutionary force (e.g. please, may I suggest...) and the use of “we” instead of “I” that can be used to avoid for example entanglements and escalation patterns in communication.

This vista of coordination and communication suggests a number of conclusions. One is that problems in communication may not be reducible to an agent, but can be a quality of the communication system or relational matrix (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick et al. 1967; Watzlawick et al. 1974), which we here understand as tying together the triad of the “big three”, i.e. “agent,” “act” and “scene” and their respective ratios (Burke 1945). Possible problems in communication in turn suggest that people can conversely become proficient in communication and thus in avoiding such pitfalls and still achieve the fruits of effective coordination. These aspects hint at where various degrees of “agency” and proficiency is found in our understanding of a grammar of management as well as how a communication system can constrain agency and thus make action more difficult.

The discussion thus far suggests that agency is found in the minute details of a performance that balances the act with the relationally constituted scene. In the case of coordination and management this is accomplished whilst putting in place a mutual understanding of a desired state of affairs and a set of fitting complementary actions to that end without causing rifts in the other coordinates and ratios in the dramatistic pentad. Given relational knots and how much implicit background knowledge is presumed in effective communication, this may be difficult to accomplish on a day-to-day and encounter-to-encounter basis especially in more complex knowledge work and with an increasing number of people in the fold (see e.g. Blackler 1995; Orlikowski 2002). In plain terms, high level of agency enables a person to formulate a mutually fulfilling collective mind without for example overstepping one’s deontic powers, stepping on other people’s toes, not fulfilling the relational conditions of satisfaction, causing escalation patterns or relational impasses. This is the communicative terrain in which acts are performed.

13.4 The threefold structure of relationality

In this account we have thus far leaned rather heavily on Berne’s (1961/2016; 1964/2010) and Goffman’s (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981) seminal work for the framework of a relational structure and its three relational positions of Parent, Adult and Child. We have also shown that a developmental and psychotherapeutic approach supports such an analysis and generic understanding of learned and re-enacted interaction patterns stemming from childhood (Seligman 2018). In this section we aim to strengthen these conceptual roots.

The chief argument in this section is that the relational structure presented in Part III – once it is incorporated with an understanding of different forms of intentionality formation and
concomitant relational patterns of acting and thinking – is more profound and widespread than what one would guess merely based on Transactional Analysis or the concept of relational positions. I argue this case by presenting a particular convergence in theoretical perspectives, which I call the *threefold structure of relationality*.

**Table 3.** The threefold structure of relationality. The table juxtaposes similar conceptual structures stemming from Freud, Giddens, Heidegger, Lewin, MacMurray, Mead, and Spinosa et al.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giddens (1984)</td>
<td>Practical Consciousness</td>
<td>Discursive Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewin (1948)</td>
<td>Autocracy</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macmurray (1960)</td>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>Communal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mead (1934/2015)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I + Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinosa et al. (1997)</td>
<td>Reconfiguration</td>
<td>Cross-appropriation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The threefold structure of relationality is, I argue, embedded in a variety of classic 20th century theories which have focused upon the mind in-relation-to the surrounding world and the social setting. These theories are in other words relational in character albeit not necessarily focused specifically on human relationships (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008). The theories were forged at the time when the mind emerged as one seminal bridge across dualism, that is, roughly at the beginning of the 20th century (see Toulmin 1990; 2003). At that point in time modernism and postmodernism were more or less entwined into a single intellectual project of correcting past philosophical faults in the general “climate of opinion” (Becker 1932/2003). Subsequently, several notable scholars used, I argue, a strikingly similar set of ideas as the foundation for their relational theories of mind, identity and also, organization. The similarity is not limited to what they were attempting to solve, but how they went about it. Although the conceptualizations of these authors differ to some extent, my claim is that there is much more in common between these classic and yet thematically distinct views than what has hitherto been realized in the academic community.

To coax forth the pertinent aspects of the threefold structure of relationality, in Table 3 I juxtapose the theories stemming from Sigmund Freud (1995 ed. Gay), Kurt Lewin (1948), Martin Heidegger (1962/2008), Eric Berne (1961/2016), John Macmurray (1960), George Herbert Mead (1934/2015), Anthony Giddens (1984) and Spinosa et al. (1997). As I have already introduced Berne’s threefold, therefore, I will not reiterate myself here. I also leave out a detailed discussion of Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) threefold structure of the id, ego, and super-ego. A good discussion on Freud’s theories can be found in Makari (2008), Schafer (1976), and Ellenberger (1971). In short, Freud’s triad was not a coherent one (Giddens 1984; Schafer 1976), and intertwined with his prior threefold of consciousness, pre-consciousness and unconsciousness. The
and analysis of these various conceptual threefolds is beyond the interest of this account. The point of this juxtaposition is to grasp the significance and an overarching way of reasoning within and across this relational structure. The juxtaposition shows the versatility of the threefold across an array of philosophical perspectives and theoretical subject matters. Furthermore, the juxtaposition enables one to understand and appreciate how integrated the threefold is amongst a variety of disciplines and theories due to its manifold and dispersed origin. The intellectual history of the threefold structure of relationality is mostly omitted in this account. Who built on whose ideas and how, is not a chief concern at this point. The question of origins and contribution is of course not entirely inconsequential, but that investigation is better left to proper intellectual historians, once it can be generally accepted that these threefolds are in fact intimately related in the history of ideas.

An apt way to approach this threefold is to understand it is more a process of engagement with the world than a stable structure, as one would perhaps guess based on common linguistic conventions associated with the word ‘structure.’ Mead (1934/2015: 173) for example uses the threefold structure in a relational sense in his analysis of the “self” and in describing how “the origin and foundations of the self, like those of thinking, are social.” Firstly, it is worth noting that Mead has an intricate understanding of the mind as organizing experience as well as of language being of immediate concern to the social process of the self.

Moreover, Mead is deliberately out to gain an understanding of the mind and the self as something that is not appropriately understood as merely subjective, but “both subject and object” (Mead 1934/2015: 137; for similar accounts see also Fromm 1976/1997; May 1983/1994; Laing 1960/2010). He thus relies on a relational lens, which is discernible in how he exemplifies the “social process” that gives rise to the self (Mead 1934/2015). For example, “The meaning of a gesture by one organism, to repeat, is found in the response of another organism to what would be the completion of the act of the first organism which that gesture initiates and indicates.” (Mead 1934/2015: 146). He thus suggests the self to be an outgrowth of a relational and thus social process.

Mead’s (ibid.) account of the social process is relatively easy to convey and illuminating for our purposes. In the early experiences of a child, many things happen to the child; to his “Me.” The child learns to view the world and himself as an object in that world to which things happen both through various experiences but chiefly by the force of other people. The child becomes the recipient of the attitudes and actions of the people around him. The child becomes enculturated into a social milieu. The child’s “Me” becomes the object for the “generalized other”, the sum of social relations surrounding the child, what we have here called the relational matrix.

In responding to stimuli from the generalized other the child changes “phase” from “Me” to “I” (Mead 1934/2015). “The ‘I’ is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others, the ‘me’ is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes.” (Mead 1934/2015: 175). Both the “Me” and the “I” should in Mead’s mind be understood as types of consciousness and “phases” in a stream of events instead of as isolated structures. According

result of directly juxtaposing it with the other threefold structures would result in more confusion than clarity. Freud’s theory should in my mind be considered as a way of theorizing in the making, instead of as a ready product. I include it in the table because Lewin (1948) and Giddens (1984) explicitly drew from Freud, and at least Mead (1934/2015) was well informed of his theorizing.

73 It is my belief that Franz Brentano (1838-1917) and William James (1842-1910) would most likely figure in such an account, as would Aristotle.
to Mead, the historical “Me” does not determine the self-expressive “I”, which has its basis in the creation of novelty (cf. the views by Vico, Herder and Fichte in the previous chapter, see also Nietzsche 1999; 2008). The “I” is thus a process of trying to influence the generalized other within the social process.

In choosing a response, the child is taking into consideration the probable response of the Other, and one’s response to that response and so on ad infinitum. The act becomes all the more intelligent the more the expected stream of events is taken into consideration in advance. To be aware of the probable consequences of one’s actions, Mead calls being reflective or self-conscious. Mead pinpoints self-consciousness as the process between the “Me” and the “I” (cf. Schein 1999). “This process of relating one’s own organism to the others in the interactions that are going on, in so far as it is imported into the conduct of the individual with the conversation of the ‘I’ and the ‘me’, constitutes the self. The value of this importation of the conversation of gestures into the conduct of the individual lies in the superior co-ordination gained for society as a whole, and the increased efficiency of the individual as a member of the group.” (Mead 1934/2015: 179)

In the communicational act of being an object to a social act and then an active-responsive subject (see also Cunliffe 2008), there in-between lies the self in Mead’s account. Or more appropriately, it lies in the social process happening between two persons. The self is a person’s way of handling himself this way instead of that in response to a particular stimulus, the meaning of which is rooted within a language community. It is in moving from a situation of “You did this to Me” to “I am now going to do this”, which in all haste most likely goes unnoticed in most situations. In Mead’s account, the stimulus stems from another person, but one’s response to that stimulus is after some learning based on one’s understanding of “the generalized other” (ibid.). In one’s communicational act a person assumes a generic response of the kind of the generalized other, which is all that one has learned of one’s social setting. In other words, the acts one’s self is constituted upon is inseparably related to an understanding of the general social setting.

According to Mead (1934/2015: 164), “there is a social process out of which selves arise and within which further differentiation, further evolution, further organization, take place.” The relationally founded social process can be carved out in many ways so as to understand the environment in one way and one’s self in another. For example, ‘a person is what he does, not what has happened to him.’ This manner of everyday theories of for example the self are common, but according to Mead unfortunately segments off the relational process that actually gives rise to the self. Experience can be organized in many ways and the organization of experience and imports from others is what the mind does in encountering more or less manageable problems (Mead 1934/2015).

Mead (1934/2015) discusses the balance and fusion between the “I” and the “Me” at some length. In Mead’s analysis, the “Me” is the habitual response to acts in one’s vicinity. One does as is expected. One can perhaps understand the “Me” as habitual or encultured consciousness (cf. Giddens 1984). The more the “I” comes into play the more creative, self-expressive and directive of the generalized other the act becomes. The degree of submission and self-expression is in other words at play in balancing the two. Mead (1934/2015: 274) takes also notice of the case in which there is a complete “fusion of the ‘me’ with the ‘I’.” According to Mead, this happens when one feels a unity with one’s community as for example with exalting religious experiences. He particularly highlights teamwork and the actions that are involved in doing something together on the fly. In such instances the separation between the individual and the
community dissolves alongside the split between the “Me” and the “I.” One could call it, I would suggest, a fusion of minds or the formation of “collective intentionality” as some prefer (Bratman 1992; Searle 1995; 2009).

Mead’s account of the relational threefold is inherently social. It might therefore be illuminating to contrast his account with Heidegger’s (1962/2008: 34) highly similar and yet slightly different threefold. This is because Heidegger is well known to have for the most part bypassed the social in his “existential analytic” which analyzed a threefold “system of Relations” (ibid.: 121). Heidegger (1962/2008: 78) is explicit about seeking a non-dual understanding of a “unitary phenomenon.” The cornerstone of his theory is built on intentionality, which he calls “care” or “concern.” Subsequently Heidegger outlines several mutually overlapping threefold structures (e.g. state-of-mind, understanding and discourse) as he continues to disclose novel characteristics of his “fundamental ontology.” All of those threefold structures are not pertinent here, except for the main one.

Similar to Mead, Heidegger’s analysis begins from two main concepts. Something that manifests itself “ready-to-hand” has the ontological character of “readiness-to-hand” and what is “present-at-hand” has the kind of Being of “presence-at-hand” (Heidegger 1962/2008). Heidegger’s solution to collapsing the Cartesian dualism is found within the concept of ready-to-hand. “To the extent that any entity shows itself to concern – that is, to the extent that it is discovered in its Being – it is already something ready-to-hand environmentally; it just is not ‘proximally’ a ‘world-stuff’ that is merely present-at-hand.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 118).

What Heidegger means is that nothing is found in itself (an sich) in the world, but as something which is in relation to a person’s totality of involvements and his referential totality of significance within the world. In plain terms it is recognized in connection to one’s way of life (involvements) and the world as it is known (referential totality of significance). This is necessarily so, according to Heidegger (1962/2008: 119), because “the structure of that to which Dasein assigns itself is what makes up the worldhood of the world.” The world is not ‘out there’ as such, but one is within a world of relations constituted by involvements and their significance.

Heidegger juxtaposes ready-to-hand and present-at-hand to illuminate a more encompassing and relational state of “Being-in-the-world” (see also Chia & Holt 2006). Heidegger argues that the ontological character of human beings is not similar to a present-at-hand entity like an item which can be appropriately interrogated in terms of ‘what’ but rather as ‘whom.’ For this reason, philosophically speaking, he claims that an existential analytic precedes empirical analysis, in order to be clear about what kinds of questions and answers are appropriate for an understanding of ‘whom’ (for a similar and yet distinct account see Berlin 2013a; 2013b). Persons are engaged in the world through “involvements” and in the form of intentional and thus world-directed pursuits. It is in this context that the character of both present-at-hand and ready-to-hand come to life (ibid.).

Objects may present themselves as unrecognized items, that is, as present-at-hand. In uncovering the item as to its equipmentality and usability – the ‘for what’ – the item becomes recognized. It is put in reference with some involvements and with other items. It gains

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74 For introductions and examples of using Heideggerian perspectives and vocabulary in organization studies see for instance Chia & Holt (2006), Tomkins & Simpson (2015), Yanow & Tsoukas (2009).

75 Heidegger (1962/2008) distinguishes these two concepts from each other (Sorge and Besorge), however, their minute differences are not of consequence for this account. Put shortly, care is the mode of Being in Being-in-the-world whereas concern is implicit in being involved with the world.
serviceability and usability, or in Heidegger’s words, a character of equipmentality. An umbrella is recognized in relation to rain and keeping oneself dry, a train platform in relation to transporting oneself from one place to another with a train, a pen with paper and writing, and so forth. When something present-at-hand becomes ready-to-hand it is disclosed and becomes a recognized part of the inhabited world. To be more precise, it is not discovered, nor does it automatically ‘become’ anything; it is made into such. “An entity is discovered when it has been assigned and referred to something, and referred as that entity which it is.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 115).

Thus an item is made ready-to-hand as it becomes transparent or obvious as to what it is. The item fades into the background of the inhabited world alongside all other equipment and what they are for. The assignment the item is in relation to becomes apparent once again usually when the item breaks down and cannot perform according to its use. When for instance a hammer becomes “un-ready-to-hand” (ibid.: 103) and cannot any longer be used to hammer nails, the assignment of the item becomes rather obvious in practice, although not necessarily theoretically so. “The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that which we concern ourselves primarily is the work – that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 99). In being immersed in a familiar involvement all the equipment used in that involvement become taken-for-granted as well as that involvement itself. They disappear from consciousness as one becomes absorbed in the doing (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990).

Through the concept of ready-to-hand Heidegger explores the “worldhood of the world.” “Dasein finds ‘itself’ proximally in what it does, uses, expects, avoids, – in those things environmentally ready-to-hand with which it is proximally concerned.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 155, italics in original) In Heidegger’s account, one is always in-relation-to the world in some way. What one discloses to become part of the world is what one is concerned with and is subsequently put in relation with all that one is concerned with in the world (the referential totality of significance). In encountering the world as present-at-hand, the involvements and their ‘for whats’ have broken down. One does not know how to continue within the world. In discovering the world anew, which is the same as re-establishing one’s relation to the world, does the state of presence-at-hand dissipate and the world becomes ready-to-hand once again. What is often termed Reality or Nature is in Heidegger’s terminology present-at-hand. That is to say, if Reality poses itself as unfamiliar, for instance, exhibits an unexpected force upon a person, the world shows itself as in needing disclosing anew in order to continue with one’s everyday involvements with the world.

Both ready-to-hand and present-at-hand are presented by Heidegger as a relation to some item through which the inhabited world and our way of Being-in-the-world becomes lit up. Heidegger’s existential analytic takes on another form when the encounter is not with an item, but a fellow human being, what he calls Dasein. Heidegger’s terminology is a bit tricky in this context, as he deliberately avoids and argues against using the familiar terms of subject and object. Other people offer a particular problematic in Heidegger’s account, because they too are world-disclosers (see also Spinosa et al. 1997). “These entities are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand; on the contrary, they are like the very Dasein which frees them, in that they are there too, and there with it. So if one should want to identify the world in general with entities within-the-world, one should have to say that Dasein too is ‘world.’ ... The world of
Dasein is a with-world. Being-in is Being-with Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is Dasein-with.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 154)

In delineating what happens in “Being-with-one-another”, Heidegger (1962/2008: 149, 168) uses the concept of “Being-with” and “Dasein-with” of the type of Being which takes place in such an encounter. According to Heidegger (1962/2008: 163), “Being-with is an existential constituent of Being-in-the-world.” With this he means that Being-with discloses facets of Being overall, which do not come to the open merely by analyzing ready-to-hand and present-at-hand. Other persons are encountered in the midst of doings and while they are absorbed in their own activities. Heidegger argues that it is therefore inaccurate to portray them as present-at-hand objects in one's own world, albeit it is possible to treat one as such, as equipment in reference to one's own doings. Heidegger claims that Being-with brings forth a particular sort of concern for others, which could be called empathy although Heidegger is not enthusiastic about the term due to its near connections to subjectivity.

With concern for others (Fursorge, solicitude) Heidegger argues that person's concerns actively take on the concerns of another either by “leaping in” or “leaping ahead” (ibid.; see also Tomkins & Simpson 2015). In leaping in, “In such solicitude the Other can become one who is dominated and dependent” (ibid.: 158), which essentially intervenes in the concerns of the Other. Leaping ahead on the other hand takes care and liberates the the other person from having to care for something. Being-with thus brings the possibilities of considerateness and inconsiderateness to the fore (cf. Ryle 1949/2000). Without other persons one could not be either. In this context it is worth noticing that Heidegger does not analyze or even take note of the possibility of teamwork or of other forms of social engagements, which can be argued to be amongst the most significant omissions in his account.

In sharing a “with-world” constituted by all the concerns of oneself and others, Heidegger perceives the possibility of becoming immersed and in a relation of subjection to the concerns of Others. Similar to Mead’s analysis of the generalized other, Heidegger argues that one can lose oneself in the average everydayness of just doing what “they” do (das Man) or as one does. “We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as they take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as they see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the ‘great mass’ as they shrink back; we find ‘shocking’ what they find shocking. The ‘they’, which is nothing definite, and which all are, though no as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness.” (Heidegger 1962/2008: 164, italics in original).

In this dialectic between the dominance of the social setting and an authentic and self-expressive self, Heidegger is close to the views and concerns of Nietzsche (1999; 2008; 2013). In Heidegger’s (1962/2008: 67ff) analysis of authenticity and inauthenticity he comes to astoundingly similar thoughts as Mead does in his analysis of the balance between the “Me” and the “I.” A significant difference, which is not of the phenomenon but a theoretical choice, in between the two threefolds is that Heidegger situates the social within the Being-with mode of Being whereas Mead perceives the entire threefold as social. By pointing out these similarities between ready-to-hand and the active and creative ‘I’ and also between present-at-hand and the ‘being acted upon Me’ within a relational understanding we wish to strengthen the case for these points of connection as more than mere happenstance.

Mead’s and Heidegger’s accounts of the threefold in unison do justice to both the social process and how one is in the world of objects in relational terms. A significant omission of both threefolds lies within the domain of morality. That Heidegger lacks such an account in his existential analytic is not entirely surprising, but Mead’s account arguably ought to have included
Part IV: Conducive Proto-Ideas and Theoretical Prototypes

such an analysis to be adequately comprehensive. Morality is however the centerpiece of Macmurray's (1960) threefold, which can be easily enriched and connected to works by other thus far mentioned scholars to coax forth the moral fiber of the three relational positions.

Macmurray (1960: 110) has described how the three relational positions, which we have thus far considered as Parent, Adult and Child, in terms of Kantian “categories of apperception.” According to Macmurray, the categories give rise to three corresponding “modes of morality.” He argues that these are the three categories of enacted and self-disclosed moral action. “The categories are presuppositions of the possibility of all cognition; they are universal and necessary (or in Kantian terminology, ‘a priori’) concepts which determine the general form of all our experience” (Macmurray 1960: 112). What Macmurray means is that there can be only these three modes of moral action, because the modes are determined by the three relational positions to intentionality formation. Intentionality can be formed only by oneself, the Other, or together.

In Macmurray’s mind there is no action beyond morality because it would mean that there is action beyond action with intentionality, which is contradictory to what Macmurray means by action (for similar positions see Bakhtin 1993; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). Thence, all moral action is according to Macmurray enacted from one of the three moral positions. In Macmurray’s account, morality denotes action within a relational understanding: “The moral rightness of an action, therefore, has its ground in the relation of persons. The moral problematic of all action – the possibility that any action may be morally right or wrong – arises from the conflict of wills, and morality, in any mode, is the effort to resolve this conflict” (Macmurray 1960: 116). It is not only that human beings are nurtured into relationships, but moral action cannot by definition exist outside the relational matrix. This relational tenet can be put even more broadly, namely by stating that relational existence is the condition of existence overall (Heidegger 1962/2008; Macmurray 1960; Mead 1934/2015).

Macmurray (1960) uses the term “apperception” because all actions take certain considerations into account and the intentionality-in-action is formed based on those considerations (cf. Ryle 1949/2000). But no set of considerations is an exact mirror of reality or based on perfect knowledge or totality of considerations of the present and intended outcome. They are limited apperceptions or “modes of experience” (Oakeshott 1933/2015). Apperceptions can vary. The intentionality within the three relational positions endow experience and action its understandability, and in Macmurray’s (1960) account “the three modes of morality” stem from the three possible relational positions.

The three modes are forms and a priori motives of how to apperceive others and consequently to act upon those precepts and to the situation as it is understood. The relational positions of intentionality formation, which give rise to the more encompassing modes are: (1) to impose intentionality, (2) to negotiate joint intentionality and (3) to subscribe to an imposed intentionality. Macmurray calls the three modes of morality “pragmatic” (Parent), “communal” (Adult) and “contemplative” (Child). Macmurray refers to the three modes of morality as three “ways of life” that have their own characterological moral fiber. Human beings can engage the Other from any of the three positions, but through habituation and the concomitant rise in becoming ever more skillful one can begin to act according to an acquired moral character that epitomizes a singular mode of morality (Macmurray 1960).

Within a social arrangement the doings and sought-after outcomes of persons are interrelated. They may conflict with, hinder, help or overlap with the intentions of Others. The
pragmatic mode is the action that realizes one’s own intentions at the cost of Others’ desires and stance. It is not concerned with the understanding of Others’ concerns. In the pragmatic mode action is focused on the material reality and on the perception of Others as hindrances or means to self-imposed ends. The life of action and material existence is perceived as the only true reality. Social life is perceived as a struggle of wills. Action consequently gains particular facets that have to be considered. It is that of style and effort in addition to those contextual facets that are necessary to take into account in order to attain the desired outcome.

The chosen style pertains to how to convey the moral righteousness of the intended action which give the action social ease and priority. Moral righteousness is accomplished by purposively using the overt moral rules or norms in society and by exhibiting tact and manners as a way to communicate that Others have been taken into account (cf. Goffman 1961a; 1961b; 1967). These are to overcome opposing moral arguments and to gain an aesthetic moral feel to the intended action. In the pragmatic mode morality is perceived as a technique. The committed effort to the realization of a desired outcome directly affects what one can strive for and gives the action technological ease. With technological ease comes the possibility to want and strive for more.

The pragmatic mode of action endeavors to be technologically efficient and morally unquestionable for the sake of accomplishing self-desired ends. These give action the character of absorbed going-on or flow from one action to the next without noticing where one ends and the second begins (cf. ready-to-hand). In a social arrangement the ‘right’ technique is what is necessary to accomplish one’s will with ease and with a flow of accomplished intents one after the other.

Action in the pragmatic mode is always action with spectators or Others in mind, who judge the action based on both the proficiency of acquiring the intended outcome and the stylistic rightness of the performance. The rightness of the intent is paramount to spectators, but the right to assert intention in a social arrangement is usually earned and thus lifts practical proficiency almost on par. Macmurray (1960) apparently follows Fichte’s train of thought (see the previous chapter) in arguing that the agent in pragmatic mode judges his own performance on success or failure and on the ease and resistance to which the intended outcome is accomplished. Hindrances are to be overcome and Others to be employed as helpers. Technique is polished according to these considerations. The agent’s gaze in the pragmatic mode is strictly in the future and if the gaze is brought to the present by unexpected resistance the mood is usually that of irritation. Conversely, all means to accomplish desired future states are transparent and out of mind as long as the means function according to expectations.

The spectator is stereotypical of the contemplative mode (Child), which always requires the counterpart of the pragmatic, who imposes intentionality on the spectator.76 From the contemplative mode conformism to imposed intents is given and secondary to the personal life of thought, aesthetic experience and reflection. The freedom of reflection is more important than the life of action or struggle between individual wills. In the pragmatic mode an intended world is actioned into being whereas in the contemplative mode the intention remains in the form of an ideal. To muster an ideal better than the current state of affairs is the act of contemplation. The minute details in the ideal and one’s relation to them through personal reflection can be

76 Strictly speaking also an un-agentic situation can impose intentionality on a spectator through coercive considerations such as a fire or a collapsing building or merely breakdown of technology. The changed considerations in the environment force the agent to take the environment as it is. Heidegger (1962/2008) has dealt with this scenario extensively through the concept of unready-to-hand.
more real and important than material reality, which is nonetheless accepted as indubitably real.

The mode of morality in the contemplative mode is that of aesthetics and good form. It is particularly concerned with tact, manners, grace and beauty of action. They are to elevate the spectator’s ‘mood’, his relationally constituted aesthetic ground, into accepting the imposed intent. Imposed intents are from this perspective perceived in the spectrum of sublime and evil. It is a morality of right feel. It is the art of distinguishing and idealizing the ‘good’ considerations in action. If the ‘good’ considerations are performed by the pragmatically minded, then there is social cohesion between the two. To be clear, it is not so that the ones immersed in the contemplative mode would never assert their own will and thus step into the pragmatic mode. The way of life experienced through the contemplative mode so to say deepens as one becomes more proficient in that way of life (e.g. Frankl 1959/2006). It is the art of shifting considerations and intentions as most prominently displayed by the Stoics (see Hadot 2004).

According to Macmurray, the pragmatic and contemplative modes are inherently selfish as they are concerned with ‘my intentions’ (pragmatic) and ‘my feelings’ (contemplative) whereas he portrays the communal mode as unselfish (similarly to Mead and Heidegger). In the communal mode the interest is on the good of the Other and thereby oneself, but not at the expense of oneself. It is care for oneself for the sake of the Other. The community of equals is paramount and intentional. Intentions are formed together in collaboration. The collaboration or form of the relationship is in itself more important than the content of the collaboration. The intent is that of joint wellbeing of each and every participant in the fellowship. It is a unity of persons as persons and through mutual affection. Both its mood and intellectual intent is that of the communal. Because people in the communal mode understand one another and form intents together they necessarily have a common purpose and background understanding.

The common purpose may however have different scopes. In this context it is fitting to complement Macmurray’s (1960) account with a conceptual distinction from Oakeshott. Oakeshott’s (1991a) description of the difference between “enterprise association” (economic-rational organization) and “civil association” (e.g. city state) aptly portrays this point about the differences in scope for a joint purpose. In a joint enterprise the common purpose has a much closer proximity in the future and the collaboration is more tightly knit through a shared intentionality. The common intent ranges from the daily to the expected near future and is therefore more or less continuously negotiated (“in-order-to” and “for-the-sake-of-which” in Heidegger’s (1962/2008) terminology). The common purpose between citizens of a state is by far more distant. It can be portrayed as for example respect for the rule of law and the organizing principles of the state for the sake of common good of all citizens. There is however no direct or active negotiation between citizens as to how the common good of citizens is to be ascertained. Intentionality can thus have different scopes; this is one key difference between the communal by Macmurray’s and “cross-appropriation” in Spinosa et al. (1997).

In Macmurray’s wake it is relatively straightforward to introduce Lewin’s (1948) use of the threefold. Lewin (1948) distinguishes between “autocratic”, “democratic” and “laissez faire” forms of cultures and leadership in organizations. With culture Lewin (1948: 46) means “a living process, composed of countless social interactions.” Autocratic style is characterized by a strong leader figure who by dictation coordinates both the what and how of others’ activities. Democratic style allows group self-coordination, multiplicity of allowed techniques and pathways, and freedom in task coordination in accomplishing a thoroughly explained goal. The
laissez faire form is not deeply discussed by Lewin, but only briefly mentioned as a possibility in which a leader or group can be indifferent to one another’s activities by valuing individualistic freedom. The origin of the typology is not so much theoretical in Lewin’s account. Rather, it is based on many personal, both minute and global, cultural observations.

In analyzing the pertinent differences between U.S. and German cultures following the first World War and in discussing what for instance “re-education” of a person from an autocratic to democratic culture would require, Lewin (1948) highlights the importance of interactions and leadership style. He argues that a person is so rooted in a culture that it is difficult to change their orientation in life unless one plants them in another culture altogether. “A cultural change in regard to a specific item will have to be able to stand up against the weight of the thousand and one items of the rest of the culture which tend to turn the conduct back to its old pattern” (Lewin 1948: 46). This makes it very difficult, for example, for a democratic leadership style to root in an otherwise autocratic culture (see also Raelin 2004). “Change in culture requires the change of leadership forms in every walk of life. At the start, particularly important is leadership in those social areas which are fundamental from the point of view of power.” (Lewin 1948: 55) In this study we understand the issue of power as a deontic power associated with a relational position that corresponds with one’s actions in the formation of a collective intentionality.

According to Lewin, autocratic leadership and its complementary form of followership comes easily to most while democratic forms of interaction and leadership require learning and skill. Drawing from Freud, Lewin posits that in changing a culture of a person the super-ego takes on an especially significant role, that is, what and how something ought to be done: “A change in action-ideology, a real acceptance of a changed set of facts and values, a change in the perceived social world – all three are but different expressions of the same process. By some, this process may be called a change in the culture of the individual; by others, a change of his super-ego.” (Lewin 1948: 64)

In relation to leadership and groups, Lewin argues that there is a holistic “group mind” (Lewin 1948: 72), which is more than the sum of individuals combined, which manifests in how the group works. “Groups are sociological wholes”, argues Lewin (1948: 73). That whole is significantly influenced by how a leader conducts himself with the group and what kind of “atmosphere” is created (ibid.: 74). According to Lewin, there are distinct differences between the atmospheres in autocratic, democratic and laissez faire groups. Lewin (1948: 78) noticed in a study that the democratic form mustered a “we feeling.” Members in a democratic group used more “we-centered” statements in relation to autocratic groups that elicited an “I feeling” and “I-centered” statements in the group. According to Lewin (1948: 49), a culture is changed by changing “the group atmosphere rather than a single item.” Lewin (1948: 49-50) describes the process of change from autocratic to democratic atmosphere in surprisingly relational terms:

“The change of a group atmosphere from autocracy or laissez faire to democracy through a democratic leader amounts to a re-education of the followers toward ‘democratic followership.’ Any group atmosphere can be conceived of as a pattern of role playing. Neither the autocratic nor the democratic leader can play his role without the followers being ready to play their role

77 Lewin most likely takes this concept from Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) essay Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego albeit it is not explicitly referenced. In this study it is good to notice the similarity to the notion of "collective mind" (Weick & Roberts 1993).
accordingly. Without the members of the group being able and ready to take over those responsibilities which are essential for followerships in a democracy, the democratic leader will be helpless. Changing a group atmosphere from autocracy toward democracy through a democratic leadership, therefore, means that the autocratic followers must shift toward a genuine acceptance of the role of democratic followers.”

Identical to Lewin, Giddens (1984) in articulating his groundbreaking “structuration theory” builds his understanding of consciousness and the self upon the works of Freud (1995 ed. Gay). Based on ordinary language philosophy stemming from Wittgenstein and on Heideggerian phenomenology, Giddens however expands Freud’s triad of the Ego, Id and Superego to include elements he sees the original triad as not being able to coherently entertain. Giddens thus comes to his threefold structure of (1) practical consciousness (Parent), (2) discursive consciousness (Adult), and (3) the unconscious (Child).

For Giddens (1984: 5), the unconscious “expresses the ‘depth’ of the life history of the individual actor.” Giddens argues that the unconscious is the seat of trust and “ontological security” in a person (cf. psychological safety, Edmondson 1999). In this Giddens follows developmental psychologists and refers to it as the “basic security system” (Giddens 1984: 41), which can be hampered by breaching the prevalent social rules. In Giddens account, the basic security system is based on all prior interactions with others in situations of “copresence” (Goffman 1963a: 17), beginning from the very early mother-infant interactions (cf. Mead 1934/2015).

Following similar lines of thought as Mead, Giddens positions the unconscious as the source of “routinization” and habituation. According to Giddens (ibid.: 45), “the unconscious’ can be understood only in terms of memory.” The connections between memory, knowledge and perception, that which an agent is practically conscious of in his engagements, are according to Giddens inextricably linked. Past experiences direct attention and allow one to distinguish between what is familiar and what novel. Thus what is learned and experienced becomes familiar and practically available to (practical) consciousness. Giddens (1984: 21-22) conceives practical consciousness to be “the very core of that ‘knowledgeability’ which specifically characterizes human agents.” Thus knowledgeable conduct and routinization are vital for understanding practical consciousness. “All competent members of society are vastly skilled in the practical accomplishments of social activities and are expert ‘sociologists.’ The knowledge they possess is not incidental to the persistent patterning of social life but is integral to it” (Giddens 1984: 26; see also Schon 1984). It is subsequently this form of consciousness which Giddens foremost builds on his comprehensive and nuanced theory of structuration.

The line between practical and discursive consciousness is, according to Giddens, anything but impenetrable (cf. Berne 1961/2016). Drawing from Wittgenstein (1953), Giddens argues that the use of language is similar to learning a technique. Therefore, it is not easily discernible from practical consciousness. “Discursive consciousness means being able to put things into words” (Giddens 1984: 45). Following the footsteps of Freud and especially Mead, Giddens claims that language development hangs upon the mastery of social encounters and therefore the linguistic forms inherent in it. “Mastery of ‘I’, ‘me’, ‘you’ relations, as applied reflexively in discourse, is of key importance to the emerging competence of agents learning language” (Giddens 1984: 7).

Giddens’ account of agency is based on practical and discursive consciousness and how they are linked to power in a social setting. “Action depends upon the capability of the individual to ‘make a difference’ to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events” (Giddens 1984: 14). For
Giddens (1984: 15), power has “two faces.” On the one hand the ability to enact one’s mind (practical consciousness) and the ability to mobilize a mind (discursive consciousness) through the deliberate handling of familiar institutions (e.g. words and agreements). Consequently, what is manipulated through agency are (discursive) “rules” and (practical) “resources.” In Giddens account, these are affected by agents and also make up what he calls “structure.” Giddens (1984: xxxi) explains structure thus: “In structuration theory ‘structure’ is regarded as rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction: institutional features of social systems have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space.”

Giddens (1979; 1984), like Heidegger and Mead, takes dualism as a point of departure for his theory of structuration. He argues that dualism is one of the central problems that should be overcome in “social theory.” A chief problematic he is pursuing with his solution to dualism, his “duality of structure” (1984: xxiii), is the interplay between agents and the social setting and how “social practices [are] ordered across time and space” (Giddens 1984: 2). Thus he focuses upon the issue of crossing “time-space”, which is, according to Giddens, grounded in temporality and thus the ontology of history (for a similar account see Heidegger 1962/2008). In this conceptual move Giddens arguably re-conceptualizes historical situatedness into “structure”: “Structure thus refers, in social analysis, to the structuring properties allowing the ‘binding’ of time-space in social systems, the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them ‘systemic’ form.” (Giddens 1984: 17). Thus conceived, Giddens’ theory of structuration describes how historical situatedness is reproduced and re-created in the ongoing and knowledge-intensive activities within society by knowledgeable moral agents. It is worth noting that it is for this purpose that he explicates his understanding of the threefold.

To come full circle, Spinosa et al. (1997) build on Heidegger’s threefold structure and describe three foundational ways of making everyday history. “Something that makes history...changes the way in which we understand and deal with ourselves and with things.” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 2). According to Spinosa et al. (1997: 1, 16), history-making is an “ontological skill of disclosing new ways of being” which “produce people, selves and worlds.” They approach the topic of historical situatedness through the concept of “style” (cf. “orientation” Burke 1984, “paradigm” in Kuhn 1962/2012, “climate of opinion” Becker 1932/2003; Giddens 1984), which is their name for “the way all the practices [within a world] ultimately fit together” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 19). A style comprises “organization” of equipment and practices and “coordination”, which is the basis for meaningfulness and the way things are done (see also Heidegger 1962/2008). “Style acts as the basis on which practices are conserved and also the basis on which new practices are developed. Style is the ground of meaning in human activity” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 20). Spinosa et al. in other words focus upon the ways of changing the style of a world in their take of history-making.

Spinosa et al. (1997) utilize Heidegger’s (1962/2008) conceptualization of worldhood to outline three history-making practices within a world: “reconfiguration” (equipment, ready-to-hand), “cross-appropriation” (involvements, Being-with), and “articulation” (significance, present-at-hand). Spinosa et al. (1997) use the term “disclosive space” for world, by which they indiscriminately mean cultures, professions, communities, families, and the like. In this study we have referred to the same idea with the concept of “scene” (Burke 1945). When persons are intensely engaged in disclosive practices persons are, according to Spinosa et al. (1997: 16),
“living life at its best.” They are bringing historical disharmonies to light and thus resolving them in practice (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990). In their account, the resolution of disharmonies is a projection towards the future as a betterment of the current historical situation from within its style of grasping that situation. This is an apt and concise description of history-making on a general level.

To engage in history-making is according to Spinosa et al. (1997) an intense engagement of doing business, politics, or culture and most of the time variously all of them with a particular “sensitivity to marginal, neighboring or occluded practices” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 30). Heidegger’s practical ready-to-hand mode is in its most recognizable form that of business and especially that of entrepreneurship. Its characteristic way of disclosing something new in the world in a way that changes the world through equipment and thus “reconfiguration” (Spinosa et al. 1997). Heidegger’s Being-with mode is recognizable as politics and especially in democratic action. Its characteristic way of history-making is that of disclosing novel practices through “cross-appropriation” (ibid.) between different disclosive spaces. The present-at-hand mode is most familiar as culture and especially in the cultivation of solidarity. Its primary form of disclosure is by giving significance through aesthetically attuned “articulation” (ibid.). Articulation, reconfiguration and cross-appropriation are according to Spinosa et al. (1997) most often entwined, but some familiar occupations and practices in society can be recognized as employing or spearheading one of them more than the other two, and it is in this sense the following examples of these history-making practices are given.

“Articulation, reconfiguration, and cross-appropriation are three different ways in which disclosive skills can work to bring about meaningful historical change of a disclosive space. All of these types of change are historical because people sense them as continuous with the past. The practices that newly become important are not unfamiliar. … We engage in disclosive activity all the time, whether we are aware of it or not, whenever we deal with things or people in a way that makes sense – that is, whenever we deal with things or people (disclose them) as the things or people that they normally are in our culture. But we are only sensitive to this disclosing as our way of dealing with things and people when we are engaged in articulating, reconfiguring, or cross-appropriating. When we engage in these history-making activities, we are engaging in coordination in the practices of some domain we inhabit, and then we are dealing with ourselves as the kinds of beings who can disclose things, people, and selves in various ways, coordinated by various styles.” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 28, italics in original)

Articulation is bringing significance into light and focus. There is a plethora of possible concerns that one could attend to every day, but those concerns must at times be ordered so that one actually attends to that which is of significance and in a way that is suitable according to the prevalent style. When such concerns are voiced and mutually agreed to be a collective concern and of significance, it contributes to establishing shared identity or solidarity. That is, it requires that of taking the concerns as one’s own. “Concerns are constituted in our daily practices as the basis of our identity as members of a community. As such they are posited, but, as we are inculcated into them, we come to see situations as requiring action according to them” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 119). When one is engaged in articulating significance, one is in essence building solidarity and a “we.” It is voicing what “we” should care for. One does not engage in articulation unless there is a “we” and that we should take something specific into consideration. Articulation stems from a present-at-hand situation due to an experienced disharmony.
Articulation brings the marginal and in the case of solidarity the marginalized into the limelight. It is usually a marginal set of persons who notice a problem and voice it. Thus the marginal and marginalized often come hand-in-hand. Articulation thus focuses a dispersion of practices and their disharmony into focus. (Spinosa et al. 1997)

In reconfiguration the practices of a world are changed through the invention and marketing of novel products or services. The world – its significance and practices – and thus the style is in other words changed through its equipment. The change in equipment brings an occluded practice into being, which may change the overall style. It is a small but noticeable change in a way of life. Spinosa et al. (1997) give the illustrative examples of an automobile and computer, which changed the way of life in at least developed societies. With the automobile that of governing a land, a farm, a settlement became replaced by the practice of controlling a car. An automobile is not governed, it is controlled, as so was the overall style changed towards controlling. The computer was initially thought of as an information processor. What the computer is has however changed with software that enabled novel practices such as gaming, all forms of apps and novel communication forms. The equipmentality of the computer has altered with the practices that it is used for.

Reconfiguration is however, in my mind, not confined to only products and services instituted by entrepreneurs but includes scientists as well. What for example social scientists do is reconfigure the use of words to alter or better the thought-style of a community. Although this might be done very deliberately by social scientists, all persons engage in the reconfiguration of words when the use their everyday vocabulary that they have in encountering novel and surprising situations in order to manage them. At any rate, reconfiguration as an explicit history-making practice is about the sensitivity to the common way of life and perceiving how it could be altered for the better through reconfiguration of a product, service or practice of use. It is not about following the trends and needs in society, but of creating such by re-gestalting an alternative way of life through the lens of equipment.

“The kind of thinking that leads to innovation requires an openness to anomalies in life. It requires an interest in holding on to these anomalies in one’s daily activities and in seeing clearly how the anomalies look under different conditions. ... Being settled, seeing things as settled, acting as though the way we do things is the natural way of doing things are the greatest enemies of seeing anomalies in the first place and of holding on to them in the second.” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 54)

When an involvement (practice) is transferred between two different worlds in some way it is the history-making practice of cross-appropriation. This can occur between family-life and work, through vacation in another cultural setting and then returning to one’s own homeworld, or between two communities who have divergent involvements and significance-structures. According to Spinosa et al. (1997: 92) cross-appropriation “occurs when people from one world generate a practice and give it to people in another world who can receive and use it but who would not have generated it on their own.” In cross-appropriation there are two “communities of practice” (Wenger 2000) and a representative of one community perceives a disharmony or in other words something strange in the practices of another community (see also Boas 1928/1986).

A community can also be put together based on a shared identity and in order to change the prevalent ways of doing things, as civil interest groups do. Cross-appropriation is discourse as
one citizen to another, both attuned and appreciating the other as a citizen of a community. Between two developed nations it could be, for example, lack of recycling or equality that would be taken for granted in the other nation, which should fit the style of the nation as well, but for some reason it is not yet a taken for granted practice. Cross-appropriation is at its best civil discourse where people remain true to their own style, respect the style of others and seek opportunities to better the life of their own community (Spinosa et al. 1997). This is politics as it is done in its everyday practice. It is thus not a question of merging identities and thus significance-structures, but cross-appropriating across ways of life. “In cross-appropriating, one must express concerns with which one has experience in a way that touches the concrete experiences of others” (Spinosa et al. 1997: 115). It requires “interpretive speaking”, that is, to speak a language that the representative of the other community can understand as significant to their way of life (ibid.). Cross-appropriation thereby requires certain citizenship skills such as sensitivity to and expertise of the style of one’s own community, interpretive speaking across worlds, sensitivity to disharmonies and the ability to articulate them (cf. democratic leadership in Lewin 1948).

To summarize: I argue that the various threefold structures exemplified by Mead, Heidegger, Macmurray, Lewin, Giddens and Spinosa et al., tell of an interdisciplinary and explicitly non-dual style of thinking that built on Counter-Enlightenment presuppositions and emerged in the early 20th century. The threefold was time and time again explicitly designed and used to counter dualistic paths of thought in philosophy and social theory. Many of the tenets and conceptual building blocks in contemporary relational and interactional theorizing build on one or several of the authors who have relied and explicated a threefold structure (e.g. Bateson 1972; Berne 1961/2016). The threefold structures were arguably relational and situated within a panoptic understanding of consciousness, the self, historical situatedness, enculturation, a situated use of material equipment, and how one makes a difference within such a diverse setting through the disclosive practices of history-making.

13.5 Relational figurations

The threefold structure of relationality, including the kinds of practices and speech acts that are descriptive of those relational positions, is of course not a comprehensive account of what takes place within and across relationships. Thus far the analysis has been limited to a dyad, with the often-made assumption that what occurs in dyads can be generalized into larger constellations of people. Since the relational structure of a dyad has been outlined, the structural complicatedness can now be increased by adding additional conscious moral agents into the fold. This can be done without altering the underlying and already explicated premises about action and communication. The point of this is to show the theoretical reach of this way of thinking, given that it is utilized later in the empirical part of this study.

Despite having a relatively simple structure at its base, when more conscious moral agents are added novel phenomena arise from the relational structure we have discussed thus far, similar to that of “systematic fallouts” discussed earlier (Searle 2009). This section is concerned with the communication and formation of a collective mind and mutual understanding in sets of human relationships when the relational structure is increased to account for more than two persons. We furthermore intend to visualize these relationships and constellations, thus providing a visual translation of some of the key concepts in the relational structure. In
this illustration I have for the sake of simplicity omitted the complications stemming from, for instance, games, which include a double entendre, most forms of crossed transactions, as well as longer sequences of transactions which take place even in the simplest of conversations (Berne 1964/2010). Real everyday relations and communicative acts are indubitably much more nuanced and versatile than what the following relatively generic relational figurations show. Nevertheless, one can argue that one of the merits of a good theory is the simplicity it allows in understanding the phenomenon (Berlin 2013b; Weick 1999).

A **team** is a stereotypic form for multiple and intertwined Adult-Adult relations (e.g. Lewin 1948). In this depiction there is no team leader, which could easily be added as a form of Parent-Child relation towards all team members. In contrast to a team, in a **hierarchy** the relations are top-down or equivalent to Parent-Child relations whereas laterally they are formally of the Adult-Adult kind. The amount of levels in the hierarchy are determined by the Parent-Child relations whereas Adult-Adult relations designate equal relations within a particular level. **Disorganization** is accomplished when two sequential Parent-Child relations is counteracted upon through an oppositely directed Parent-Child relation which negates the mind in the previous relations. The result is a never-ending circularity of imposing and counter-imposing a mind, without the possibility of establishing a stable and shared collective mind. An example of this sort of incident would be a case of corruption (Aguilera & Vadera 2007), in which a citizen bribes a high official to intervene in a matter under his employees and which goes

**Figure 4.** Relational figurations. The figure shows twelve constellations of relations that can be compiled with the help of a small set of generic relations. The constellations show: (1) a team, (2) a hierarchy, (3) disorganization, (4) a conflict, (5) a power play, (6) a contract, (7) in-group/out-group, (8) ostracism, (9) a Parent-Parent interaction with an absent Child, (10) a middle manager under “pressure”, (11) a confused subordinate, and (12) a bullied colleague under the same middle manager.
against common policy. Such incidents can have vast consequences if they manage to undermine the confidence and trust in the collective mind of the organization (Luhmann 1988).

A conflict is an example of a case with no shared collective mind, or two crossed Parent-Child transactions (Berne 1964/2010; Gottman 2011; Watzlawick et al. 1967; Watzlawick 1990). In a power play a mutual Adult-Adult relationship is at one instance turned with the help of a “move” (Goffman 1981) into a crossed transaction. One interactant continues on an Adult-Adult basis whereas the other communicates according to a Parent-Child relation. A common example of this would be that of ‘making an issue’ out of something; or assigning oneself with more self-worth than one assigns to the other at a single instance (Goffman 1967).

A contract is an example of constituting a joint rule of conduct and expectations, which both persons abide by (Hobbes 1651/2008; Oakeshott 1991b). The contract is followed by both parties. As the contract has a commanding position in both persons future actions, it can be said that the contract is in a Parent-Child relation to the persons similar to how a citizen is subject to the rule of law (Giddens 1984; Oakeshott 1991a). Obedience to a contract can stem from a variety of reasons, such as economic remuneration, social rewards or threat of violence (Etzioni 1975; Goffman 1961b).

Ingroups and outgroups are often associated with social identity theory (Brewer 1999; Tajfel 1982), albeit relationally the phenomenon can be illustrated in rather simple terms. It can be understood as two groups so that within the ingroup exists Adult-Adult relations whilst their relations to the outgroup is of the form Parent-Child. Two groups in conflict with one another are consequently in a crossed transaction of Parent-Child interactions. Ostracism is from a relational viewpoint relatively similar to the ingroup/outgroup relational figuration. The key exceptions are that the ostracized individual does not necessarily have an ingroup nor is there necessarily antagonistic Parent-Child relations from the ostracized individual towards the group (Williams 2007). Ostracism is consequently often perceived as a group’s action towards an individual, although it can be perceived as actions congruent with a particular sort of relational figuration.

A Parent-Parent interaction with an absent Child is exemplified by the interaction in which two persons talk pejoratively of an absent third party (see Berne 1964/2010). Both participants in the discussion assume the position of the Parent, but because it is directed at a third party, it enables two Parents to be in symmetrical communication with one another without it being a conflict or a case of Adult-Adult interaction (ibid.).

To summarize, these relational figurations show that the explicated relational structure can with the help of relatively simple visual illustrations of Parent-Child and Adult-Adult relations depict a large set of common social phenomena inside and outside of typical organizations.

13.6 The ever-present scene for action and communication

It has been said many times that this chapter is principally concerned with the “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945), perceived from the point of view of the creative, performative, relational and communicative act. We have also discussed how the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad like the “agent” through self-enactment, “agency” through deontic powers, and “purpose” through intentionality are infused into the act. In this final section we close this chapter by discussing the local and man-made “scene” from the point of view of the “act” (Burke 1945).
The chief argument in this section is that the act can only be understood against its local backdrop, i.e. the act uses the scene as background knowledge that is used to understand the act as a particular kind of performance ranging from particularly skillful to utterly unfitting. Without understanding the scene of action, the act and its significance across the other coordinates of the pentad may go unnoticed or can even be misunderstood. Moreover, to appreciate the difficulty and skill implicit in the act, it may be appropriate to understand the scene as imbued with different considerations and entanglements that echo across into the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad (see e.g. Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b).

To come to terms with the significance of the scene, try first to imagine a society that does not have a culture. Then try to imagine what the actions of people would look like in a society that did not have any knowledge whatsoever. In all likelihood you cannot. The first question was posed by the famous anthropologist Franz Boas (1928/1986) and the second by Norbert Elias (1998). It does not require a huge leap of faith to posit that their inquiries relate to the same phenomenon, namely that of the ‘background’ in action and communication.

In this study I use scene and background synonymously. The phenomenon of the background is either implicitly or explicitly referred to by Mead (1934/2015), Heidegger (1962/2008), Giddens (1984), Shotter (2016), Spinosa et al. (1997), Wittgenstein (1953) and many more astute scholars. The background is the scene to any act, and thus especially about the “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945).

However, the scene is also connected to the other coordinates of the pentad through the “agent-scene”, “purpose-scene”, and “agency-scene” ratios (Burke 1945). Especially the agent, the act and the scene are highly intertwined (Burke 1945). Thus it is not only the act that is connected to these other coordinates, but also the scene, which means that all the coordinates of the pentad are somehow embedded in the act-scene ratio, if one chooses this as the primary frame of reference (Burke 1945). A simple act can be performed in a very dense scene, and the dense fiber of the background is what instills the act with qualities ranging from genius to insane (Goffman 1961b).

One person’s act can become the scene for another person and countless acts can become an ingrained culture and background for subsequent acts (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Schein 1992). Acts build man-made scenes (Berlin 2013a; Collingwood 1946). In organizations where there are innumerable formal and informal agreements at play (Goffman 1961b), the issue of background is at times best understood through the concept of “trust” or “ontological security” (Giddens 1991). Others drawing from relational-developmental psychology (Seligman 2018) have talked about this phenomenon as a “secure base” (Kahn 1995) or “holding environment” (Kahn 2001).

To understand action as action, and performance as performance of a particular kind there needs to be a background to which the action or performance is contrasted to and which informs on the relevant details that are heeded or cared for in the act (Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1991a; Schon 1984). The performance acquires its intelligibility, nuance and communicated meaning through the juxtaposition to what is usually done in those kinds of scenes (Goffman 1967; 1981). Deliberate self-enactment and self-disclosure can take place only against a shared background knowledge of action and conduct (Oakeshott 1991a). This is one sense of the background. It is shared and often implicit knowledge about what kinds of acts are

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78 The ‘background’ is in one sense an alternative to the idea of context. One problem with context is that it is often thought through the ideas of geographical or Newtonian space similar to the idea of the environment (see Toulmin 2003). The ‘background’ sensitizes to the self-evident fact that many persons can be in the same place, but that geographical space can be very different to each person depending on their understanding of the background.
appropriate to a given situation. This sense of the background does not distinguish the physical environment from people’s past actions as relevant cues to what one does in a situation of a particular kind. Both can contribute as pertinent ‘considerations’ to be taken into account in one’s actions in that situation. The background is consequently not the same as the environment or nature (see previous chapter).

A second sense of the background comes from the use of language. Language cannot be understood without a communicative medium or background (e.g. Burke 1984). Wittgenstein (1953; 2009) took notice of the background in language use when he in his *Philosophical Investigations* put forth that language use is radically underdetermined (see also Burke 1984; Searle 1995; 2009). To understand a sentence correctly, as simple as “Give me that tool” or just “Hammer”, the sentence does not convey the relevant information to complete the directive. It is necessary to understand the situation in which the directive is given, what is probably meant or intended by it. As another example, words can have inherent ambiguity such as ‘Police, Police!’ and ‘Police police’ (Searle 2009), which need contextual cues to be understood according to the intended meaning. This is accomplished by employing background knowledge. Thus the background can be used synonymously with an ongoing and partly ambiguous “situation” (see Toulmin 2003 for a distinction between context and situation).

A simple case of this phenomenon of using language in a “field-dependent” (Toulmin 1958/2003) manner is encountered in situations when knowledgeable experts such as researchers discuss a topic comprising of highly specific (contextual) knowledge and try to do so effectively without giving much notice to others listening in. Even though the utilized language can be plain English where every sentence seems to be intelligible from a grammatical and vocabulary point of view, for a non-member of the knowledge community the discussion is most likely very difficult to follow, understand, and even less so to participate in (Wenger 2000). This same phenomenon is probably true of all specific language communities which by definition utilize specific background knowledge in their language use (Becker 1932/2003; Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012).

A third sense of the background is that of skill and knowledge attainment (Annas 2011; Heidegger 1962/2008). As analyzed by Heidegger (1962/2008; 2011), Being-in-the-world is characterized by familiarity, which is acquired through experience. When considerations and “equipment” become part of the background they become “transparent” (Heidegger 1962/2008). They become familiar in the sense that they do not need to be cared for above and beyond that of caring for the desired state of affairs. The intent-in-action incorporates the considerations as taken for granted knowledge of how to perform the act so that the intent can actually be accomplished. That is to say, there is knowledge embedded even in the most basic of acts through intentionality and in effectively accomplishing a desired state of affairs in a mutable world (see also Giddens 1984).

According to this point of view, because intentionality is directed at a state of affairs with its specific conditions of satisfaction that make it a particular state of affairs every purposive and therefore intelligent action implicitly and necessarily contains knowledge about the current world and how that world is in this or that particular case effectively acted upon in order to instigate the change. The previously mentioned example of a directive ‘Go get me a glass of water, please’ can serve as an example of background knowledge. The ‘please’ is in the sentence to tone down the illocutionary force of the directive and effectively in the sentence serves as a signal to not to get offended by the directive. It utilizes the customary manners in a civilized society (Elias 1998), where it is not legitimate to get noticeably offended if the request contains
a ‘please’, and thus the please increases the odds of actually accomplishing the desired end state. The ‘glass of water’ contains multiple situation-specific specifications or “field-dependent” criteria (Toulmin 1958/2003), some more vital than others. The water should be clean, fresh water, a certain amount at least, and so forth. That the water is served in a see-through glass and not in a mug or a cup is perhaps of lesser importance.

The issue of the background has often been approached through the concept of the “rule” (e.g. Giddens 1984; Winch 1958/2007; Wittgenstein 1953), which connects the act with the relevant scene. In this context the rule is not to be understood as a regulatory or deontic rule set by an authority. The ‘rule’ how to accomplish a certain feat by doing this rather than that is the kind of rule in question. It is the kind of implicit knowledge about, for example, how particular words are to be used so that they convey a particular meaning. These considerations are seldom explicit and usually come into consciousness by noticing that something is not right in the use of the word or the sentence.

A rule does not strictly speaking impose a particular performance or action (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). There are many ways to skin a cat. It is background knowledge of the relevant considerations in the scene and conditions of satisfaction which are to be taken into account in choosing how to act so that it can be a particular sort of purposive act, including self-enactment and self-disclosure (agent-act and agent-scene ratios) leading from one state of affairs to a wished for future state of affairs. The doing of a particular task for the first time, for example, accumulates understanding of the task and of the conditions in which the task is done. In future performances of the same task the background knowledge has accumulated, and the action becomes more fine-tuned to take certain, often implicit, conditions and considerations into account (Boas 1928/1986; Elias 1998; Giddens 1984).

In relationships the shared communicative medium and background is continuously in the making (Burke 1984; Goffman 1967). In relational dyads every act becomes the 'background' to which a responsive act is formed (Cunliffe 2008; Mead 1934/2015; Watzlawick et al. 1967). The responsive act can be on a relational level one-up, one-down or roughly equal (Berne 1964/2010; Watzlawick et al. 1967). Roughly equal is the most difficult response (Lewin 1948).

This can be illustrated with a fairly simple example. Let us return to the case of meeting a member from the Pirahá tribe. There can be trouble in getting greeted by gifts, for example, is that you do not know the background and thus their symbolic value. If you are given a gem, what do you give in return? You do not necessarily know how common they are, what their ‘purpose’ or intent is, how often such gifts are given, and so on. How do you even know if it is a gift and not merely an offer to lend or even a symbolic obligation to something? In a series of communicational events the act-response pairs turn into act-act pairs where every action is both a response and a novel action (Gergen 2009; Mead 1934/2015). The scene and act meld into one continuous flow of experience. For example, taking a sentence out of the middle of a discussion can be utterly incomprehensible if one does not know what both parties have said before the extracted sentence. The prior acts of both parties become the shared 'background', for which different people in the situation can nonetheless have different foci like the acts of the other rather than one’s own actions (Watzlawick 1984). With enough sequences of act-act pairs, the jointly acknowledged understanding for the form for the relationship is formed and reconfirmed, as discussed earlier.

The background is of importance because it essentially tells us how the “unconscious” (Freud 1995 ed. Gay) can be understood in a history-making perspective (cf. “implicit relational knowing” in Seligman 2018). From this point of view, it is not so that human beings just happen to
have an unconscious like an appendix which could be operated out without consequence, or
that the unconscious is beyond consciousness and therefore cannot be brought forth to con-
sciousness, or that there ‘is’ something like a desire or goodness or badness in one’s uncon-
scious mind (for a similar account see Seligman 2018). These interpretations stem from a one-
sided way of understanding one early part of Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) legacy of an imaginary
realm of interacting forces in the mind (see Schafer 1976; Seligman 2018).

Freud’s original insight and discovery of the unconscious was to notice that people did things
they did not always notice doing (Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008; Seligman 2018). From a re-
lational and history-making standpoint, the unconscious is as a phenomenon about noticing
the details of what one is doing in a particular scene (Giddens 1984; Heidegger 1962/2008).
In other words, it is about knowledge embedded in action (Schon 1984; Seligman 2018).

Freud as a therapist could tell something about a patient’s actions that the patient did not
seem to be aware of. That is, they had managed to acquire all kinds of ‘strange’ considerations
as part of their background, observable as peculiar performances (Ellenberger 1971; Makari
2008). They were strange performances because they stuck out as unintelligible from the point
of view of “what one does” (Heidegger 1962/2008; see also Foucault 1965; Szasz 1974/2010).
Unintelligibility in this context meaning unfamiliar considerations and performances in rela-
tion to one’s own background and familiar style of self-enactment and self-disclosure.

Freud’s insight, that these strange considerations originated in past situations and actions,
that is, from the patient’s history like trauma instead of being a biological condition, was none-
theless a groundbreaking insight not least for developmental psychology (e.g. Seligman 2018).
From this perspective, Freud managed to break new ground in finding a novel conceptual bal-
ance between nature and history (see Berlin 2013b; Toulmin 1990; 2003) in the study of men-
tal health and illness (e.g. Makari 2008). As Makari (2008) points out, in the history of ideas,
this was an immense conceptual and philosophical achievement.

13.6.1 Trust as an embedded connector between the act and the scene

A discussion about the act-scene ratio would not in my mind be sufficiently complete without
a discussion about trust. Immediately as one begins to dig deeper into the character of the act,
it becomes clear that the act is reliant on the scene. This reliance can be coaxed forth with the
help of the concept of trust.

In breaking the constraints of “time-space” (Giddens 1984) through organized action, the
enacted organization inevitably, one can argue, becomes in part upheld by what is colloquially
referred to as trust. For example, that there is a trust that the others will do as agreed in the
near future. When the organization increases in scope and scale to encompass society, trust
becomes a part of a functioning civil government (Luhmann 1988). It is not a coincidence that
trust in government, leadership, judiciary system, politicians, society, market economy, future
sales and the like, have been frequently pinpointed as key metrics of a working civil society and
a widely studied subject matter across the social sciences (e.g. Blomqvist 1997; Gottman 2011).

Perceived from the outlook described herein, an organization of any kind cannot exist with-
out successful communication and mutually agreed upon enactment of joint intentions, both
of which require trust of some sort. Put differently, constructed (man-made) agreements and
mutual understandings exist only through trust (e.g. Harari 2011). Thus in choosing an intelli-
gent and well-thought out course of action, one is forced to trust that the scene is of a particular
kind and trust that other people will act according to agreed expectations.
Trust is a common and yet elusive and grand concept in organization studies (Edmondson 2004; Rousseau et al. 1998). It can be associated with, for instance, familiarity, solidarity, competence, credibility, confidence, faith, hope, loyalty, and reliance (Blomqvist 1997; Luhmann 1988). The issue is further complicated by the fact that concepts such as justice (Leventhal 1980) and psychological safety (Edmondson 1999; Giddens 1984) are entwined with trust. To my knowledge, trust has not been approached in a systematic fashion with the microfoundations lens of history-making in mind, which carves out the theme somewhat differently than for instance levels of analysis (e.g. systems and interpersonal trust, Luhmann 1988) or those approaches that conform to dualism (e.g. cognitive and emotional trust, Lewis & Weigert 1985).

From a history-making point of view, I would suggest that trust can be understood as the general bond that binds an act with especially the scene of action. Trauma, has for example revealed that a total mistrust in the scene, radically impedes the act (Janoff-Bulman 1992; Joseph 2011). That is to say, action requires various forms of trust in the scene and oneself in that scene (agent-scene ratio). These forms are arguably dependent of the situation at hand.

There is a pragmatic and a philosophical answer to why one may consider trust to be an intrinsic part of “relational constructionism” (Hosking 2011). The pragmatic answer is to state the obvious to anyone who has ever cooperated or been part of an established social order. It is a truism that trust promotes cooperation and the lack of it undermines it. It is doubtful if anyone who is daily immersed in the pragmatics of cooperation would disagree. A hypothesis based on merely the pragmatic answer would be that it is impossible to find a functioning organization – functioning means that there is in fact an organization and thus people in cooperation and not merely individual human beings in the vicinity of one another – where there is no trust of any kind. This may be as impossible as finding a people without culture or knowledge. I would argue, as does for example Searle (1995; 2009), that a social arrangement like an organization is an impossibility without trust. From our present perspective, complete lack of trust contradicts what makes the practical and discursive formation of an organization or even a general rule of law possible (see Hobbes 1651/2008; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b).

The philosophical answer is a bit more intricate. Searle (2009), who argues that social reality and civilization are formed on specific forms of language use, posits that inherent in language use is an element of “commitment.” This is a similar idea to Goffman’s (1967) argument that everyone in society is required and expected to care for their “face” and thus expected to participate in the upkeep of face-work and the communicative medium. Thus people are committed to their actions and its consequences on how they are apprehended as moral agents. Searle, in principle, argues the same from a language point of view. Searle (2009) argues that commitment is as intrinsic in language as are syntax, semantics, phonetics, generativity and pragmatics. In formulating and publicly conveying an understandable sentence the orator is committed to that sentence. Searle argues that in using common devices to convey meaning – established words and sensible sentences – the orator it implicitly committed to the speech act.

For example, saying “the cat is on the mat” commits the speaker to basic shared understandings such as a cat is not a human and that a mat is not a house (i.e. the speaker is not using a private language). Otherwise it would be the use of common communicative devices in bad faith undermining the shared devices and medium of communication. Moreover, the statement binds the speaker to the observation “the cat is on the mat.” After the utterance, the agent is committed to the contents of that statement. The audience or respondents are in the position
to form a response varying from complete trust to utter lack of it, depending on their assessment of how committed the speaker is to that statement.

Implicit understandings about the sincerity of language use become embedded within the social arrangement within which the speech acts are uttered. As I have come to understand it, a speech act conveys commitment and therefore the response, which is formed against the background of a committing act necessarily in some part responds to that commitment. How the response as an individual speech act commits to the same commitments conveys trust or lack of it in some form or another. For example, “we must run, we are late” commits the speaker to an action and corresponding rationality both of which a respondent may or may not commit to. Moreover, the respondent decides to what extent he commits to intentionality in the speech act. The respondent might agree with the action, the rationality, but not want to validate the speech act and its relational position by an affirming act. This special case of a partly validating and partly invalidating reply could in this example be accomplished by uttering the exact same sentence and then starting to run. In contemporary organizations this phenomenon is encountered at least in cases where employees’ work-related improvement suggestions are not affirmed by management, yet the exact same content can subsequently be put into effect as management’s own suggestions.79

In sum, an act is an act only in connection to a particular scene. The scene can be dense or light, but it is a necessary ingredient in understanding an act as a particular kind of act. The density of a scene and thus also of the act depends on how much information, considerations, entanglements, and connections to other coordinates of the pentad are at play. The only way for an act to be, for example, complicated, nuanced, intelligent or difficult is for the scene to epitomize characteristics that make such an act possible. Concepts related to trust, like “secure base” (Kahn 1995), “holding environment” (Kahn 2001), background knowledge, self-confidence, expectations, faith, and similar terms, can be thought of as referring to the inseparable connections between an act and its scene (as well as the agent-act and agent-scene ratios to some extent), often tangible as the implicit optionality and risk in acts (e.g. Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b).

The outcome of an act is never truly known in beforehand; one is forced to “trust” in the act, and yet acts are enacted with commitment and the prospect of a future state of affairs in mind. When an act does not pan out, one can after the fact say that some sort of trust was misplaced. From the point of view of history-making, that there can be a gamut of reasons for an unsuccessful act, I would say that there can be a multitude of different forms of trust that can be delineated from each other with the help of real-life cases. These forms are however not of primary interest in this account. The main point of this section has been to put forth the notion that the scene is in various ways of seminal importance in understanding the act. The two are inseparable, and in the midst of action this is often experienced as trust or the lack of it.

13.7 A forward-looking summary of the grammar of management

Similar to the last chapter, in this summary we state the different theoretical prototypes and proto-ideas individually, albeit they form a web of intertwined notions that explicitly or implicitly underlie and penetrate the topic and study of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

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79 Not an uncommon phenomenon, according to informant accounts.
1. Relationships and the matrix of relationships (scene) within which acts are enacted are the principal backdrop for theory-development about the acts of conscious moral agents.

2. Action and more specifically acts and performances in varying degrees carry and convey information about the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad, i.e. agent, scene, agency, and purpose. These connections are inseverable, which makes action communicative, purposive, expressive, and intelligent rather than instinctual behavior. (Burke, Oakeshott, Heidegger, Ryle).
   a. Especially the “agent-act”, “agent-scene”, and “act-scene” ratios are prevalent in all action in the form of embedded information about the scene and about the self in the form of self-disclosure and self-enactment within that scene. (Oakeshott, Burke, Goffman)
   b. Action by definition implies intentionality and an intentionality-oriented (bidirectional) bond to a locally inhabited scene. (Oakeshott, Heidegger, Searle)

3. The act discloses information especially about the act-scene, agent-act, agent-scene, and agency-act ratios through enactment of deontic powers.
   a. Individual deontic powers and thus institutionalized rights and obligations as well as the relational conditions of satisfaction communicate and express a person’s relational position and role in different setups

4. Choosing an appropriate course of action that balances or communicates a distinct and fitting pattern of the dramatistic coordinates whilst taking the person from a current state to a desired future state of affairs is the implicit difficulty of all action. Without difficulty and risk action could not be intelligent and skillful and without options action could not be free and thus performed by conscious moral agents. (Oakeshott, Searle)
   a. A context of difficulty, risk, uncertainty, freedom of choice and what one chooses to care for in the local circumstances underlie the notion of a skillful performance and more generally the show of mind. (Oakeshott, Heidegger, Ryle)

5. Every morally responsible person can be presumed to be familiar with, habituated and enculturated into – and thus able to play – the roles of a Parent, Child and Adult in relationships. These roles are relationally constituted through deontic powers and respective positions on intentionality formation, albeit they have their origin in upbringing and ontogenic development. (Macmurray, Berne, Searle, Seligman)
   a. For our purposes of this chapter and study, intentionality principally concerns a shift from a current state of affairs to a desired state of affairs through assignment of conditions of satisfaction on a current state of affairs. Assignment of conditions of satisfaction concerns a sense of balance and appropriate pattern in the dramatistic pentad.
   b. Relational conditions of satisfaction concern the relationship (scene) and the construction and communication of collective intentionality. Thus it concerns the agent-act ratio within a particular relational scene.

6. A modern society is constituted by institutionalized relationships formed by past agreements concerning deontic powers, i.e. rights and obligations. The enduring matrix of relationships are context dependent variations of the asymmetrical Parent-Child relationship, thus forming a rights and obligations based man-made authority system every person in society and organizations are in various degrees subject to. Thus the
relational fabric of society and organizations is principally based on man-made agreements about context dependent roles, i.e. constellations of rights and duties within distinct scenes of action. These powers can be altered by new man-made agreements. (Berlin, Hobbes, Searle, Milgram)

7. Collective intentionality is the global understanding of a desired future state of affairs (future man-made scene) and its conditions of satisfaction, which can include an amalgam of different and yet interrelated agent-act ratios or colloquially roles, practices, and performances to achieve that future state of affairs. (Bratman, Searle, Weick & Roberts)
   a. Collective intentionality is a *sine qua non* of cooperation and thus also of coordination and management of organizations
   b. Collective intentionality or respectively collective mind is efficiently established through the use of speech acts, especially Directives and Commissives that concern the formation of a collective intentionality directed at a desired future state of affairs
   c. The use of language is radically under-defined regarding the necessary background knowledge to understand the content and relational conditions of satisfaction surrounding language use. The use of language requires it to be embedded in a shared world of experience and its medium of communication.

8. There can be relational pathologies that stem from the constructed communication system itself. A relational pathology indicates a situation in which action is prompted toward extreme behavior like misbehaving or otherwise made practically impossible. These man-made situations are construed in a way that diminishes agency to the degree that it makes it impossible to balance the act-scene, agent-act and agent-scene ratios. (Bateson, Goffman, Watzlawick, Laing, Seligman)
   a. A mixture of relational positions, speech acts, conditions of satisfaction, intentionality formation, nested institutions, deontic powers, and implicit knowledge can become entangled, contradictory, ambiguous, and even paradoxical in a way that makes an intelligent act impossible, without breaking some of the implicit rules of the situation.

9. The vocabulary of Parent, Adult and Child is not confined to the analysis of interactions but through intentionality (care) can be extended to theorize of the constitution of the self, consciousness, Being-in-the-world, moral characters, culture, history-making, and the inhabited world. This vocabulary is based on a widely adapted non-dual way of thinking about the actions of conscious moral agents. (Mead, Heidegger, Macmurray, Lewin, Giddens, Spinosa et al.)

10. An act is inseverable from its scene. The act-scene relationship is based on trust that a chosen course of action fits with the scene and thus accomplishes the desired future state of affairs.
   a. An act is always risky because it is based on incomplete knowledge of a mutable and man-made scene inhabited by other conscious moral agents. Risk and options are inherent characteristics of the act-scene relationship in a world inhabited by conscious moral agents.
   b. Trust can take multiple forms in the act-scene, agent-act and agent-scene ratios, like faith, self-confidence, courage, knowledge, power, commitment, reliance,
and expectations. An act always carries some trust in the man-made scene, which is broken or found to be misplaced upon experiencing unsuccessful acts.
14. Understanding interactional wellbeing

“Our anthropological knowledge justifies the most serious doubts regarding the physiological determination or the necessity of occurrence of many of the crises and struggles that characterize individual life in our civilization.” (Boas 1928/1986: 191)

“The moral life is human affection and behaviour determined, not by nature, but by art. It is conduct to which there is an alternative. This alternative need not be consciously before the mind; moral conduct does not necessarily involve the reflective choice of a particular action. Nor does it require that each occasion shall find a man without a disposition, or even without predetermination, to act in a certain way: a man’s affections and conduct may be seen to spring from his character without thereby ceasing to be moral. The freedom without which moral conduct is impossible is freedom from a natural necessity which binds all men to act alike. ... It identifies moral behaviour as the exercise of an acquired skill (though the skill need not have been selfconsciously acquired), but it does not distinguish it from other kinds of art – from cookery or from carpentry.” (Oakeshott 1991b: 466)

14.1 Foreword

Hitherto we have in the previous chapter towards history-making inquired into the appropriate philosophical background and intellectual lineage underpinning the study of the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing as a man-made phenomenon co-constituted by the acts of conscious moral agents in locally constructed settings. We chose the theoretical “scene” of history-making in order to gain a grasp of the relational dynamics involved in interactional wellbeing in an action and context sensitive furniture and lighting (Burke 1945). We thereafter in a grammar of management carved out a way of thinking that connects the “act” with the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad, i.e. scene, agency, purpose, and agent (Burke 1945). The chapter illustrates the kind of communicative and performative building blocks that undergird the construction and enactment of interaction, relationship and organization setups, which were introduced and used in the analysis of the empirical material in Part III.

In this final theoretical chapter, the focus is on connecting the hitherto unearthed interactional understandings with wellbeing. As said, the grammar of management can be understood as a chapter on the structural components surrounding and embedded in an act. How acts employ and build man-made scenes (setups), and consequently, what makes action difficult and how one can act for example intelligently and skillfully within such setups in accordance with the gamut of nested rules (agreements) and the relational conditions of satisfaction implicit in the situation. In plain terms, how to construct, read, enact and abide by the intricate and often implicit details of the man-made “authority system” like an organization setup (Milgram 1974/2009).
This final chapter on understanding interactional wellbeing complements the grammar of management by discussing how wellbeing generative and degenerative processes can be embedded in the relational dynamics that make and break the setup, especially the alignment between the “big three” of “agent”, “act”, and “scene” or as we here call it the agent-act-scene triad (Burke 1945). In this chapter we are especially interested in two categorically different types of cases: one in which wellbeing is generated by maintaining and following an established authority system, and secondly, cases where one may more or less deliberately act in a way that breaks with the established rules and pressures inherent in the situation and subsequently constructs a new scene of action. Thus how and why one opts for an action even though it might not be in accordance with the pre-established rules of the situation.

In the terms of Burke’s (1945) pentad, this chapter is primarily concerned with “purpose”, which expands on the previously introduced and used relational structure by connecting it to wellbeing (see Part II). However, due to the embedded character of purpose (e.g. intentionality) we are forced to investigate it indirectly, through subordination, representation and transformation of the setup (cf. Weick & Roberts 1993). Purpose is not one of the “big three”, i.e. “act”, “agent” or “scene”, which are dramatistically highly interconnected and well-established foci of dramatistical interest (Burke 1945). Purpose can be understood as always stemming from or embedded in one or more of these three coordinates or their in-between ratios. Consequently, purpose comes to the fore especially in cases where a man-made scene of action is either constructed or is deliberately broken down, for some purpose.

For example, in cases where the dominance of the scene upon the act is broken (scene-act ratio), it is customarily accomplished by conversely highlighting the moral “agent’s” influence upon the act (agent-act ratio), as will be shown. An alternative purpose and consequently also a different act is chosen for the scene by an agent, that is to say, the purpose lives through the agent and his inherent freedom to choose differently. Thus purpose is customarily either infused into the scene or the agent, and in the tension and influence of the two on the act. Purpose consequently becomes part of the dynamics between the big three of agent, act and scene (see Burke 1945). This important topic of purpose and its dramatistic bond to the scene and the character and significance of the agent becomes highlighted especially in cases where one is forced into a choice of either following the rules of the authority system and consequently different forms of setups one finds oneself in, or if one breaks and attempts to transform the setup to fit another purpose and thus open up novel possibilities for action.

For these reasons, this chapter discusses purpose through the balance in the agent-act-scene triad. That is to say, through the actions that disrupt and maintain a mutually shared scene of action (Goffman 1967) and in part through the qualities of the agent (Annas 2011), with a keen eye on cases where the agent chooses to break with the man-made scene to construct an alternative setup and purpose for action. This means that some additional thematic concerns and discussions are in order, so that we have the necessary conceptual building blocks in place for a thoughtful empirical discussion about the interactional wellbeing of conscious moral agents within different setups. These discussions include emotions, civil conduct, virtuous conduct, and trauma in light of the dramatistic pentad. To unearth a way of thinking about wellbeing whilst employing the dramatistic pentad is the main goal of this chapter. This discussion shows how the advocated understanding and the pentad can be used to connected often unconnected but instrumental subject matters closely related to wellbeing.

In this chapter we begin by connecting the dramatistic pentad to emotions. By dealing with the issue of emotions in everyday life we begin to transpose the topic of wellbeing from a
universal or environmental scene to a history-making “circumference” (Burke 1945). Emotions are often thought of as the bedrock of wellbeing and thus what one should study to understand happiness and wellbeing at its foundation (Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Diener 2000; Fredrickson 2009; 2013; Haybron 2008; Lyubomirsky et al. 2005a; Seligman 2002). Following Freud’s (1995 ed. Gay) classic take on emotions, emotions are often reduced into the generic agent as an internal substance or force that directs, empowers or forces the agent to act in particular ways, at times leading to embarrassing emotional episodes and other times to sought-after organizational outcomes (e.g. Barsade & Gibson 2007; Fredrickson 2013; Russell 2003; see also Burke 1945). Here I put forward an alternative way of thinking about emotions which does not position emotions on the pedestal of wellbeing, but as part of a larger circumference that includes at least the big three of the dramatistic pentad. This is the first step in connecting the issue of wellbeing with our prior discussions about the “act” of management and the “scene” of history-making (Burke 1945).

Building upon the versatile conceptualizations previously introduced with the threefold structure of relationality, especially Heidegger’s (1962/2008) way of thinking penetrates the theme of emotions in an apt manner that fits the purpose of this chapter (e.g. Goldie 2009). Other adjacent vocabularies to conceptualize the matter could have also been used (e.g. Bakhtin 1993; Dewey 2012; Gergen 2009; Holt & Cornelissen 2014; Maitlis et al. 2013; Nussbaum 2001; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b), but for the sake of comprehension one set of concepts is sufficient to accomplish the aim of transposing emotions into the frame of reference of the dramatistic pentad. In discussing emotions, I subsequently utilize foremost Heidegger’s (1962/2008) “existential analytic” to focus attention on the concrete situations (i.e. scene) in which emotions are felt and how they are dealt with in an everyday manner (see also Goldie 2009). Following Heidegger, I pursue the notion that emotions are used and performed to deal with one’s situation in the world, and thereby also as expressives in communication to alter those scenes (Searle 2009; Wittgenstein 1953). In a sense, “act” and “scene” are reintroduced into the topic of emotions in a way that does not privilege emotions. Instead, our discussion brings emotions forth as within the tensions and harmonies between at least act-scene, agent-act, act-scene, agency-act and purpose-scene ratios (Burke 1945).

How emotions are used and performed every day is most vividly and with much acuity portrayed through the next topic of “civil conduct” (Goffman 1967). The discussion situates emotions in the relations between the “big three” (Burke 1945); a person (agent) and the world (scene) as well as within the interactional encounters (acts) that transpire within a world inhabited by other conscious moral agents. In this discussion emotions are part and parcel of following and enacting man-made situations as well as parting away from the rules of the situation (Goffman 1961a; 1963a; 1967). Consequently, emotions are in everyday social life intimately connected to issues of understanding, judgement, expression and action within unique man-made situations (Bakhtin 1993; Billig 1996; Goffman 1967; Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1991b).

Man-made and co-constituted scenes can guide which sorts of acts, moods and emotions, and also agents (act-agent ratio) through self-disclosure and self-enactment are appropriate for those scenes. This discussion underscores the tension between the scene and the agent, with pressure on the act to conform to either of the two and often to both coordinates (Goffman 1967).
This line of thought comes to understand emotions as through the tensions and harmonic resolutions between dramatistic coordinates, thus situating civil conduct and experienced fluctuations in wellbeing within the frame of reference of the dramatistic pentad.

The discussion on civil conduct is chiefly based on the seminal works of Erving Goffman (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981), albeit other similar perspectives have also informed this account (e.g. Macmurray 1960; Oakeshott 1991a). In analyzing everyday civil conduct Goffman managed to break new ground by drawing forth how communication works and especially how emotions are part of and used within communication. With the help of Goffman, I discuss how an “interaction order” (Goffman 1967) is maintained and broken away from through emotional communication. It would seem that emotional communication is also used for this purpose, that is, to act in accordance with and to break away from the scene of the interaction.

Put differently, to act in a certain predictable way is to draw forth a predictable and harmonious reciprocal response. The act and the response are understood similarly when the scene is understood in the same way (Burke 1945). But as acts may change the scene, there are rituals for maintaining or re-establishing the scene for civil encounters (Goffman 1961a). The topic of civil conduct shows that relational scenes can have purposes, which constrain the acts and the expression of emotions within those scenes. In addition to breaking with the scene, the show of emotions can be subject to and serve the purpose of maintaining the “rules” of the situation, the co-constituted act-scene ratio (Giddens 1984; Winch 1958/2007; Wittgenstein 1953). Emotions are thus played out as part of a larger whole that includes agent, scene, act, purpose and agency (Burke 1945).

The interaction order or equivalently, the rules of the man-made situation often concern the issue of relational positions as they form the setup for the encounter (Berne 1964/2010; Goffman 1981). Who may enact what kinds of acts, who may change the scene in what way, who is obliged to act according to the scene, etc.? Rules are man-made rights and obligations (see the grammar of management). Within this path of thought it is argued that the “self” (James 1890/2016; Mead 1934/2015), which has already been plotted with the relational threefold, is partly determined by the acts and scenes as a carrier of information about those acts and scenes (Goffman 1959; 1961b; 1981).

With the “self” or “face” (Goffman 1959; 1967) interactants plot what divergent deontic powers concern whom in each scene; that is, the “participation framework” and “production format” of the encounter (Goffman 1981). Based on Goffman’s work, it can be said that an agent’s “self”, especially through communicated self- and other-worth, is always in play in each situation. That is to say, the “agent” is always somehow part of the “scene” in a way that vibrates across to the other coordinates of the pentad (Burke 1945). When one does not act according to the rules of the situation, the character of the agent becomes prominent (Aristotle 2005; Goffman 1967). Self-disclosure and self-enactment of a particular kind of agent can thus constrain as well as enable acts beyond the rules of the situation.

Wellbeing is often at least implicitly asserted as the sumnum bonum of all action; it is colloquially the end-all “purpose” to all purposes for action (Aristotle 2005; Burke 1945; Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Within a history-making “scene” (Burke 1945) a science about universal and tenseless purposes is however problematic because the scene is not universal or timeless in history-making, and the same goes for purposes. Moreover, theorizing of universally good

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81 Our discussion of Heidegger (1962/2008) in Part II already showed the same for material scenes with equipment and ready-to-hand assignments for scenic objects.
purposes can unwittingly revert to paternalism and thus erode the possibility of situational self-authority and self-expression inherent in the perspective on history-making (Kant 1784/2009). How then to talk of wellbeing in this light?

In this I turn to Aristotle (2005) and “phronesis” (see also Chia & Holt 2008; Flyvbjerg 2006; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). Human conduct and the “games people play” (Berne 1964/2010; see also Carse 1986) ostensibly concern living in a world of other minds and their purposes and, consequently, a life of also conflicts, discordant minds, misunderstandings, innuendos, uncertain choices, moral dilemmas, uncontrollable circumstances and unexpected possibilities (Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). Within the multitude of such situations persons nonetheless can and tend to act purposively and morally aware, according to the rules of the situation (act-scene ratio) or according to one’s own moral compass (agent-act ratio) (Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945).

In order to talk of these matters and the balancing act in the act-scene-agent triad with sufficient concreteness and yet non-deterministically a broad humane outlook is probably warranted (Toulmin 2003). In my mind a science of purpose and the kind of knowledge that it produces and requires is perhaps best approached through case-based moral reasoning or “casuistry” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; see also Burke 1945). Casuistry highlights a sensitivity to the scene of action and its circumstances (the scene) as well as to the use of practical reasoning and judgement (i.e. the agent) to cope with morally vexing situations. That is to say, case-based moral reasoning probably allows phrnetic knowledge of purposes and thus of wellbeing by highlighting cases of act-scene-agent balancing acts, with phrnetic “edification” in mind (Rorty 1979/2009; see also Janik & Toulmin 1996).

With the help of Julia Annas’s (2011) conducive cross-pollination between Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975; 1990) flow-theory and Aristotelian (2005) virtue ethics this investigation shows how one could approach the developmental character of interactional wellbeing, that is, how an agent can become so to say equipped with “personal mastery” (Senge 1990/2006) to withstand or even construct alternative scenes for action. In this discussion the agent is not a constraint or victim to action or the scene, but an enabler through character and acquired interpersonal skills. Civil interactions require and build on vast amounts of background knowledge which become visible as interactional skill attainment (Boas 1928/1986; Elias 1998; Giddens 1984).

Annas’s (2011) account shows practical moral wisdom as a practical skill that can be cultivated even though it does not rely upon learning universal and timeless principles of good or moral action. With these discussions at hand it is possible to conceptualize interactional wellbeing as a historically situated relational moral competence that can be both learned and educated in lived life. Relational moral competence in this study refers to the skill of balancing between the dramatistic coordinates and especially the big three; agent, act, and scene. The kind of knowledge it builds upon is however in all likelihood, due to the impermanence of acts, agents and man-made scenes, of a phrnetic instead of epistemic character (Aristotle 2005; Flyvbjerg 2006; Nussbaum 2001; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The repercussions of a phrnetic instead of an epistemic view on wellbeing is consequently also elaborated.

This chapter on interactional wellbeing ends with a section on the issue of trauma whilst also touching upon the phenomenon of posttraumatic growth. The point of this discussion is to show that some therapeutic problems can be of a similar kind or “category” (Ryle 1949/2000) as interactional wellbeing. There can be such a thing as “trained incapacity” (Burke 1954/1984) or learned relational moral incompetence. Trauma and personal growth are arguably
connected to practical wisdom and one’s relationship with the world (Janoff-Bulman 1992; Joseph 2011; see also Nussbaum 2001).

Traumatic events show that volitional but perhaps unpredictable consequences or unsolicited acts can change one’s “orientation” (Burke 1954/1984) and thus one’s judgement about one’s surroundings (act-scenes), self-image (agent-scene), and the efficacy of one’s acts (agency-scene), which can be disadvantageous to the agent in question. The example of trauma is an extreme example of how a perpetual imbalance between coordinates of the pentad can be learned. In these cases, experience, instead of contributing to relational skill attainment, disintegrates one’s “assumptive world” of how the different ratios of the dramatistic pentad can be combined and balanced and consequently how one may successfully act in a man-made world inhabited by other conscious moral agents (Janoff-Bulman 1992).

In my mind these connections provide us with a sufficient set of considerations and conceptual scaffolds to delve into the second empirical encounter in Part V of this study and thus into understanding interactional wellbeing in situated action with a more developed vocabulary at our disposal.

14.2 From emotions as things to emotions in lived life

When speaking of emotions in an everyday way and in an everyday situation what is most evident is that they without a doubt matter. Concordant with this observation, multiple well-known psychological theories of wellbeing have been asserted which prominently feature emotions. Hedonic wellbeing and desire-satisfaction theories are cases in point (for a seminal review see Haybron 2008; see also Fredrickson 2013; McMahon 2006; Seligman 2011). Emotions are often however thought of as irrational, a ‘characteristic’ that a human being possesses, and as psycho-chemical agents grounded in the substantiality of biological existence. Emotions are thought to be something in and of themselves. That is, as universal and timeless things, an emotion is understood through its thinghood that has characteristics such as valence, a level of arousal (Russell 1980), a specific thought-action tendency (Isen 2000), a broadening or narrowing effect on cognition (Fredrickson 1998; 2001), or how it is hardwired into cognition and facial expressions (see Goldie 2009). In orthodox wellbeing theory emotions are part and parcel of the fabric of (human) nature.

One influential approach into emotions has been through traditional Cartesian presuppositions of how they should be described as substances in order to conform to the traditions of Enlightenment era theory (Berlin 2013a; Burke 1945). There are however other ways how one can approach emotions. To understand emotions and how they are involved in a person’s well-being but not its sole determinant, it may be worthwhile to momentarily set aside ingrained metaphysical structures by bringing forth the phenomenon of emotions as it is experienced directly in its everydayness, that is, in its worldly character. Heidegger (1962/2008) put it rather accurately in Being and Time in stating that the experience of emotions is direct experiential evidence that emotions are not things. Perceived as what they are in their familiar everydayness thus enables an alternative vista into the character of emotions. To understand emotions according to the “criteria” (Toulmin 1958/2003) of everyday intelligibility it is necessary to understand them in one’s everyday dealings with and amidst them.

In order to understand emotions in the way they are understood in their everydayness it is most likely necessary to perceive them in situated life (Bakhtin 1993; Heidegger 1962/2008; Goffman 1967). This requires the pinpointing of emotions within the living of a life of a person
Heidegger’s existential analytic is helpful in this regard. He set out to describe lived life as a phenomenon anyone can observe and scrutinize for themselves without the help of any specialist methods (cf. introspection in James 1890/2016). Heidegger’s overall argument is that one does not have to take his word for it, he merely aims to point out what our direct empirical evidence self-evidently tells us about the phenomenon (see also Dewey 1958; James 1912/2003). For Heidegger, the careful investigation of what is most self-evident about emotions is also revealing, because the observations are most likely in sharp contrast to how they have been approached through essentialist theorizing. In this account I try to be true to Heidegger’s point of view without relying too heavily on his own esoteric linguistic style and conceptualizations (for a similar approach see Goldie 2009; Holt & Cornelissen 2014).

14.2.1 Moods and understanding

Heidegger approached emotions through a unity of the person, the phenomenon and the world. It is deliberately and distinctly non-Cartesian in its philosophical convictions. This unity is in Heidegger’s (1962/2008) terminology “Being-in-the-world.” According to Heidegger (1962/2008), to subtract the person, the phenomenon, or the world out of this unity is to reduce it to some pre-theoretically saturated metaphysical structure which is contradictory to direct experience of everyday life as Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world, if interpreted plainly, can in its simple form be understood as reminding of the existential fact that for any phenomenon there is always a being (person) who encounters something (phenomenon) in a context (world) (cf. Burke 1945). To understand emotions in the light of lived life as Being-in-the-world and thus as it is lived in an everyday way it might be helpful to follow Heidegger’s footsteps and begin with understanding states-of-mind as moods before we go into the more specific topic of emotions. It is worth noting that Bakhtin (1993: 36) has discerned the phenomenon of moods and emotions very similarly to Heidegger:

“The emotional-volitional tone [of a person] relates precisely to the whole concrete and once-occurrent unity in its entirety. It expresses the entire fullness of a state of being qua event at the given moment, and expresses it as that which is given as well as yet-to-be-determined from within me as an obligatory participant in it. That is why the emotional-volitional tone cannot be isolated, separated out of the unitary and once-occurrent context of a living consciousness as related only to a particular object as such. This is not a universal valuation of an object independently of that unique context in which it is given to me at the given moment, but expresses the whole truth of the entire situation as a unique moment in what constitutes an ongoing event.”

The phenomenon of “emotional-volitional tone” (Bakhtin 1993) or “mood” (Heidegger 1962/2008) can be conceived of as an existential phenomenon. A mood can be experienced directly as an always present reminder of what a person is in its Being-in-the-world. According to Heidegger, moods can be considered as evidence that persons are existentially ‘open’ (cf. Homo Clausus, Elias 1998; Goffman 1961b; Holt & Cornelissen 2014). In Heidegger’s account a person cannot be severed from the world and moods show this as an existential and existentially verifiable fact. Thus, the often-asserted metaphysical structure of ‘inside’ (emotions, moods, thoughts...) and ‘outside’ (environment) of experience of any kind is in Heideggerian thought false, simplistic and metaphorical (for similar arguments see Bakhtin 1993; Dewey...
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1958; Oakeshott 1991a, 1991b). According to Heidegger (1962/2008), mood is a person’s attunement to the world (see also Holt & Cornelissen 2014). As such it is both what a person ‘is’ in its being in some situation and how the person is faring in the situation he is in. The mood is in its aboutness about the person who experiences it, about the person’s faring in his dealings, and about the world in which those dealings are understood as significant. In Burke’s (1945) terms, a mood is about the “agent”, it is about the “scene”, it is about the “act”, and it is about the attunement between the “agent”, the “act” and the “scene.” The mood is part of all the elements of Being-in-the-world. A mood is thus part of understanding oneself as a then-and-there person in the world with a then-and-there comport with the world.

Moods are within Being-in-the-world and when interrogated directly they offer a situated understanding of Being-in-the-world. According to Heidegger (1962/2008), this holds also the other way around, that any understanding of one’s attunement with the world is accompanied with a concomitant mood. In general, it can be said that moods have an intelligible ‘why’ to them and that ‘why’ is related to a situated understanding. For example, if one is feeling moody, one seeks a situational explanation to the mood. From the idea that Being-in-the-world forms a unity, it follows that all understandings are always accompanied with some mood, because all understandings are always in relation to one’s situation (involvement) and of that situation (world) as a particular situation which one is ongoingly coping with. Thus, to understand moods one needs to have at least a rudimentary understanding of situated understanding.

Situated understanding is a relational phenomenon. When ‘something’ is recognized it is understood as part of understanding a situation, of the person in that situation and his capability of coping with it (see also Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990). The situated understanding of how one is faring in a situation is accompanied by a mood, and both the understanding and mood are in relation to the understood potentialities of that particular situation (Heidegger 1962/2008). If, for example, a situation can with some likelihood turn into a fight or a pressure cooker, that can be understood and anticipated in a person’s mood. The person’s capability to influence the situation is also taken into account, which can be described as how naturally or easily a person copes with, say, a high-pressure situation (cf. Annas 2011; Aristotle 2005). This is in all likelihood experienced and visible in that person’s self-enactment and self-disclosure in that situation (Oakeshott 1991a). Moods are about the person’s Being-in-the-world which includes several concomitant understandings: An understanding of the situation the person is in, an understanding of what that situation could turn into, and an understanding of how the person could deal with such potential situations (see Holt & Cornelissen 2014). The mood is not only about the actuality of the situation but also directed at its future possibilities. A mood is in other words also about oneself coping with those possibilities and probabilities instead of only the actuality at hand.

In a Heideggerian understanding, moods and understanding must thus be dealt with in unison if they are to be understood in their everyday form. A mood is always in a situation, i.e. moods are encountered in the midst of involvements. By dealing with a situation one is dealing with an involvement in that situation. That involvement is understood through the totality of involvements (world). To do one thing is to choose not to do other things at that moment, but those other things nonetheless provide some of the significance that the ongoing involvement has (see also “answerability” in Bakhtin 1993). The totality of involvements is in other words a (moral) context to the involvement at hand. One deals with a specific involvement because of its potential and thus its significance. That is, what is accomplished by dealing with it, it’s purpose. One’s dealings are thus always timely and take into consideration at what time what
involvement should be attended to so that it makes sense and is (morally) intelligent. This understanding is however dependent of the context, which means dependent on all other possible involvements a person could conceivably be doing instead.

Those involvements get their significance and understandability through the “referential totality of significance” (Heidegger 1962/2008) which is the ‘for what’-structure. All acts are done with a purpose in mind and that purpose is the accomplishment of something. It is a ‘for what.’ Consequently, in an action there is an implicit direction and potentiality that is worked towards. All that one could conceivably work towards constitutes the referential totality of significance. The referential totality of significance is all that which one could project oneself towards as possibility (for-the-sake-of-which in Heidegger’s terminology) and on the basis of which a person chooses his involvements. According to Heidegger (1962/2008), the involvement and its significance in unison give rise to overall understandability, which is connected to any and all understandings of the inhabited world.

In other words, the involvements are understood only in reference to their ‘for what.’ ‘I am here in order to and for the sake of’ is understanding the situation as a particular situation with a particular potential, even though it does not need to be articulated explicitly (see also Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b; Schon 1984). Without this reference it is likely that one does not have an understanding of what one is doing. If one does not understand what one is doing, then the person cannot have an understanding of how he is faring in the doing and thus the situation. Coming from this point of view, understanding and mood are co-constituted in doings. And this is the context in which moods are encountered, in the midst of everyday doings.

An involvement is done with a particular future ‘for what’ in view and the mood is dependent of the tenability of that ‘for what.’ If, for example, a particular ‘for what’ becomes untenable then the mood changes, but this is only if that ‘for what’ is significant. In sum, existentially, a mood is how one is dealing with one’s situation and what that situation is, and the encountered mood is one’s own in the sense that it is about one’s own Being-in-the-world.

In Being-in-the-world, moods are also part of the “existentialia” of Being-in (Heidegger 1962/2008), that is, that which can be encountered as a phenomenon in Being-in-the-world. Understandings, interpretations, emotions and moods are all existentialia. They can be scrutinized and discerned as ‘something.’ That a person always has some sort of mood can be taken as an existential fact, but it is not something that a person has as a ‘thing’ but something that can be noticed as a state-of-mind and handled as such. States-of-mind are such that they can go unnoticed and be transparent (ready-to-hand) while being absorbed in dealing with involvements (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990). Or they can become a problem for a person and thus require handling or taking it into account in one’s dealings (present-at-hand). Moods are thus such that they can show up as something that should be handled (Heidegger 1962/2008).

As stated earlier, moods and emotions matter to persons. The fact that moods and emotions show themselves as something that matter is to say that they show up as something significant and thus to be attended to. A state-of-mind when it is noticed is in its foundation an involvement in the world, and only because it is an involvement can it be noticed and attended to. But it is not any generic involvement. A person can notice his state-of-mind only in the midst of an already ongoing involvement in Being-in-the-world; in its particular ‘then-and-there.’ To acknowledge the experience of moods is to acknowledge the existential fact that a person is subject and open to the world, which one can however learn to cope with (Heidegger 1962/2008; Holt & Cornelissen 2014).
According to Heidegger (1962/2008), moods are never experienced as generic and universal moods but as specific attunement to the situation. A state-of-mind is not and can never be uprooted from its surroundings. In Heidegger’s terminology, the sense of being subject to the world in encountered existentially in the experience of “thrownness.” It is to be already and at all times, that is, pre-ontologically, in some situation which may at times and to various degrees be uncontrollable. The world or scene can work unsuspectedly upon the person instead of the other way around. That the world does not always conform to one’s projected hopes and possibilities should perhaps be taken as an existential fact. This entails the recognition that lived life is quintessentially an uncertain affair. For Heidegger, when this uncertainty is experienced directly and with all its fervor it is encountered phenomenally as experiencing the mood of anxiety.

14.2.2 Focused emotions in everyday life

Some states-of-mind can be instigated by a relation to something specific in the situation. One can be angry, happy, sad, irritated, jealous, and so forth, and in each case the specific understanding of the situation makes the emotion intelligible. When a mood is encountered as problematic it is often unfocused, the reason for the ill-attunement is covered up (Goldie 2009). In order for the mood to be understood and thus become intelligible it requires uncovering as to its focus. A focused mood can be called an emotion (Heidegger 1962/2008; Goldie 2009). A mood can wane in and out of focus similarly to any understanding of the situation as a specific kind of situation. When a mood becomes recognized as an emotion it gains specificity about one’s Being-in-the-world. A mood is thus disclosed as to its focus and consequently becomes intelligible as an emotion. For example, fear is commonly brought about by a relation to something, often an unexpected encounter with something that is more or less reasonable to be feared. In a similar vein anxiety as an emotion brings forth something to be handled.

This world-directedness of emotions – a “feeling towards” (Goldie 2009) – shows that emotions are intentional phenomena and it is their intentionality which is uncovered when they are made intelligible. Emotions are intelligible through this character of world-directedness and can be considered intelligent when it is appropriate to the situation. unintelligent emotions present themselves as problems and thus as inappropriate to the situation and must be handled due to their inappropriateness. It is possible to behold one’s emotion as an emotion only because it has stuck out of the everyday background, probably due to its inappropriateness in the then-and-there situation.

If a mood is considered problematic and the reason for the ill-attunement cannot be made sense of and thus turned into a specific emotion directed as something in the world that can be attended to directly, a person can alter his mood in order to dissolve the problem. The problem has presented itself as a possibly misplaced ill-attunement. It is considered possibly misplaced because it cannot be recognized and made sense of as to its reason, which is always an understanding of the situation the person is in. Consequently, the appropriate remedy to the emotion is also covered up. A person can take action to re-attune himself to the situation by altering the situation into some recognizable activity in which the person when he is attuned to it has a familiar mood; a person can thus instigate a “counter-mood” (Heidegger 1962/2008). Counter-moods can be plotted by, for example, listening to a particular and familiar sort of music, by talking to a friend, by going for a walk. In other words, by taking on a recognizable involvement Being-in-the-world is altered to bring with it a familiar mood.
Persistent and problematic moods that have stuck out are taken to be significant in the sense that they are effortfully and reflectively scrutinized to be discovered as a particular emotion with an explicit directionality and significance (Goldie 2009). Problematic moods that are interpreted to be without reason are probably interpreted as unintelligible moods. This does not mean that moods ‘are’ primordially unintelligible, but that moods which are perceived as problematic and with a covered directionality are taken as unintelligible. Such moods present themselves as problems that cannot be dealt with as the problem is unclear due to its unintelligibility.

It is possible that all moods cannot be made sense of (Goldie 2009). The unclarity of the mood can present itself as an existential problem. It brings forth the person as a doer in its proper character as a doer, but without nothing to attend to. As there is nothing to be done, as nothing can be done directly because there is no focus; nothing can be beheld in one’s mind’s eye. Heidegger calls this particular mood anxiety. In anxiety the person’s being becomes the problem which is, according to Heidegger (1962/2008), constitutive for what Being is. A person is a person because only for a person can his Being become a problem (Heidegger 1962/2008).

According to Heidegger (1962/2008), states-of-mind however have the character of “turning away” from existence as such, which is Being-in-the-world. This turning away is identical to saying that a person is in the grip of an emotion. To be in such a grip is to lock Being-in-the-world into a specific understanding of oneself and the situation at hand, which thus closes of the situation from novel circumspection and caring considerations of what that situation is (Heidegger 1962/2008). The feeling towards has defined the situation and thus its potential as a particular sort of situation, and this is possible only because emotions have intentionality and carry understandings.

In Heidegger’s (1962/2008) mind this is the special character of emotions. They can be equally captivating as specific understandings. To be in the grip of an emotion is to close off oneself to novel situational understandings and thus to let that emotion define the situation. One can be in the grip of a worldview, a religion, a belief, but these understandings are not the sort that close off the situation as to its potentiality as a particular sort of situation. Emotions can close the horizon of possibility because they are always about the situation at hand. As the emotion is directed at something in the situation the emotion is attended to by attending to its involvement directly. For example, to be angry is to jump into dealing with the object of anger directly. The involvement in the world shows itself as significant through the emotion but also because of the recognition of the emotion itself.

When the emotion is taken as the reason for the person’s way of being in a certain way in a then-and-there situation – which is moreover discerned as ungrounded, inappropriate and disproportionate (Goldie 2009) – then the person is said to be in the grip of an emotion. The emotion itself is taken as more significant than what it points toward with its directedness. Although the emotion is taken to be the reason for the conduct, the emotion is not intelligible without understanding its directedness towards something. The emotion cannot be understood in isolation. An action which carries an emotional attunement with that action may justify the action for the person because in that person’s referential totality then-and-there the action is fitting. The trust in the emotion and thus its concomitant action is probably taken as well-grounded in the facts of the situation, appropriate to that situation and proportionate according to the significance of the situation. Afterwards when the emotional grip has subsisted
and the referential totality has thus altered, the action may no longer be perceived as fitting. Remorse may set in.

In sum, the essential features of moods and emotions in their everydayness is not necessarily captured if they are described as isolated entities and thus devoid on doings, situations, and the world around them. The character of emotions and moods arguably comes forth in a novel light when inquired through how they become and are treated as significant by conscious moral agents. They arise in the midst of involvements, they are often intelligible, they can be intelligent and informative in accordance with an understanding of the situation and its possibilities, they can be overpowering and accomplish a lock-in with an understanding of the then-and-there situation, and they are not considered unintelligent, inappropriate, or disproportionate until they are considered ill-attuned with the situation at hand. Consequently, moods and emotions can be considered commonsensical, intelligent, and intelligible in everyday life instead of irrational as they are so often portrayed.

14.2.3 Understanding emotions in and through action

If a person feels hunger and acts appropriately and proportionally in accordance with that feeling of hunger, the act is considered intelligent. It is well-grounded in the facts of the situation. It is moreover intelligible and understood in so taken-for-granted way that the emotion is not necessarily even noticed as an everyday emotion. The emotion is part of the background of everyday life. If someone eats disproportionately fast or much the inappropriate table manners and disproportionate amount of food is probably interpreted as a consequence of being gripped by hunger. Only in light of presuming the personal significance of the emotion does the action make sense. This presumption of the emotion is however made after-the-fact based on the other person’s actions (see Searle 2009).

The emotion is in the action itself and cannot with any exactitude be purported to ‘exist’ if the action is not matched with the purported emotion (Wittgenstein 1953). All emotions are arguably understandable through action. It is within the shared world that other persons are encountered and in which the significance of their actions is understood (Shotter 2016). The emotion is presupposed to ‘exist’ in that person’s totality of involvements and moreover with a particular significance in comparison to all other involvements that could be attended to (Searle 2009). This is how emotions are most likely made sense of, through understanding the significance of the action. The action is perceived with an understood ‘for what’ and if the action is inappropriate or disproportionate then an emotion is presumed to be the reason. This sort of everyday reasoning about emotions is most likely sensible because it is founded on the existential character of emotions. Emotions have “mineness” (Goldie 2009) or “presupposed fit” (Searle 2009) which is not directly available to all other participants in the situation. Emotions are significant and personal in the sense that they are about that particular person’s Being-in-the-world.

Emotions can be said to be dear and costly, because they can be handled as significant above something else (Goldie 2009). If attending to the emotion presents itself as inappropriate and thus presupposes an ill-fitting significance, then, the act is considered unreasonable or unjustified. The emotion is considered ungrounded in relation to the relevant facts of the situation. For an emotion to be judged as unjustified is to be judged as unreasonable as to the situational appropriateness and proportionality. Non-justifiability can however only be posited in comparison to an alternative referential totality of significance where that emotion is considered insignificant and its world-directedness inappropriate. It is an alternative understanding of the
facts and their significance in that situation. Inappropriate and disproportionate actions that make the emotion consciously noticeable can be called an “emotional episode” (Goldie 2009; see also “incident” in Goffman 1967).

In talking about emotions, they are presumed to exist and thus have a presupposed fit with the world, that is, they exist if they are said to exist (Searle 2009). Because emotions are experienced directly as something that is mine, they have an immediate personal significance which can be made part of the shared situation with other persons. This is done by expressing the emotion as an Expression through action and language (Searle 2009). The emotion thus becomes an overt involvement in the shared world and thus part of the significance structure of that situation. When an emotion is made aware of in this fashion it becomes dealt with consciously and as such instigates an emotional episode. Similarly, if a person comports oneself as in being in the grip of an emotion, that emotion becomes an involvement in the shared situation and thus of significance (Goffman 1967).

Persons are not in total control of their bodily and communicational self-disclosure and self-enactment because moods and emotions are co-constituted with understandings (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). They can be experienced to arise before or ensued by focused emotions and understandings of the situation. Moods and emotions may arise as fast and unnoticed as understandings, but only when moods and emotions are inappropriate to the situation are they handled purposively and thus show themselves as requiring handling. Emotions and moods are bodily in the sense that they take place within the world in which they can be noticed by others as fast as they are noticed by oneself (Goffman 1961a; 1967). An emotional episode and dealing with the emotion can thus be an involvement for the person who experiences it as his, or for another person who from his own frame of reference notices situationally inappropriate or ill-attuned actions and comportment in another person and is interpreted as signifying the presence of an emotion.

Moods and emotions are bodily and as such are recognizable only in the midst of actions of self-disclosure and self-enactment carried out by the person’s body. Mind and body however operate in unison in action (Oakeshott 1991b). The involvement of the body in moods and emotions is however not of insignificance unless it is made significant. Bodily changes occur all the time but all of them are not noticed because they are commonly insignificant to the situation at hand. An emotion is made significant if it is considered to be a relevant part of the situation to the degree that it may define the situation at hand. For an emotion to bear significance on a situation it needs to be acted out and thus be in part acted because of the presence of the emotion. When an action is noticed and considered to be at least in part emotionally motivated, that is, emotionally enacted, it is handled as an emotional episode.

An action is understood through its intentionality (Heidegger 1962/2008; Searle 1995; 2009). Action is directed at the world in some way and that is understood through the assignment ‘what’ and the reference ‘for what.’ If these are understood, then the action is intelligible and subsequently also the emotion. An action is an irreducible whole to the extent that it is intelligible. Thus if an action suddenly takes on a ‘for what’ which is considered for example morally petty such as an emotion describable as self-aggrandizement or pride or a want for a possession as in jealousy, then the action is considered emotionally enacted (Goldie 2009). Its ‘for what’ is an emotional satisfaction, a release from the grip of the emotion by attending to its specific involvement in the world. The action is taken to gain release from the emotion.

If someone for instance has been angered and they want to get back at the one who angered them, this ‘get even’ which is the release from the situation may be considered petty and thus
emotional. Such instances of being out of character, that is, an atypical action for that person is thus considered emotionally motivated and are consequently dealt with as emotional episodes (Goffman 1967). If the action is on the other hand typical for that person, then it is considered characteristic and part of their persona and thus part of that person’s typical Being-in-the-world (Goldie 2009). Then it is not taken as an emotional episode. For example, continuous self-aggrandizement or jealousy is not necessarily an emotional episode that requires conscious handling if there is already a ready-to-hand and easy way of dealing with that person’s characteristic persona.

A person can notice himself having an emotion which he does not want to express due to its inappropriateness in the situation at hand (Goffman 1967). When an emotion is recognized as a then-and-there present emotion that is being handled and thus intentionally not expressed it means the it is consciously suppressed. In intentionally suppressing an emotion it is taken as “existentialia” (Heidegger 1962/2008) equivalent to any understanding of something significant and as such part of the totality of involvements, which is merely not attended to at the time. Emotions are not always overpowering. Emotions that arise in the midst of being immersed in an involvement are rarely attended to unless they are of significance to the involvement at hand. It is not necessarily even noticed that such emotions arise as they are most often handled with ease and require little conscious attention. When emotions are appropriate and proportionate and thus part of the background of everyday life, they are characteristically unproblematic and do not require conscious handling.

An emotion can be taken as something to be handled if one notices oneself to be in the grip of an emotion which is furthermore inappropriate for the situation, or equivalently inappropriate to what kind of a person one considers oneself to be. That is, there is an imbalance between the agent-act-scene triad (Burke 1945). In Heidegger’s terms the emotion is inappropriate to one’s Being-in-the-world. In this case oneself as one’s comport with the world is the problematic involvement, which is due to its existential character felt as uneasiness (Heidegger 1962/2008). The emotion presents itself as something that should be attended to in a straightforward fashion, but due to other understandings of the situation that particular action is ruled out as unwise. It is difficult to be as one is in that situation because it is not obvious and ready-to-hand how one should be and nonetheless that being then-and-there presents itself as a problem that must be attended to in some way. To not-be is an existential impossibility similar to not communicating (e.g. Bateson 1972) and to leave the situation or attend to something else in that situation may not be a viable or even a possible alternative then-and-there due to the factual or physical restrictions of the situation. Felt uneasiness is thus an emotion that is felt in a situation in which the person senses his unfamiliarity with it and thus has not yet learned to master attunement to that sort of situation as a matter of course. The person can be said to be inexperienced and thus out of character in that situation.

To consider another person to be in the grip of an emotion is to understand their action as having an emotional ‘for what’ which is dissimilar from one’s own referential totality. If for example two persons who are discussing politics are both angry at their government for the same reason, then that emotional expression is most likely unproblematic for both of them. The emotion is considered justified. It is well-grounded, proportionate and appropriate for the

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82 Here I agree with Goldie (2009) that a commonsense theory of people’s dispositions is indispensable and in fact used in real life. What is typical and atypical for a specific person can be distinguished and this is how these commonsensical theories are used. I also agree that theoretical propositions of such dispositions are problematic because they divert the understanding of dispositions as more or less conscious and self-chosen styles of Being-in-the-world into a Cartesian metaphysical structure of what persons essentially ‘are.’
conversation. Only when their referential totality of significance is dissimilar, and the other person is judged to be enacting an inappropriate emotion, does the emotion show itself as problematic. In a sense all actions are emotional as they are directed at some understandings which are always accompanied by some mood or emotion. Actions that are deemed as situationally unfitting enacted emotions bring about an emotional episode. In such cases the action is markedly defined by the emotion in play.

To understand the emotion and the referential totality it is part of requires the use of conscious effort. In this sense emotions overtly matter only if they show up as significant, often by being apprehended as inappropriate to the situation. When an emotional episode has been brought about, what is done to handle it is a conscious effort to understand that person’s significance structure. In other words, that person’s world, himself in it, and his situationally attuned directedness at something in that world. In Burke’s (1945) terms one tries to make sense of that person’s agent-act-scene triad. It is to make sense of the emotion as it is enacted by the person.

14.2.4 The use of emotions in everyday life

From the point of view of managing people, how emotions show up, how they are handled in the episodes in which they are considered to require handling, and how they are used in everyday life are arguably of importance (e.g. Sutton 1991). That moods and emotions are and can be used has been acknowledged at least since Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (see Billig 1996; Burke 1984; Sutton 1991). The use of moods and emotions as part of rhetoric does not require additional remarks other than that of what has already been said, that every understanding is conjoined with a mood and the same is true in reverse. Thus, a speech act to be understood in a specific way needs to be clothed with an appropriate mood and emotion. “Speech is communicative in the sense that it provides a common basis of feeling”, argues Burke (1984: 175-176), and “in the sense that it serves as the common implement of action.” Consequently, how moods and emotions can be used to alter the significance of the situation and thus the definition of the situation is of interest for this account, as this pertains to the character of emotions as something that is significant to others in social settings.

It is a relatively novel conception that emotions can be culturally specific, such as the Japanese amae or the German schadenfreude (Goldie 2009). However, it is not uncommon to think of understandings as culturally situated (Boas 1928/1986). If it can be accepted that moods and emotions are entwined with understandings and thus grounded in Being-in-the-world, then it is a straightforward consequence that emotions can be culturally specific. A situation has to first of all be understood in a specific way as to its involvements and significance (world) and as the situation is understood as a typical sort of situation it also has a typical set of responses to it. There is in other words a typical act-scene repertoire to a typical situation. A particular understanding of a worldly situation is concomitant with a sense of culturally appropriate style of being in that world and situation (Spinosa et al. 1997). There are very likely a multitude of ways of responding to the situation that is (in)appropriate and (dis)proportionate. It is worth noting that when such culturally specific emotions are described to others that are not indigenous to the style of the culture, then, often a situation is described. One usually

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83 In this account I do not mean to over-intellectualize emotions into something that they phenomenally are not. Emotions have a “feeling towards” which is not necessarily graspable in its entirely through verbal and intellectual means. That which is graspable can however be described through its significance, which is more or less consciously and masterfully employed in everyday situations.
describes how one would respond to that kind of situation in a way that makes the situation understood in a specific way. The emotion is most likely described using the act-scene ratio.

Before delving more deeply into the use of emotions, a remark about the proposed innate character of emotions is probably in order. The issue if emotions are hardwired or not into human nature is not in my mind a relevant concern from the point of the above described point of view. In the course of history there have been several suggestions on what the basic emotions would be. Goldie (2009: 87) lists some of them: In a first century Chinese encyclopedia are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, liking; the Stoics had pleasure, distress, appetite, and fear; Descartes named wonder, love, hatred, desire, joy and sadness; Spinoza had pleasure, pain and desire; and Hobbes discerned simple passions to be appetite, desire, love, aversion, hate, joy and grief (see also Russell 1980; Fredrickson 2009). What the true list is, even if there is one, is however not of concern from the view of action and use of emotions.

Firstly, it is plausible that in a forced-choice facial recognition task, emotions are interpreted relatively similarly pan-culturally and for which there is empirical evidence for (see Goldie 2009 for references). The facial recognition of emotions is however far from interpreting what intentionality they carry, as Goldie (2009) aptly points out. How they are handled in the sense of what kind of situational understanding is built around the emotion and as to its significance and appropriate responsive action is a different matter. That is to say, even if there were an innate alphabet of basic emotions hardcoded into human nature in the sense that ‘when you feel this activate these facial muscles’, that coding does not determine how those emotions are employed, handled and responded to in everyday life. Just as an example, the Nazis during the Second World War considered and treated Jews as disgusting and it is very likely that they truly felt the emotion of disgust in association with Jews (Pinker 2011). It is possible that disgust is a basic emotion for human beings as some have argued, but that does not determine how and when that emotion is employed and what one considers to be the situational understanding for when the emotion ceases to be appropriate. These are cultural and thus historical standards of appropriate conduct and style and what “one” (Das Man) does in such situations (Heidegger 1962/2008).84

If it can be granted that understandings, moods and emotions have intentionality – “care” for something, as Heidegger (1962/2008) put it – then the pertinent question is no longer to what extent emotions determine ‘behavior’, but how their intentionality manifests, is enacted, and socially handled? A person outfitted with a mind arguably has the ability to direct his emotional engagement similar to the freedom of choosing differently. They can take an alternative stance towards the situation which has an alternative emotion or mood to it by, for example, instigating a counter-mood. That is to say, one is not in ‘control’ of one’s emotions, but one can direct them by taking an alternative reading of the circumstances of the situation at hand (Heidegger 1962/2008). To be a conscious person and thus a discloser of the actualities and possibilities in a situation, is to have that capability as an existential possibility (Heidegger 1962/2008). And world-disclosing is something a person can become more or less proficient in (Spinoasa et al. 1997). The fact that consciousness and thus one’s agency can be trained also in the dimension of emotional engagement is arguably implicit in the phenomena of upbringing and maturity (Goleman 2005; Kegan 1982). To put it differently, to be reflectively conscious of a situation is to take it as something other than given with an automated response (Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). One could say this is what it is to be a conscious agent. I take it to be

84 Here I deviate from the official translation of the “they” and opt for Hubert Dreyfus’s translation of the “one” as a more exact translation of what Heidegger meant with the concept.
an existential fact that a person can be reflectively conscious of any situation he is taking part in.

To return to the issue of use, emotions can be used to get one’s way in the shared world co-inhabited by other persons (e.g. Cialdini 1984). In a shared world ‘something’ such as an action, a condition, an item, and so forth can be altered in significance by showing an emotional relation to it. For example, ‘If you love me then you will...’, ‘This is unacceptable and you need to...', ‘I like that, we should…’, and so on. The same can be said more generally as ‘If you do not take my emotion seriously then you do not take me seriously.’ The emotion is tied to the agent and especially the significance of the agent. With such an act the significance of the involvement like an emotion is altered and tied to the significance of the person.

One way of how emotions can be used is through giving one’s experienced emotion a significance which the other should take into account. It is to give them a place and significance in the shared world through one’s persona. By asserting that there is an emotion present either implicitly through enactment or a speech act, e.g. ‘I am hungry’, it is a request to the other to acknowledge the emotion as a factual state of affairs in the world (Searle 2009). Put differently, the significance an emotion is always tied to the person who experiences it as mine. Because emotions are significant to those who ‘own’ them, they can be claimed a place of significance also in how others view the situation. By introducing an emotion through one’s persona into the shared world the persona itself becomes an object of significance which is evaluated for its significance. It is to take something personally or to be personally invested in something in the situation. An example of the former is feeling hurt because of something whereas examples of the latter are pride, honor, dignity, and the like. It is likely that if the person does not matter to others then neither does his feelings, and the same may very well be true in reverse.

The act of taking something personally, overzealous use of emotions, is often and understandably condemned in civilized society (Goffman 1967). If the introduction of emotions was done as a matter of course by all parties, it would in all likelihood result in utter non-negotiability of the situation and a Hobbesian war of all against all (see also Rahim 2002). Everyone would merely assert emotions and try to get their way by claiming personal significance. By consciously introducing an emotion and thus one’s personal significance as a persona into the situation it is taken for granted that their persona is taken as valuable “currency” in the situation (see Schein 2009). Otherwise it could and would not alter anything of significance in the situation at hand.

One possible and straightforward significance a persona has for another is the utility that person ‘possesses’ in accomplishing the aims of the other person (Macmurray 1960). This is to use and understand another person as equipment, a means to an end. At our historical present, human life is by far and large considered to have intrinsic value, but this has not always been the case (Pinker 2011; Toulmin 2003). Nonetheless, how one reacts to an emotional episode instigated by another person, arguably depends on the relationally constituted significance of the person in question. Emotional episodes of strangers are probably not given much thought to whereas spouses, supervisors and colleagues are a very different matter. Persons and their emotions can be dismissed if they are insignificant. And conversely, some emotions can be expected to be reciprocated or responded to in some complementary way if a person of significance makes an issue of their emotion. How emotions are used in everyday life is in other words tied with the issue of “self” (Mead 1934/2015), “face” (Goffman 1967) or “agent” (Burke 1945) and how it is enacted into being as something of significance.
In the next section I will present Goffman’s path of thought on how everyday communication necessitates a cared for ‘self.’ In Oakeshott’s (1991a) terms action is always in part an act of self-disclosure and self-enactment, which ties the agent to the agent-act-scene triad (see Burke 1945). My understanding of Goffman’s conclusions is that the ‘self’ needs to be coherently maintained so that one can act in a coherent and easily communicated manner, i.e. control, be committed to and own the act. In accordance with the intertwined character of the big three, agent-act-scene triad, if the self becomes obfuscated most likely so does the relationally constituted act and the scene.

14.3 Interactional wellbeing in everyday civil conduct

"...we must look more closely at the matter, since what is at stake is far from insignificant: it is how one should live one’s life.” (Attributed to Socrates, Plato, the Republic 352d)

Erving Goffman (1959; 1961a; 1961b; 1963a; 1963b; 1967; 1974; 1981) has given the most intricate analysis of interactions and also of emotions embedded within an unfolding flow of different sorts of interactions. Goffman’s analysis of the coordinated sequences and patterns of co-presence, encounters, gatherings, and interactions are nothing less than phenomenal and truly path-breaking research in the social sciences (e.g. Emirbayer 1997). Giddens (1984) is in my mind rather accurate in stating that Goffman’s original insights are still undertheorized, even though he is one of the most cited scholars in the social sciences. My use of Goffman’s works – in addition to serving the purpose of this chapter – hopefully helps in bringing his array of original contributions back into the limelight of social sciences.

To my understanding Goffman deliberately theorized from a relational standpoint. He aspired to expose the intricate details of enacted communication and daily intercourse. Consequently, he utilized a vocabulary for the most part purified of presupposed psychological mechanisms, which in itself is no small feat given the predominantly essentialist and Freudian paths of thought in Western scholarship (e.g. Schafer 1976; Shotter 2015). In Burke’s (1945) already familiar terminology, Goffman was breaking new conceptual ground when he theorized of familiar phenomena with an alternative constellation of philosophical commitments on which coordinates of the pentad are of consequence on behavior (see Burke 1945). As a groundbreaking social scientist Goffman was able to gain access to often inaccessible contexts, for example, closed mental asylums. He consequently managed to give enlightening accounts of the performances of those indicated as having mental illness (Goffman 1961b/1991). Goffman (1967: 92) describes “mental illness” as follows: “By and large this means that patients are graded according to the degree to which they violate ceremonial rules of social intercourse.” In other words, mental patients behaved in an “uncivil” and socially deviant manner, which he thought in many cases to be understandable behavior in the situation due to the subjugating conditions in mental hospitals (ibid.; see also Szasz 1974).

Not only did Goffman analyze such extreme cases, but also rituals in day-to-day interactions. He contrasted the insane with the supposedly normal to throw light upon the daily manners and rituals in society and what it is that mental patients actually do to gain the stigma of a mental patient. Goffman (1967: 90; cf. Milgram 1974/2009) states: “The rules of conduct which bind the actor and the recipient together are the bindings of society.” Based on

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85 In this account a person who is described as mentally ill denotes a person who conducts himself according to ways which oblige observers to posit them as mentally ill. That is to say, their illness is their abnormal conduct unless otherwise stated.
Goffman’s work it can be put forth that mental illness and thereby also wellbeing by implication, and everyday civility can be perceived interlinked and thus perceived as rooted in similar philosophical commitments on action and conduct (see Burke 1945). In terms of this study, Goffman’s life work can be considered supportive to the point of view that wellbeing can be defined and described in terms of the dramatistic pentad, and especially the man-made balances and imbalances in the agent-act-scene triad.

Goffman painstakingly showed how intelligibility in communication is a socially constituted accomplishment. Most of what is subsequently stated stems from Goffman. What little I have added, in accordance with the advocated style and tone of writing in this study (see Preface), are examples, condensations and connections to issues that have emerged in previous chapters. As Giddens (1984) points out, Goffman did not put his insights in a more encompassing theoretical framework, which left his gamut of insightful observations as fruitful stepping-stones to subsequent scholars.

14.3.1 The civil encounter

According to Goffman (1961a; 1967; 1981), in a social “encounter” every person more or less knowingly takes a stand on themselves, the situation and the other participants. Through their actions they communicate their understanding of themselves (agent), the situation (scene) and other agents involved in the scene. An encounter is an overt engagement in communication where it is acknowledged that the participants are in one another’s immediate presence and offer themselves as available to one another. Thus the other agents are part of the shared scene of action. Their attention to one another is given, expected, and obliged and the intensity of the encounter is jointly determined by the situation and the spontaneous situational involvements in the encounter.

An encounter is willfully participated in (Goffman 1961b). There is a working consensus over the “intensity” of the joint involvement, which is implicitly and mutually agreed upon (ibid.). The encounter always has a particular mood, which is dependent on the mutually acknowledged involvements stemming from the surrounding situation and what the participants bring to bear on the encounter. In this way the mood and intensity are fitted with the mutual understanding of what is going on in the situation and whom are participating in it. There is a mutually negotiated fit between participant’s engagement with the involvements (act), the situation (scene), and the persons in the situation (agents) (Goffman 1961b; 1974). Consequently, there is a man-made balance between the big three of agents, scene, and acts.

During the first instances of the encounter a readiness, considerateness, sympathy and we-attitude or ethos is formed through mutual attunement (Goffman 1961b; 1963a). This is usually accomplished with ease, immediacy and through a ritualistic exchange of bids for and giving of attention (see also Berne 1964/2010). Mutual attention is directed at some involvements through discourse. Discourse is directed at something, and what is pointed at is introduced into the encounter as an involvement. What is said and done through for instance eye-contact during the encounter is done with communication and intent in mind. “Copresence” (Goffman 1963a) implies that what is said and done during copresence is intended communication.

Persons gathered in close proximity in a social situation such as a bus stop are part of a “gathering” (Goffman 1963a), which is distinctly and purposefully dissimilar to an encounter. In an unfocused gathering it is important not to signal the intent to instigate an encounter. This is achieved through obliged “civil inattention” similar to that of not overtly noticing people’s disabilities (ibid.), ticks or other compulsive behavior, improper clothing or other idiosyncrasies
and abnormalities. Unknown persons are usually considered to have the deontic right to be treated with inattention (freedom from attention). For example, crippled persons are allowed not to have their disability as an acknowledged involvement in all of their interactions. Especially the direction of turned away posture, bodily distance and lack of eye-contact are controlled for and intentional to elicit inattention in close quarters like in an elevator.

The situation or place such as a bus stop or elevator may give the overt clue why people are there. In cases where people do not on the face of it do anything – they are waiting, contemplating, standing, watching, and the like – and situational clues are scarce people often attempt to signal to strangers passing by what they are doing, for instance by looking at their wristwatch or by carrying an item such as a newspaper to avoid suggestive looks of impropriety (Goffman 1961a; 1963a). That is, in order to merit civil inattention so that their action does not rise to the occasion of becoming an overt issue and thus gain attention. Dependent on historical and cultural etiquette (see Elias 1998), if civil inattention is not abided then it may be interpreted as a want for a particular kind of encounter, such as sexual intercourse. Historically, this has especially concerned women and their contact with unacquainted men. Conversely, in some cultures, men have the unequivocal obligation to provide civil inattention to all unknown women at all times, except when an encounter is instigated by a woman. In such cultures it may be impolite to notice women in a situation not of their choosing.

The right to instigate and corresponding duty to respond to an encounter is rule bound because it is based on rights and obligations (see Searle 1995; 2009). Either abiding or disobeying these rules tells something about the agent, just as one cannot not communicate (Bateson 1972). For an unknown person to instigate an encounter they are expected to provide a compelling reason for the encounter. The reason is a motive for their action, which connects the encounter with an involvement in the world of the instigator. They must in other words present an involvement which legitimizes the encounter that would connect their worlds of experience. Acquaintances are most often expected to instigate an encounter if in near proximity for the sheer reason to show attention and thus signal to one another that the other is not a stranger. The involvement is the acquaintanceship. In situations and places such as bars, lounges, cocktail parties and the like, visitors and participants are often allowed to instigate encounters with strangers. The scene of the act matters (Burke 1945; Goffman 1974). Based on the situation people may or may not consider themselves to have an obligation to respond in kind. To ask a stranger for a light, the time or the like is a common and casual tactic with the ulterior motive of asking if the other would be interested in an encounter (Goffman 1961a; 1963a). People may also choose to show ill-attunement or un-involvement in order to show disinterest or the want to end or disregard the instigation of the encounter. With familiar participants disinterest can be taken as disloyalty, as a sign of impropriety in the relationship.

Over- or under-involvement on someone’s part in the encounter is considered a cue to end it because the engagement has not been able to reach a working consensus on the mood and an understanding of the jointly acknowledged and attended to involvements in the encounter. The “frame” of the encounter is in these cases not mutually agreed upon (Goffman 1974). Infatuation, embarrassment, poorly disguised ulterior motives, past history between participants, preoccupation, disturbances in the surrounding situation are all possible reasons for over- or under-involvement which work to prevent joint attunement. For example, under-involvement as inappropriate unserious conduct while playing cards is a sign of ill-attunement to the mood and a failure to recognize the main involvement of the encounter, in this example that of playing cards. Under-involvement often results in the termination of the encounter or to another
participant calling the ill-attuned person back into the main involvement and thus reprimanding the person for his under-involvement (Goffman 1961a; 1963a).

The involvements in an encounter are introduced and negotiated during the encounter. The shared world (scene) and the fitting acts are consequently specific to the encounter. The acknowledged involvements become relevant considerations that are accepted and attended to and thus define the totality of the situation at hand. From the totality of involvements, or world, of a single person a restricted set of involvements are carried, suggested and infused with the restricted and shared world of others during an encounter. Encounters are “world-building activities” (Goffman 1961a: 27). An encounter is therefore a confined, exclusive world, an intentionally orchestrated fusion and flow of horizons. Some of the involvements stem from the surrounding situation such as a cocktail or dinner party, and other attributes may be introduced into the encounter as relevant involvements such as career, education, wealth, political view, hometown, gender, nationality, assertions about the wider world and so on. All attended involvements are in some relation to the participants in the encounter. That is to say, the agent-scene-act triad remains interrelated at all times.

Depending of the claimed relations between persons and the acknowledged involvements the attended involvements distribute worth to the participants. If for example politics is discussed appreciatively then a participating politician or a participant well versed in the finer art of casual political discourse is valued in the discussion. Involvements thus introduce valued resources into an encounter which are ongoingly distributed in the midst of world-building in the encounter and in defining the distributed ownership of the involvements. Agents are thus once again connected to the scene and the acts within the scene (Burke 1945).

The totality of involvements in an encounter can be described by “rules of relevance” and “rules of irrelevance” (Goffman 1961a). These rules describe what is considered a valued resource in the encounter and what is not. To change the rules of relevance and irrelevance is to change the distribution of valued resources in the encounter, which also changes the world and thus the definition of the situation. In some occasions the involvements are intentionally limited or expanded to enable equal social worth to all participants to facilitate encounters, e.g. dinner parties, and in some cases, it is the precise opposite of enabling inequality, for instance in dealing with authorities as acknowledged authorities. Courteous customer service for example implies that all customers are treated with equal worth regardless of outstanding physical attributes; the rules of irrelevance are wide-ranging in such cases. Dependent on the mutually constituted world of the encounter and thus the involvements within it, the participants are allowed and socially acknowledged a particular worth, and they may gain or lose social worth accordingly. The rules of relevance and irrelevance are thus continuously jointly negotiated and are usually concealed and thus part of the background of an encounter.

Participants of an encounter are expected to enter the mood of the encounter. The situational involvements in an encounter often show the mood in question, which is evident is the difference between, for example, a cocktail party and a ceremonial burial. Any and all encounters are situations which thus require emotional restraint, engagement and situational attunement. Personal involvements which may evoke feelings of for instance joy or sadness and are out of place with the definition of the situation, are expected to be controlled during encounters. They may however be negotiated into the encounter as a joint involvement and thus a jointly allowed change in the overall mood of the encounter and what emotions are allowed to be expressed by the interactants.
For example, playing a board game or cards has an overall expectation of a jointly upheld mood of fun, which can then fluctuate depending on the side-involvements of for example what is discussed during the game. The totality of involvements or world in the encounter define what is appropriate to express and what emotions are disallowed as going against the definition of the situation. Involvements which go against the prevalent mood are expected to be held back in abeyance. Participants who do not wish to enter or continue on with the mood of an encounter, such as a discussion with an overtly saddened person or of a sad topic such as death or cancer, may choose to terminate the encounter because of their inability or lack of desire to enliven the mood in the encounter. Ill-attunement, unwarranted emotional dominance or irrelevance and unwillingness to negotiate the mood of an encounter are considered social infractions or to be “out of play” (Goffman 1967) and dealt as a more or less temporary inability to maintain a mutual conversation. According to Goffman (1963b) social infractions are part of the daily conduct of mental patients.

14.3.2 Assigned and corroborated self-worth

For interactants in an encounter to take a stand on themselves is to take a stand of what their self-worth is in relation to the others and in that particular situation. This is done by taking a “line” (Goffman 1967). The line is a characteristic form of conduct which is relationally coherent with their suggested self-worth. To take a line is to show oneself to be in possession of valued attributes in connection with the scene of action. Here self-worth is to be understood as the self-assigned rights to world-building action and speech acts, which allow them to build a world where their self-assigned social worth is acknowledged. These conversational rights are always in relation to the surrounding situation and the participants of the encounter.

A line is something which is expected to be maintained with coherence and to be an expression of self-understanding in relation to others and to the totality of the situation at hand. Goffman (1967) designates this self-worth as “face” and the social actions it gives rise to as “face-work.” Face concerns the conduct and self-monitoring of oneself according to the implicit rules or “guides for action” in society. All actions that are designed to be consistent with face are face-work according to Goffman: “Face-work serves to counteract ‘incidents’ – that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face” (Goffman 1967: 12). Face thus designates the self-assigned and socially constituted rules of value according to which one has the options of subordination, representation or transformation the scene and its accompanied involvements.

The rules of face-work can according to Goffman, who is following Bateson (1972) in this regard, be divided into asymmetrical and symmetrical rules of conduct. Symmetrical rules are the kind which the person maintaining the rule also requires of himself and others. Asymmetrical rules are of the kind which are directed at a particular person such as a public figure or politician or king and thus does not concern all. The rules are expectations concerning the manner of conduct placed upon another which when understood by the other enables proper and concordant conduct. Some rules of conduct can be explicit in the form of laws, etiquette, company specific ethical conduct or religious commandments such as ‘thou shalt not steal.’ The difference between formal and informal rules of conduct is that indiscretion of formal rules may lead to formal punishment such as prison or a fine whereas social infractions often lead to social penalization in the form of avoidance, ridicule or non-cooperative conduct regarding face.
According to Goffman (1967) one’s face, which is often designated as self or identity, is something everyone in society is obliged to care for and act as it is something sacred and cared for. Burke’s (1945) insight on the tightly coupled character of the big three of agent, act and scene can be understood as explaining why. To maintain a shared scene and coordination of mutual involvements, also a shared understanding of the involved agents is necessarily imputed. Put simply, if the scene and action is locked, so are the agents. Conversely, if the involved agents’ faces are constantly in flux, so is the scene and the ongoing involvements. If the agent-act-scene triad becomes obscured, the medium of communication becomes impaired:

“A sound communicative medium arises out of cooperative enterprises. And the mind, so largely a linguistic product, is constructed of the combined cooperative and communicative materials. Let the system of cooperation become impaired, and the communicative equipment is correspondingly impaired, while this impairment of the communicative medium in turn threatens the structure of rationality itself.” (Burke 1984: 163)

Goffman however explains this aspect of maintaining face a bit differently. Goffman argues that due to the relational character of face and self-worth, it is impossible to take other’s face seriously if one does not treat one’s own face with equal sacredness during encounters. “When an individual becomes involved in the maintenance of a rule, he tends to become committed to a particular image of self. In the case of his obligations, he becomes to himself and others the sort of person who follows this particular rule, the sort of person who would naturally be expected to do so” (Goffman 1967: 50). For example, to change one’s own line without apparent rationale is to unexpectedly change the lines of others and the co-constructed world. Such a transformation would deny the others the possibility of a coherent face and a shared definition of the situation.

The lines are relationally co-constituted and thus entwined with the jointly constructed world and its involvements. If someone’s face shifts for no apparent reason, then communication may become entangled; the co-constructed world and the involvements within the encounter can become difficult to make sense of. The meaning of communicational acts become almost undecipherable as it becomes impossible to know in what sense communicational acts are undertaken due to the shift in agents face and consequently the scene. Altering a line alters the world and the agent-act-scene triad.

The definition of the situation – that which defines the agent-act-scene triad – and thus the identities of the participants constitute “the organizational hub of the encounter” (Goffman 1961a: 44). Goffman calls the ground rules concerning face as “ceremonial rules” because they are rules that have the sole function of enabling communication by establishing and maintaining a shared understanding of the agent-act-scene triad. Ceremonial expressions are colloquially referred to as etiquette.

In each encounter participants ascribe to themselves and others certain attributes, possessions and talents which are their reasons for their self- and other-assigned social worth (see Sveiby 2011). In this way every person in an encounter assumes a confined and situationally dependent “special self” (Goffman 1967: 52). According to Goffman, mental patients are commonly only afforded the special self of a highly restricted and generic patient, which is subjugated to and determined by the relationally corresponding and all-powerful doctor. The patient is thus completely denied of relational control over his face, which in itself is a situation that brings about intentional rebellious conduct unbecoming a civil person. To retake control of
their face mental patients thus intentionally avoid cooperative face-work by not showing ceremonial care for their own or other’s face. They are in a “double-bind” (Bateson 1972); showing care for face or not, in either case they are in a social situation in which they are not allowed a self-chosen line or in other words a self-assigned face. The only way to be an autonomous self is to not play by the rules as the rules are used against them.

Participants who do not care for their own or other’s face are considered untrustworthy, unpredictable, and even dangerous as they can be a danger to another person’s assigned and socially constituted self-worth. For this reason, some institutionalized mental patients are, because of their assumed inability for face-work, thus considered harmful for their social environment. The very basics of face-work in Western society is overall cleanliness, suitable clothing and coherent public demeanor. Face-work is part of the background of everyday life. The face one has is for practical reasons something everybody is expected to live up to. In society everyone is to take their social worth seriously and conduct themselves accordingly. To enable communication and consequently to bear and attend to a face is the underlying tenet of enacted civility:

“By entering a situation in which [a person] is given a face to maintain, a person takes on the responsibility of standing guard over the flow of events as they pass before him. He must ensure that a particular expressive order is sustained – an order that regulates the flow of events, large or small, so that anything that appears to be expressed by them will be consistent with his face. ... In any case, while his social face can be his most personal possession and the center of his security and pleasure, it is only on loan to him from society; it will be withdrawn unless he conducts himself in a way that is worthy of it. Approved attributes and their relation to face make of every man his own jailer; this is a fundamental social constraint even though each man may like his cell.” (Goffman 1967: 9-10, italics in original)

If face is not jointly upheld and thus the ground rules of civility is not abided by then the encounter is often halted or the relationship abandoned, as the implicit and necessary rules for how communication works cannot be established. The necessity of the rules for communication stem from the criteria of intelligibility in communication, which necessitates a shared understanding of the scene, a relational understanding of worth in that scene and of the appropriate involvements for those agents in that scene. In social encounters self-worth is performed as rights that are taken, which as discussed earlier, inevitably put obligations on the other participants (Searle 2009). However, for a right to be understood as a right that is taken, it is necessary to understand it in the light of the relationship. A right to interrupt another or to claim that the other is incorrect on an issue are rights which most overtly show posited self-worth in action. It is not a foregone conclusion that participants accept the other-assigned obligations such as listening to their arguments or accept their interruptions, which means that the self-assigned worth and other-assigned worth correspondingly need to be deserved and legitimized in the encounter by the other participants (see also Gottman 2011; Watzlawick et al. 1967).

A person can be allowed to perform above their line or “in wrong face” in an encounter (Goffman 1967). They will however usually be corrected before long if the wrong face continues in future encounters. It is because the other-assigned face to oneself is otherwise sanctioned as a norm. Relationally it is to accept the lowered social worth the other gives to oneself, which in accordance with implicit rule of maintaining face cannot in most cases be accepted. In this case
face and thus social worth denote a relational position and concordant actions. However, because relational positions are valued in themselves and for their own sake, it is not entirely inaccurate to call it a relational currency (Schein 2009). The currency exists only by the implicit agreement that there is such a currency. However, without such a currency of value that is linked to the scene and its appropriate involvements, it is conceivable that social rules of any kind could not exist and neither coherence in intercourse. Put in more general terms, the construction of a man-made scene may conceivably require an implicit value system of who may construct or alter the scene and in what way.

Someone can be “in wrong face” by taking a relational position which the other participants know he is not entitled to (Goffman 1967). This is often allowed as an isolated event because to attack the face of another may easily be reciprocated by the other and thus risk one’s own face being assaulted. No one tends to come untarnished from such clashes. The risk of losing face is in such cases avoided also because to cause someone to lose face may itself be an act that is devalued as a loss of face to the instigator of the incident. The instigator has in other words been over-involved in the encounter as to let it get under his skin.

In cases when the person in wrong face has left the encounter the other participants can form a “byplay” or “postplay” to corroborate to one another that he was in wrong face and thus re-establish their usual face and relationally acknowledged sense of self-worth (Goffman 1967). This can be accomplished by insulting and ridiculing the absent person’s out of face demeanor behind his back in order to put him relationally in the right face. A person can also be “out of face” meaning that he takes a line which does not conform to expectations and thus the participants do not know how they should relate to him as there is not enough information to come by to assign a face to the person (Goffman 1967). An unknown person is usually out of face until a trusted participant introduces their face to the others or they introduce themselves and thus make a bid for a face.

A person who is “in face” usually acts with confidence and ease (Goffman 1967). There is congruence between their imputed face, the world of the encounter and the involvements within it. There is no expectation of becoming “in wrong face” by someone for example disclosing information or otherwise contesting their assumed line. In such cases their enacted self-worth is handily part of the background of everyday life and the encounter excites a euphoric feel. To be in face is to be comfortably immersed in the world of the encounter (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1975; 1990). Immersion into the exchanges in the encounter is usual, which is only to say that face, social worth, imputed selves and relations to world are commonly part of the background during encounters and thus easily maintained.

In the beginning of an encounter the mutual world is relatively superficial, and the involvements in the encounter are few. With time and numerous exchanges of speech acts the involvements in the encounter increase and it begins to take on “the thickness of reality” (Goffman 1961a: 41). In such situations the participants perceive little difference between their special selves in the encounter and their “thick selves” (Sorabji 2006; see also Harré 1998). The encounter and its world may become real to the participants. According to Goffman, people attach their “feelings” to their face:

“A person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him; he cathects his face; his ‘feelings’ become attached to it. If the encounter sustains an image of him that he has long taken for granted, he probably will have few feelings about the matter. If events establish a face for him that is better than he might have
expected, he is likely to ‘feel good’; if his ordinary expectations are not fulfilled, one expects that he will ‘feel bad’ or ‘feel hurt.’ … A person will also have feelings about the face sustained for the other participants, and while these feelings may differ in quantity and direction from those he has for his own face, they constitute an involvement in the face of others that is as immediate and spontaneous as the involvement he has in his own face. One’s own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order; it is the rules of the group and the definition of the situation which determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is to be distributed among the faces involved.” (Goffman 1967: 6)

A discrepancy between the thick world where a person dwells and the world of the encounter – an unfavorable separation of worlds – is usually a reason for uneasiness, tension, boredom or disinterest in the encounter. The rules of relevance and irrelevance may make the world of the encounter into a world which is uninvolving for a participant, which is usually mended by introducing new involvements that are more congruent and relevant for their individual worlds. If the newly suggested involvements are not acknowledged or given relevance, then discontinuing the encounter becomes a viable option.

14.3.3 Tension in encounters

The co-constructed world of the encounter may through mutual design be built to consist of such involvements and relations that do not allow, or may even outright question, the regular face of an interactant. This often results in feelings of discomfort, self-consciousness, and over-involvement in the encounter. Goffman (1961a: 43) calls this “tension” and refers to a “sensed discrepancy between the world that spontaneously becomes real to the individual, or the one he is able to accept as the current reality, and the one in which he is obliged to dwell.” Rises and falls in social worth and concomitant rules of relevance and irrelevance are directly connected to increases and decreases in tension. In Burke’s (1945) terms, a tension arises when there is a sense of discrepancy between one’s own judgement about what the agent-act-scene triad should be and the triad that is ongoing in the encounter.

The tune and tempo of the melody in an encounter is altered by altering tension. To participants tension may also become unbearable: they lose their cool, their emotional control breaks down, they “flood out” as laughter, anger, shame, crying or the like (Goffman 1967; see also Gottman 2011). By experiencing an emotional episode, they become ill-attuned to the encounter and are thus temporarily out of play. This becomes an emotional episode or “incident” (Goffman 1967), which makes the encounter itself into an overt involvement in the encounter. The incident can be located in the out of play person; the agent-scene ratio assumes control over the act and every other coordinate. The flooded person is thus removed as a participant in a shared and mutually established scene and becomes an involvement, a focus of attention. In that instance, they lose control of their face and it becomes an explicit subject in the encounter. This occurrence may or may not be shown civil inattention.

This can also occur in a reverse sequence. A person is for example praised and thus brought to the fore as a focus of attention, as an involvement. They show controlled embarrassment or modesty and make themselves out of play through silence and thus signal that they would prefer to be participants of the encounter instead of an involvement. The person thus signals the other participants to instigate a tension reducing byplay which does not concern the involved person but in which he may join in as a ratified participant. The person thus communicates that he may not be used both as an active involvement and participant; his face is to be in the
background. If a person is unwillingly made an involvement, they may also intentionally try to disrupt the exchange and, for instance, change the topic of conversation.

A person whose face is called out and shown to be in wrong face usually becomes ashamed, uneasy or embarrassed. In theoretical terms, tense. For instance, if a person is assumed to be in the possession of a valued capability or know something of value and conducts himself with a corresponding line but is suddenly revealed to be devoid of such value then he may become embarrassed. It is not only in cases where someone has taken a line they cannot live up to. It can also occur when others background assumptions about his face exceed what the person ever intended for himself:

“During interaction the individual is expected to possess certain attributes, capacities, and information which, taken together, fit together into a self that is at once coherently unified and appropriate for the occasion. Through the expressive implications of his stream of conduct, through mere participation itself, the individual effectively projects this acceptable self into the interaction, although he may not be aware of it, and the others may not be aware of having so interpreted his conduct” (Goffman 1967: 105).

Embarrassment or discomfiture is a reaction to a situation when a person’s social worth and the underlying organizational hub based on social worth is brought to the fore. Thus exposing a practice of face-work and corresponding relational positions that are usually left unsaid and part of the background. Embarrassment can appropriately be described as a reaction when someone becomes self-conscious of his relational worth or face. In general, when a tacit expectation is not met, it can be an embarrassment to the one who has not met his expected obligation or to the one who had the unmerited expectations. It can thus be the result of instigated interaction-consciousness or when someone has untactfully brought unsubstantiated expectations about another person to the fore. Both faces may be in the limelight.

Shame or embarrassment usually has an immediate emotional reaction and bodily reactions such as tenseness, blushing, shaking hands, flustering or a trembling voice (Goffman 1967; see also Goldie 2009). An embarrassed person becomes emotionally and bodily ill-attuned to the ongoing social engagement. The person is said to become emotional and serious or in other words over-involved. Over- or under-involvement in an encounter are reasons to avoid or abandon encounters. In over-involvement the communication becomes entangled because what is said must be interpreted in the light of the over-involvement. Communicational acts become difficult as one needs to formulate acts so as not to enable unwanted under- or over-interpretations. It encumbers the medium of communication. In under-involvement a participant is preoccupied with something else and his manners and actions become obscured by the fact that they might relate to another involvement than that of the encounter. The ability to withstand reactions to become over-involved and thus remain attuned to the encounter is called “composure” and the ability to not cause others to become embarrassed or over-involved is “social skill” (Goffman 1967).

Persons who are not allowed to take a line they expect to be in or whose chosen line is not corroborated usually become angry. When a face is maintained for its own sake despite relevant considerations of the participants or the situation, the person is considered to show pride. When a person is expected to act in such a fashion, that is, for the sake of face it is considered honor. If a person does not react in any way to someone losing face, then he is considered heartless. A person can also deface themselves which is to act shamelessly. Face is that which
makes insults and compliments and the like at all possible as understandable communicational
acts. (Goffman 1967)
Face can be lost and given. To “lose face” is to be discredited or lowered from a previous line
(Goffman 1967). Similarly, to “give face” is to provide a person a line which is superior to what
they would normally assume or assert of themselves (ibid.). Both instances can give rise to
tension, which can be mediated through jokes, laughter, modesty or blushing. Avoidance tac-
tics are usual in order to “save face” (ibid.). Situations and persons not relied upon to partici-
pate in collaborative face-work practices are usually avoided. It could be said to be avoidance
of embarrassing situations where they could be the subject of insults, ridicule or contempt.
More analytically said it is the avoidance of situations when a person expects to be rejected a
line which he would usually expect to occupy. In such situations self-worth does not usually
come out intact, their world is not corroborated nor is that person likely to get their will satis-
fied, which is to say that there is usually no rational reason to want to engage in such encoun-
ters in which they are more likely to become a pejorative involvement. Daily politeness and
courteous manners whilst in civil conduct are used to communicate safe encounters for face,
which gives the encounter ease and comfort. This comfort stems from such as polite accord
and implicitly allows participants to know that they do not need to second-guess or overinter-
pret communicational acts for covered innuendos and messages for possible assaults on face.

In sum, particular emotions, emotional episodes, tension easing and tension increasing acts
are part and parcel of everyday civil conduct and consequently face-work. Tension is experi-
enced as a sense of discrepancy in the agent-act-scene triad, often through the self-implicatory
meanings and the socially reduced sense of self-worth in the ongoing situation and its involve-
ments. Composure and social skill concern how well a person can emotionally and socially
handle situations in which one experiences discrepancies in face either for oneself or others.

14.3.4 Easing tension in encounters

Goffman (1967) calls the use of techniques to enable another person or oneself to save face as
“tact.” It includes actions that communicate to the other that their face is safe, such as acting
as if nothing happened when an overt mistake is made or to discreetly and deniably with an
ulterior motive in mind communicate a course of action to preserve face. It is a deniable act of
communication which because of its deniability allows communication without the danger of
loss of face.
These kinds of actions are to show the other that they are in the presence of a proficient face-
work collaborator which through their proficiency make the encounter safe, as the kind of en-
counter in which loss of face is actively and proficiently countered and regaining of face is made
easy for all involved participants. In situations where participants deface themselves for in-
stance by making an embarrassing personal revelation the face-work of re-establishing the in-
teractants social worth is often left to others. Participants who can be entrusted to read the
situation correctly and to perform face-work on behalf of the defaced interactant are consid-
ered highly trusted, or colloquially friends or friendly.
If loss of face happens then a ritual of regaining face is embarked upon. It is a coordinated
set of actions which are to show that all participants and especially the one in wrong face is a
trusted and responsible participant in face-work; “that the rules of conduct which appear to
have broken are still sacred, real, and unweakened” (Goffman 1967: 21-22). Once that which
has been part of the background has been brought to the fore, it must be agreed upon how the
“incident” is dealt with in such a manner that face can again become part of the background of
the civil encounter. An incident is an unwelcome disruption in the relational matrix by face having become an overt issue. Because the social procedure to re-establish face is usually implicit knowledge of the interaction order it is suitably called a ritual (Goffman 1967).

According to Goffman (1967) this ritual allows for some leeway, but it is essentially a taking of turns with specific intent or moves in mind. The first move is the challenge which brings forth the misconduct and thus turns the encounter into an incident. The second move is conducted by the perpetrator who gives an offering to the victim or participants involved. This move can be in the form of compensation to the offended, a simple acknowledgement that the offender has conducted himself inappropriately by begging forgiveness, or by self-punishment or defacing himself. All of these actions communicate the want to re-establish the social equilibrium and the implicit interaction order through re-establishing a balance in face. The third move is that the offended victim accepts the gesture and consider the incident over. The fourth and final move is when the offender signals genuine gratitude for having been accepted back into the circle of trusted participants of the maintained expressive order. This implicit cooperative procedure can appropriately be perceived as ritualistic conduct, which designates that it is communication for the sake of the interactional order, i.e. in order to preserve the rules of face-work and the faces of involved parties. It is conducted to re-establish the ground rules of civil conduct, and thus a shared and mutually understood and acknowledged agent-act-scene triad.

“It is plain that emotions play a part in these cycles of response, as when anguish is expressed because of what one has done to another’s face, or anger because of what has been done to one’s own. I want to stress that these emotions function as moves, and fit so precisely into the logic of the ritual game that it would seem difficult to understand them without it. In fact, spontaneously expressed feelings are likely to fit into the formal pattern of the ritual interchange more elegantly than consciously designed ones.” (Goffman 1967: 23).

To “give face” Goffman (1967) designates as “deference.” It is a show of respect towards the recipient and often for some attribute he is supposed to have. Deference is thus assignment of one or more identity attributes and a concomitant show of relational valuation. Most often persons are not allowed to give deference to themselves but must seek it from others. That is only to say that by definition social worth cannot be assigned by any one individual alone. If tried it is often met with contempt or ridicule. To show deference can thus be used to give face, but also to merely acknowledge that someone is presumably in possession of an attribute of social value. It can therefore be used “asymmetrically” as a subject would to a king or “symmetrically” as a colleague would to a colleague. Symmetrical deference is thus mutual corroboration of being in face. Responses to symmetrical deference are usually of the same kind such as salutations in the form of a nod or ‘hello.’ An intentional denial of such a response signals that the recipient considers himself to be of higher social value as a king would not reciprocate equal deference to a subject.

Not to reciprocate is to conduct oneself according to an asymmetric relationship setup. Status interactions or “status rituals” are composed of actions such as standing up when a person of higher rank enters the room, ending a conversation to allow a higher ranked person to dictate what is discussed, in making introductions a lower ranked is introduced to the higher ranked and not the other way around, a lower ranked may be called by a first name but a higher ranked through their title or last name, a lower ranked is to walk behind and in the pace of the higher
ranked etc. Such rituals are often conducted between superordinates and subordinates, doctors and nurses, military commanders and troops and in similar jointly acknowledged and upheld asymmetric relationships (Goffman 1967).

“It is therefore important to see that the self is in part a ceremonial thing, a sacred object which must be treated with proper ritual care and in turn must be presented in a proper light to others. As a means through which this self is established, the individual acts with proper demeanor while in contact with others and is treated by others with deference. It is just as important to see that if the individual is to play this kind of sacred game, then the field must be suited to it. The environment must ensure that the individual will not pay too high a price for acting with good demeanor and that deference will be accorded him. Deference and demeanor practices must be institutionalized so that the individual will be able to project a viable, sacred self and stay in the game on a proper ritual basis.” (Goffman 1967: 91)

Goffman (1967) categorizes deference into two: “avoidance rituals” and “presentational rituals”, which are nonetheless interrelated. Avoidance rituals are about keeping social distance. In- and out-group behavior would for example not be possible without the practice of social distance. To keep social distance is to maintain and abide by a difference in social worth. In an asymmetric relationship both parties are expected to keep their distance to one another. The lesser ranked does it because of not having the social value of keeping company with one of higher value. To do so would otherwise lead to an embarrassment. The one of higher social rank is to avoid the company of a lesser ranked in order to not to be socially tainted by their company and thus abide by the asymmetric rule of conduct (see Goffman 1963b). Infraction could risk being lowered in respect and appreciation to the same social rank as the other in the eyes of the general audience. To show social distance can be an act of deference, but also depreciation.

Social distance can also be used to allow and respect others’ privacy and the possibility of a self-assigned “backstage” self (Goffman 1959). To be able to keep a valued line, others may not carry relevant information that could contradict it. If a person is not allowed to dictate his communicational boundaries, then he will be unable to maintain a face at all.

In mental wards, doctors according to Goffman (1961b; 1967) did not allow for any social distance to patients, neither spatially in their rooms nor socially in conversation. The room could be entered by the doctor at will or looked upon through a peephole. Mental patients were also obligated by the doctor to divulge anything the doctor asked. To not to answer an embarrassing question was not allowed and interpreted as a presence of illness. Nor could patients be in their own clothing, act responsibly if tied to a bed or severely medicated, and some were disallowed eating utensils for risk of self-harm. Therefore, maintenance of self-assigned face or some measure of common dignity was virtually impossible while institutionalized. To be able to conduct oneself according to the tenets of civility seems to require some measure of social boundaries and consequently self-determination of face and self-worth.

“When the individual is subject to extreme constraint he is automatically forced from the circle of the proper. The sign vehicles or physical tokens [i.e. demeanor] through which the customary ceremonies are performed are unavailable to him. Others may show ceremonial regard for him, but it becomes impossible for him to reciprocate the show or to act in such a way as to
make himself worthy of receiving it. The only ceremonial statements that are possible for him are improper ones.” (Goffman 1967: 93)

Similarly, social distance was something which some mental patients did not allow for their doctors and possibly even others. To go through someone’s trash, wallet or shopping bag, enter another person’s car, personal space or room, stare into a guard both, ask a personal question, evaluatively comment or question another’s clothing or manhood, ask the other to perform an undignified task or ask the other to dress more attractively or manly, and the like without the social right are all violations of expected social distance. Avoidance rituals are thus to show, oblige by and respect the rights of others and in some cases to spitefully disrespect them.

Presentational rituals are the counterpart to avoidance rituals. The typical presentational ritual is of the kind which discloses how a person perceives the attributes of another which implicitly communicates how that person intends to treat them. Goffman (1967) analyzes four types of presentational rituals: salutations, invitations, compliments and minor services. All these cases are instances when avoidance and civil inattention are deliberately broken off in order to show appreciation.

A first introduction is typically an encounter in which the relationship is determined as either symmetrical or asymmetrical. How one presents oneself and how they comment or compliment the other quickly established such a working consensus of the relationship. Daily salutations on the other hand are acknowledgments of the others face and that they therefore are in face and that correspondingly the relationship is intact. An invitation to a party, a walk, to the theater or to any exclusive event is a sign of valuation. When someone has cut their hair, bought new clothes, married, or in some way changed their appearance or official attribute they may be given a compliment to show approval of their new style or attribute, which contributes to their overall demeanor. Politeness and niceties are in such instances more often a way to show recognition of the self-assigned change, but in a way that does not actually change their social status nor cause embarrassment to them for bringing it forth.

Minor services act as to show appreciation, which is often in time reciprocated with an explicit acknowledgment of gratitude in a similar measure. Presentational rituals are most often based on jointly acknowledged familiarity. To have the right to give compliments, the right to salute through for instance touch, give an invitation, and ask for a minor service without it giving rise to embarrassment or an incident. These manners are thus employed as daily gestures of appreciation and recognition of familiarity. In relationships with familiarity such actions can be expected and therefore obligatory social rituals that keep the interaction order intact.

Demeanor somewhat overlaps and partly complements deference (Goffman 1967). Demeanor refers to conduct which is expressed through clothing, ambience, comportment and posture. It communicates to those in immediate presence that they are in possession of some desirable or undesirable qualities. Emotional self-control, being a good loser, not cracking under pressure, taking oneself seriously but not too seriously, show of sophisticated humor and wit, keeping cool even in serious situations are examples of proper comportment. Demeanor is thus a show of being civilized by an exposition of qualities which merit proper socialization. By a person with good demeanor is often designated an interactant who is a reliable and pleasant to converse with and with little danger of incidents or face-threatening social moves. These merits are to be earned through exhibiting prowess and finesse in social intercourse, of which external characteristics are mere indicators.
According to Goffman, demeanor is of two kinds: symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical demeanor indicates the kind of demeanor that is expected of all relevant parties or social equals. Asymmetrical demeanor is established in asymmetric relationships, that is, between unequal persons. Higher ranked are allowed small acts of impropriety which act to show that they are higher ranked. To sleep in a meeting, to sit relaxed or in an undignified fashion, to joke in public, to swear, to invade personal space, to initiate conversation in improper situations are all examples of eased demeanor stemming from a higher rank. Conversely, lower ranked would in such instances be disallowed such demeanor or be in wrong face. Mental patients could also act asymmetrically by taking a lower position by acting immaturely. To play with one’s food, to take sexual postures or openly masturbate or improperly touch their or other’s body, act openly jealous or covetous of someone else’s possession, engage in rampant and by the face of it uncontrollable emotional outbursts, over-eagerness, flatulence, swearing, belching, uncleanness are all examples of what can be used to intentionally act inappropriately and thus show disrespect towards the implicit rules of the situation or societal rules more generally.

Based on historical books on etiquette, many currently childish manners have been common and public conduct (Elias 1998). To use such manners to rebel against norms or the powers that be, is not necessarily an exhibition of mental illness, but an overt demonstration against the established rules of face-work for not providing the subject the opportunity to take on an even remotely self-ascribed line.

“It seems that the patient sometimes feels that life on the ward is so degrading, so unjust, and so inhuman that the only self-respecting response is to treat ward life as if it were contemptibly beyond reality and beyond seriousness. This is done (it appears) by projecting a self that is correspondingly crazy and, as far as the actor is concerned, patently not his real self. Thereby the patient demonstrates, at least to himself, that his true self is not to be judged by its current setting and has not been subjugated or contaminated by it. On the same grounds, he implies that the conduct that was responsible for getting him into the hospital is equally not a valid representation of his real self. In short, the patient may pointedly act crazy in the hospital to make it clear to all decent people that he is obviously sane.” (Goffman 1963a: 225)

In sum, face is deeply personal, emotional and immediate, and attuned to fluctuations in especially self-implicatory meanings in the agent-act-scene triad. In order to keep the shared “medium of communication” (Burke 1954/1984) or the “interaction order” (Goffman 1967) clear to all involved parties, the triad is socially maintained through rituals and other everyday means. This is to suggest that in many cases the purpose of face-work and of similar communicative acts is to keep the medium of communication unencumbered. Face-work concerns especially the agent-scene and agent-act ratios, and consequently the participants’ self-worth and then-and-there acknowledged attributes are intimately connected to the ongoing scene and the involvements within it.

The upkeep of civil conduct and thus a shared communicative background in the form of the interaction order seems to require some measure of mutually acknowledged deontic powers for those who are considered responsible participants in face-work (see prior chapter; Searle 2009). Both the freedom to assign self-worth, self-determination, a right to social distance, as well as the freedom from acts of defacement and other disclosive acts that bring a person’s face to the fore. It is a right to self-worth and other self-assigned attributes as well as the right to
get those attributes socially recognized. If these rights and duties are violated, then incidents or emotional episodes occur or are purposefully enacted to signal a transgression in the implicit rules of face-work. This most likely clouds the agent-act-scene triad until the rules of face-work are once again established. If the rules of face-work are violated, so are the implicit rules for keeping the interaction order intact and consequently also a shared understanding of the agent-act-scene triad.

In civil conduct it is thus a person’s duty to acknowledge and otherwise recognize both changes and the status of self-assigned worth. However, as social worth is relationally constituted, acknowledgement of another person’s status can for example change a symmetrical relationship to asymmetrical, which can thus fundamentally change the character of the relationship and concomitantly the rules of deference and demeanor. Such changes in relations are not necessarily acknowledged not suggested very often or easily without causing tension in the encounter. Also changes in the scene and the involvements can alter socially acknowledge worth in the situation. Thus a change in any of the big three coordinates of the pentad can cause instability and tension in the encounter and also cloud the shared communicative medium, the agent-act-scene triad.

14.4 Interactional wellbeing as relational moral competence

“The objection to think of ethics as a ‘science’, presented by pragmatic philosophers from Aristotle to William James, are as strong as ever. The dream of capturing all our moral ideas about good and bad character, right and wrong decisions, noble and base actions, or free and slavish societies in a single geometrical system is as much a delusion today as ever. What patterns of argument are appropriate in dealing with any particular kind of problem must nowadays, as always, be judged contextually with an eye to the specific case at issue.” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988: 297)

Roughly two and a half millennia ago Aristotle (2005) argued for an understanding of morals that was neither Platonic and thus built upon eternal and universal principles nor a position of utter relativism, which some may see as a necessary consequence in a world without absolute foundations. Aristotle argued for practical ethics in the midst of everyday life in contrast to a purely theoretical point of view reminiscent of geometrical certainty about the good life and its principles (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). “The realm of the practical included, for Aristotle, the entire realm of ethics: in his eyes the subject matter of moral reflection lay within the sphere of practical wisdom rather than theoretical comprehension” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988: 26). In this study we take the position advocated by at least Aristotle (2005) and for example Nussbaum (2001) and Jonsen and Toulmin (1988), that ethics and morality should be perceived with the entire dramatistic pentad in view in each individual case. Especially the big three and thus in light of the agent-act-scene triad (see Burke 1945).

Aristotle’s (2005) account of virtues and the type of knowledge it relies upon, practical wisdom or phronesis, was an influential and original descriptive account of the human condition and of everyday moral practices instead of a normative and prescriptive endeavor as we commonly associate with ethics today. One of Aristotle’s (2005) principal assertions was that in a shared world of incessantly changing circumstances and concomitant uncertainties, persons – with experience and with the kind of maturity and wisdom that it accumulates – learn to act more proficiently within a situated and shared world. This is accomplished through the

Phronesis, according to Jonsen and Toulmin (1988: 259), rests on “having a feeling for or grasp for what is epieikes – equitable fair, fitting, or reasonable – given all the detailed circumstances of some particular practical situation.” Persons learn how to skillfully combine in everyday endeavors ‘the good life’ as they perceive it then and there with ‘the facts of life’ as they are then and there (Aristotle 2005; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b). It is action in the realm of particular cases, circumstances, possibilities, probabilities and novel particularities in contrast to certainties, uniformities and universals (Flyvbjerg 2006; Nonaka et al. 2014; Tsoukas & Cummings 1997). The former realm was the descriptive landscape Aristotle was amongst the first to traverse in the Western intellectual tradition.

“By making moral judgement a matter of phronesis not episteme, and placing ethics squarely in the realm of the practical, Aristotle took moral philosophy a long way from its starting point in Platonic ‘theory.’ On his account, ethical problems can be solved rationally only by going beyond abstract and universal terms and paying attention to specific circumstances: this had not been so obvious to people who viewed Ethics from the theoretical, Platonist standpoint. If Aristotle were right, sound and certain moral judgements about real-life situations are not reached by relying on uncriticized ‘intuitions’ of universal and invariable Truths or of eternal and abstract Forms. Instead the relevance of such generalities must always be criticized in the light of the detailed facts of the particular situation.” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988: 70-71).

Aristotle can be seen as a genealogical precursor to moral “casuistry”, that is, to practical moral reasoning based on real-life historical cases (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; see also Nussbaum 2001). Given that the empirical part of this study includes case descriptions of interactions between conscious moral agents, which can be portrayed as the heartland of moral philosophy (Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945; Macmurray 1960), a discussion of how one learns virtuous conduct and thus practical wisdom from historically situated moral cases is in order. Such descriptive cases are used to make sense and reason about morality, the moral actions in a situation and the circumstances that make up the situation as a unique and yet recognizable situation of some sort (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001).

Furthermore, a discussion about virtues and learned practical wisdom will likely allow a fruitful discussion about learning in practice within the insecurities, vicissitudes, and possibilities of “once-occurrent life” (Bakhtin 1993), instead of approaching the matter too theoretically, as for example by seeking everlasting Platonic principles and conclusions about the good life (see also Chia & Holt 2008). To connect this discussion with our hitherto developed vocabulary, in this study we approach phronic knowledge as pertaining to especially how to act with practical wisdom and moral proficiency; thus how to balance the agent-act-scene triad in one’s situated actions without necessarily merely following the established rules of the situation (see Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b).

However, it may be prudent to begin by commenting a bit more about the overall view of ethics this approach relies upon. Moral reasoning concerning moral cases and the practice of argumentation based on the details of the case developed from Aristotle to the beginning of the Enlightenment in the mid 17th century (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). According to Jonsen and Toulmin (1988), the age-old practice of casuistry early on acknowledged the significance of particularities to cases in the form of pertinent circumstances (i.e. the scene of action).
This is arguably a development that continued the tradition of practical wisdom in Greek tragedies (Nussbaum 2001); that there were cases where good morals could be in conflict with one another and thus an ordered set of principles was not enough to deal with real-life moral quandaries. Moreover, casuistry could reason with possibilities, alternatives and probabilities instead of absolute principles, and respected locality and timeliness in the sense that the cases should be reasoned and resolved in an open-ended fashion amongst those the cases concerned instead of the confines of a monastery or a merely theoretical discipline (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; see also Chia & Holt 2008; Holt 2006). The practice was self-reflective in the sense that is was knowingly situated and timely, and thus open to the possibility of reinterpretation and new arguments (see also Nussbaum 2001; Holt 2006). During the course of this moral “conversation of mankind” (Oakeshott 1991b), the arguments changed with changing socio-economic and cultural conditions of the times (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). When the overarching scene and climate of opinion changed so did the moral conclusions and what one considered pertinent details in the argument.

In the context of moral reasoning, practical wisdom or prudence showed itself in the enacted ability to reason about a case, to argue one’s case and understand the possible strengths and weaknesses and probabilities and uncertainties of each interpretation of events. With time various conceptual tools were developed to help such contemplation, to facilitate “excellence in deliberation” (Nussbaum 2001). For example, the circumstances of a case could be teased forth with pertinent questions. Cicero, whom Jonsen and Toulmin (1988: 132) name as the first casuist, said that the “cause” (i.e. case) is constructed out of “persons, places, times, actions and affairs.” In the Middle Ages, the circumstances of a case were often constructed with the standard use of a mnemonic hexameter, “who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when?” (Burke 1945; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). In this study we as previously discussed use the tool of the dramatistic pentad, which incorporates insights from Aristotle (2005) and casuistry (Burke 1945).

According to Jonsen and Toulmin (1988: 242; see also Hadot 2004; Nussbaum 2001) casuistry “was a simple practical exercise directed at attempting a satisfactory resolution of particular moral problems. In this respect it resembled philosophy and theology less than it did present-day ‘counseling’ or, as it would earlier have been called, ‘the cure of souls.’” One could thus argue that casuistry in many ways resembles ancient moral philosophy (Hadot 2004; Nussbaum 2001) and the current-day practice of psychotherapy (e.g. Janoff-Bulman 1992; Joseph 2011). What the development and practice of casuistry at least provides us with, is that prudence and moral competence could be educated, developed and thus learned in life and through discourse as well as a professional practice (see also Holt 2006). Moreover, there was a need for such a discursive and professional practice due to the fact that moral maxims of the sort ‘thou shall not lie’ and ‘thou shalt not kill’ had their acknowledged and continuously developing exceptions depending on the historical circumstances.

Casuistry did not rely on eternal or universal rules or doctrines. Instead, it utilized other means such as a “paradigm cases”, reasoning by analogy, drew upon simple maxims or heuristics people thought as commonsensical and knew in their hearts to be reasonable, took into account probabilities and relied on the wisdom embedded in the accumulation of arguments (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Casuistry in this sense is about the discursive practice of reasoning about unique moral cases. In our terms, it is about the skill to formulate and discursively convey a sense of balance in the agent-act-scene triad.
Casuists did not see morality as an issue of personal “conscience” as it is understood today. Conscience was a communal affair:

“For the casuists, by contrast, informed conscience might be intensely personal, but its primary concern was to place the individual agent’s decision into its larger context at the level of actual choice: namely, the moral dialogue and debate of a community. Conscience was ‘knowing-together’ (con-scientia). The dialogue and debate consisted in the critical application of paradigms to new circumstances, but these ‘paradigms’ were the collective possession of people – priests, rabbis, or common lawyers or moral theologians – who had the education, the opportunity, and the experience needed to reflect on the difficulties raised by new cases and to argue them through among themselves.” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988: 335)

Conscience and casuistry thus were not merely about personal mastery of morally vexing situations as in Greek tragedies (see Nussbaum 2001), but in addition about the skill to argue within a community what the balance in the triad should be (see Holt 2006). That such a practice as casuistry could at all be established, was historically built upon Aristotle’s astute scholarship. Historically, it is worth noting that casuistry fell in disrepute during the rise of Enlightenment thought that privileged universal principles above practical knowledge (see towards the study of history-making). It has however and only recently regained some of its former luster with the intermixing of historically situated and principles-driven theoretical reasoning (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Nonetheless, the possibility of educating practical ethics was built upon Aristotle’s discussion on moral excellence, which he noticed as something that was and could be learned in real-life. In this Aristotle was very close to the Greek tragedians, a fact that is not acknowledged often enough (Nussbaum 2001).

With this developmental and agent-governed characteristic in mind, we now turn to the issue of enacted and learned virtues. But before we delve into a discussion about virtues, it is good to remind oneself that this overall discussion concerns “purpose” (Burke 1945) and how purpose manifests is different actions that balance the agent-act-scene triad. The developmental character of virtues is a way to understand how a sense of proper purposes and balance in the agent-act-scene triad can develop, be encultured, and become enacted by an agent. This showcases the influence an agent can have on the agent-act-scene triad of any man-made situation.

14.4.1 Practiced eudaimonia

It has already been put forth that civil conduct is a matter of relational competence – tact, social skill, and composure (Goffman 1967). The issues of skill attainment and practical reasoning can thereby be discussed conjointly as skilled “reflection-in-action” (Schon 1984) in interactional wellbeing. Aristotelian virtue ethics have described wellbeing, or in the Aristotelian vocabulary virtuous conduct, as a conduct requiring exercise and practical skill (Annas 2011). According to Aristotle (2005), virtuous conduct needs to be learned in practice, similar to playing the piano instead of reading theory of how the piano is played. It is in other words a phronetic instead of an epistemic engagement (Flyvbjerg 2006; Holt 2006; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014; Tsoukas & Cummings 1997). In terms of the dramatistic pentad, virtue ethics broadens the circumference of ethics from a theoretical discourse about principles to include at least agents and their acts, and in many cases also the scene of action. Aristotelian virtue ethics – as a torchbearer of insights from Greek tragedies –
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posit that it is thus a matter of practical skill and experience, “excellence in deliberation” (Nussbaum 2001), to be able to balance the agent-act-scene triad.

In what follows I utilize especially Annas’s (2011) account of virtue ethics to draw forth novel characteristics about interactional wellbeing, and thus the balancing of the agent-act-scene triad in everyday life (see also Oakeshott 1991b; Schon 1984; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). As is probably evident by now, I also interpret and relocate Annas’ neo-Aristotelian views about virtuous conduct into the vocabulary and concomitant theoretical scenery we have thus far developed, especially Burke’s terminology. The discussion about virtues underscores that an agent is not a victim or an onlooker in the scene of action (see Milgram 1974/2009), but as a conscious moral agent who can learn to act in a way that enacts a purpose and subsequent action from a different source than the ongoing man-made scene. In the discussion on virtuous conduct, the source for an act of moral excellence is traditionally the agent’s self or character, which one uses to seek an alternative balance to the agent-act-scene triad (e.g. Annas 2011).

In this account skilled interpersonal conduct, relational moral competence, and virtuous conduct are used synonymously to denote agent-governed balancing of the triad. It should nonetheless be noted that there are particularities to virtuous conduct that is not similar to all forms of skill attainment as is the case with any singular skill such as cooking or painting. On the issue of virtue, it is at least that of relational and moral “goodness” (Annas 2011), which does not need to be a component of skilled interpersonal conduct or relational moral competence. Historically, it was Cicero who first proposed “goodness” as a contrast to “advantage”, that is to say, that the benefits of an act does not always determine its morality (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Goodness is at times pinpointed as the characteristic which parents likely hope their children would engender and pursue in life, albeit the “criteria” (Toulmin 1958/2003) for goodness demonstrably differ depending on the historical situation and context. The well-known historical cases of usury and the extent one goes to defend one’s honor or possessions poignantly demonstrate this point (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). In this study, we are subsequently interested in what persons apprehend as a balance in the triad and how they in particular scenes of action enact or pursue a balance in the triad, and not the general and epistemic argument for what represents a balance like goodness or benefit.

Leaving the overall Aristotelian view on ethics behind us and delving into the details about virtuous conduct, we now take a look at relational moral competence through Annas’s (2011) theoretical gaze. In Intelligent Virtue Julia Annas (2011) describes the age-old topic of virtuous conduct in the specific and concrete light of skill attainment. According to Annas, virtue is dispositional in the non-psychological sense that it is a reliable characteristic of a person’s conduct. It is a consciously enacted characteristic of the agent. Being dispositional, it is something that a person has adopted as part of his background aspirations and considerations (Annas 2011). It is consequently not something that has become an unintelligent and automated routine for the person, but a way of being in everyday situations, even in novel circumstances. It thereby allows the person to handle situations with a measure of interpersonal skill and

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86 There is a divergence between the account herein and that of Annas (2011). Annas uses skill attainment as an analogy to draw forth characteristics of what virtuous conduct is, what the pertinent aspects are and what sort of questions about virtue are nonsense. I do not use skill attainment in connection with virtuous conduct as an analogy but as a family resemblance between all manners of learning. Based on Jonsen & Toulmin (1988) virtuous conduct can be approached as a competence instead of merely using skill attainment as an analogy in understanding the phenomenon.

87 It would be in our dominant metaphysical sentiment to distinguish the appearance of a skill, morality or virtue from truly being skilled, moral and virtuous. This distinction is nevertheless a supposition stemming from an alternative metaphysical foundation, which is not the one described herein. See for instance Oakeshott (1991a, 1991b) for a criticism of the appearance account.
practical intelligence. “Virtues, which are states of character, are states that enable us to respond in creative and imaginative ways to new challenges” (Annas 2011: 15).

This relational skill is based on previous experience in all manners of interpersonal situations, which has formed into a kind of ingrained “style” of being with others in a shared world (Spinosa et al. 1997). That style is brought to bear on all situations through the person’s “character” (Annas 2011), which in no way directs the person but is something that the person has come to habitually use as ready-to-hand and thus as skillful and refined self-disclosure and self-enactment (see also Oakeshott 1991a). Thus, the person can use his character to enact and change the ongoing agent-act-scene triad.

Through the lens of skill attainment, it becomes clear that “virtue is essentially developmental” (Annas 2011: 4). To be more specific, character is not a property of a person, it is not an invisible force in the mind, it is not an action-tendency, but instead it could be described as a world-inhabiting-skill-in-action noticeable as a personal style or character. In other words, a person’s character shows itself through the agent-act and agent-scene ratios, and thus in the midst of the agent-act-scene triad (see Burke 1945). In life someone’s style is the elusive pattern of Being-in-the-world which cannot be pinpointed in any singular action, but it is nonetheless always ‘there’ in the background. It is embedded in that person’s actions and develops conjointly as the person’s understandings and experiences of the world are enacted and revised (Annas 2011). Character thus understood is what a person brings to any and all situations merely by being an agent and thus part of the agent-act-scene triad of any ongoing situation.

Virtuous conduct, given that it concerns a person’s entire character, also concerns the unity of reasons and feelings (Annas 2011; see also Nussbaum 2001). In the midst of action, virtue shows itself as ease and comfort so that the reasons and feelings are in concordance and appropriate to the situation (see also Goldie 2009). Said differently, the agent-act and agent-scene ratios are balanced with ease and self-confidence often experienced as alignment between thinking and feeling about the situation and the proper action within that situation. Judgement and experience are aligned with action and the sense of the situation. One could say virtuous conduct involves having the “right” feelings and reasons that are in mutual agreement (Aristotle 2005), but this should be understood in the situationally attuned sense instead of prescriptively according to some universal tenets. According to Annas (2011), virtues are about a person’s overall character, which is not to be thought of as what a person ‘is’, but as a characteristic orientation towards lived life in concrete situations (see Burke 1954/1984 for an in-depth discussion on “orientation”). That is to say, a person’s character cannot be separated from the triad, but is always inextricably entwined in the triad, as previously discussed (e.g. Goffman 1967; Oakeshott 1991a).

The development of character requires habituation and practical world-inhabiting skills (Annas 2011; see also Nussbaum 2001). Because the agent is inseparable from the scene, development of character is based on acquired practical knowledge about self-disclosure and self-enactment in the incessantly changing scene of action. Virtues are thus not add-ons to aspirations and actions, but embedded wisdom of moral conduct within the aspirations and actions that are undertaken in particular scenes. “Virtue is not a once for all achievement but a disposition of our character that is constantly developing as it meets new challenges and enlarges the understanding it involves (this leading to self-direction and improvement)” (Annas 2011: 38).88

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88 Annas uses the conceptualization of enlargement of understanding in relation to character development. This is a very Cartesian notion of understanding and should in this case be understood metaphorically. It is a metaphor for the very practical and everyday experience of disclosing of new practices and significance.
In Burke’s terms, purpose is always connected to the act and thus also to the agent-act-scene triad. Thus purpose cannot be investigated separately from the triad. The gist is that through habituation, self-development, and accumulation of experience, agents learn and become better at balancing the agent-act-scene triad.

When an action is described as virtuous it is identical to saying that a person aims and acts towards the achievement of personal excellence in one’s actions (Annas 2011). A person aims to be the best possible self or agent in the agent-act-scene triad. In practical terms it means trying to do one’s best in the unfolding moment. It is consequently not decontextualized excellence, but “Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger 1962/2008) or “once-occurent Being” (Bakhtin 1993) excellence. This is what virtue is in the Aristotelian sense. It is aspired to for its own sake, as stated explicitly by Aristotle (2005) in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Put differently, action is always directed at some future possibility and state of affairs. When that possibility includes the aspiration towards the vague and oblique notion of personal excellence (e.g. being a good citizen, husband, employee, teacher, scholar, friend, family member and so forth in their concreteness) instead of only aspiring for changes in situational circumstances (scene), it is an aspiration towards a self-determined, virtuous, future self. This is what is called an autotelic aspiration, it is aspired towards for its own sake (for-the-sake-of-which in Heidegger’s 1962/2008 vocabulary).

Annas (2011) argues that virtue cannot be understood in the Aristotelian sense unless it is understood how it is acquired; that it can be learned as a skill (for similar accounts see Nussbaum 2001; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). In our terminology, virtue should be understood through the different ratios of the dramatistic pentad, especially those that connect with the act, instead of a single coordinate. Annas (2011) highlights personal responsibility of the conscious moral agent. Children can be brought up according to certain values, which means that everyone is “thrown” (Heidegger 1962/2008) into a certain culture and its characteristic style (Dewey 2011; Oakeshott 1991b). Virtue, according to Annas (2011), is not however a simple issue of cultural reproduction and passive copying of conduct, but an issue of autonomy. It is about the use of one’s own mind in dealing with situations instead of completely relying on the wisdom of others (cf. Kant 1784/2009; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

When persons take responsibility of their lives they also manage their own aspirations, not according to what “one” does and aspires to as a matter of course, but authentically what oneself as a conscious moral agent chooses to be in one’s own Being-in-the-world (Nietzsche 1999; 2008; 2013; Heidegger 1962/2008). In this context authenticity means to be capable of deviating from the collective norm of what the triad should be in accordance with one’s own moral values and how one understands the situation at hand (see also Milgram 1974/2009). For example, observed virtuous conduct is the recognition of a person’s mind as an autonomous mind which directs the person’s conduct according to its own intentionality, skill and understanding of the world. That is to say, a person can be virtuous only if the person is a conscious moral agent and acts accordingly. Consequently, virtuous conduct is at times observed by others as a person’s self-determined act that emits excellence and inspires awe (Annas 2011).

Actions are performed with particular considerations in mind. The act is always connected to the particulars in the scene of action (Burke 1945). Annas (2011) forcefully argues that there is no such thing as a right act according to some transcendentental or eternal deontic criteria of rightness (see also Toulmin 1958/2003; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). There is no eternal and universally right criteria for what those considerations should be regardless of the situation and its circumstances. According to Annas (2011), a virtue is a “thick concept” as is that of the
The appropriateness of an action is based on one's understanding and feeling towards the situation, what one apprehends as a fair balance in the triad.

Only when a moral act is made into or shows itself as a problem does it require conscious handling. This is how a virtue is in continuous development similar to any practical skill. By acting virtuously (appropriately to the situation) and at times failing to do so, practical intelligence embedded in action is both developed and maintained. One learns to balance the agent-act-scene triad in more vexing and intricate situations. The Greek tragedies show some of the most vexing situations and how one might be able to handle them (Nussbaum 2001). These types of “hard cases” provide a fertile ground for improvements in moral deliberation (Nussbaum 2001).

A skill is always learned in a particular co-constituted world, and in the case of morals, in a particular discussion, family, society, or the like and is based on its values and expected responses. Those cultural values however tend to alter with time and with other changing circumstances (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Virtuous conduct is thus ongoing self-renewal and self-improvement through the development of practical understanding while being immersed in a shared and malleable man-made world (Aristotle 2005). In other words, if the overall or particular scene of action changes, so does the character of the agent and the appropriate moral acts in those scenes.

A virtue is not an action that is done but is embedded in the actions a person chooses to undertake (purpose) and how such actions are conducted (triad) (Annas 2011). That is, virtue cannot be reduced into the act. It is a unitary whole in real life, which cannot be separated into constituent parts without losing the character of what action is (see Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945; Oakeshott 1991a, 1991b). The often-remarked sensations of pleasantness and enjoyment are accordingly encountered while being immersed in action. As Annas (2011) notes, this particular emotional landscape has been empirically explored and astutely described by Csikszentmihalyi (1975; 1990) in his account of flow-experiences.

In Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975; 1990; 2003) account the focal phenomenon is the immersion. Subjects have frequently described immersion with the metaphor of flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1975). It is immersed consciousness. Csikszentmihalyi can be understood as describing flow as the selfsame ready-to-hand consciousness as Heidegger and thus as characteristic of practical and everyday immersion. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), flow occurs when one is goal-directed, feedback is constant, the person is able to cope with the flow of novel information concerning the involvement, a reflective understanding of self disappears out of consciousness, there is an orderliness to consciousness, the action is accompanied by a feeling of pleasantness or enjoyment, and the action is done for its own sake.90

This description can very well be interpreted as a set of characteristics that describe a state of harmony in the dramatistic pentad (see Burke 1945). There is in other words an experience of an actively accomplished balance in the pentad, and especially the agent-act-scene triad. In obverse situations novel information cannot be assimilated into consciousness and disorder is awakened as a present-at-hand consciousness, the significance of the action may be in doubt.

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89 According to Jonsen and Toulmin (1988), in theology the notion of a “person” came to mean a rational individual whereas in Roman law it referred to the legal entity of the individual. Later in the 17th century it developed to mean the free and responsible individual who by his own accord could accept or reject God’s grace. A person thus came to mean a free person in the ontological sense of the term.

90 Here information denotes “a difference that makes a difference” (Bateson 1972), which is significance that needs to be taken into account in one’s actions. It by definition is a ‘for what’ something is done the way it is done and recognized as such in the midst of action.
the action may be too difficult or conflicts with what the person knows about his world, the action may be too routine and boring not requiring proper involvement, or the situation may be distracting and turbulent. In these cases, ready-to-hand becomes present-at-hand and thereby the situation turns into a situation which requires conscious handling to find one’s way about the situation (for examples see Nussbaum 2001). Again, in Burke’s terms, there is a sense of imbalance in the pentad and especially the agent-act-scene triad.

According to Annas (2011), Aristotelian eudaimonia as an understanding of happiness cannot be in any way operationalized into psychological measurement. To my understanding, this is because Annas sees eudaimonia in the balance between the agent-act-scene and other two intangible coordinates of the pentad instead of a reported state of mind. It is an understanding of the good life as “acting well and being well” (Nussbaum 2001) in the continuously unfolding present. Persons are immersed in involvements in the world and strive for betterment, which is implicit in their actions (intentionality). Each action is a push into the future as a chosen possibility amongst all conceivable alternatives (Heidegger 1962/2008). In such everyday cases the action one has chosen for oneself is chosen as primary before a multitude of other possibilities. According to the Aristotelian understanding, what is strived for in these cases is eudaimonia in all its generality, vagueness and particularity (Annas 2011; Nussbaum 2001). That is, a balance between the current and future coordinates of the pentad. It is the commonsense answer to what one lives a life for, what one aspires towards through one’s own actions. Eudaimonia is not a standard of wellbeing or happiness from the outside; it is personal (see also Bakhtin 1993; Goldie 2009):

“Happiness in a eudaimonist account is what I come to when I start asking about my life, how it is going and how I can achieve better. Happiness is my happiness, the way I live my life; only I can achieve my happiness, because only I can live my life, and happiness won’t result from some plan imposed on me from outside my own reflections.” (Annas 2011: 144, italics in original)

We can thus suggest the conclusion that in the two millennia old Aristotelian stream of scholarship about the good life and wellbeing, eudaimonia is embedded in the continuously unfolding flow of experience which is not reducible to any single coordinate in the dramatistic pentad. Moreover, eudaimonia seems to be about the unique person’s sense of how he is fairing in balancing the agent-act-scene triad, whilst bearing in mind that the balance is not only a balance in the present but a push into the future as a best possible future self (agent), the most fair and equitable action (act), and the best possible future state of affairs (scene). Agency and purpose seem to be embedded in the balancing of the triad, amongst the complexities that form “hard cases” insofar as one tries to do one’s best whilst it is to some extent unclear what the best course of action should be (Nussbaum 2001). At the very least we can say that a neo-Aristotelian interpretation about virtues and eudaimonia can benevolently and concisely be described with the help of the dramatistic pentad. Given that Burke (1945) used Aristotle’s four causes in the development of the pentad, this should not be all too surprising.

14.4.2 A phronetic definition of interactional wellbeing

Aristotle (2005) was very clear that in speaking of virtuous conduct he was speaking of the practical everyday life. He reintroduced the complexities and vulnerabilities into the issue of eudaimonia and everyday life (Nussbaum 2001). It is not a mere account of virtue as a socially
constructed norm nor a uniform instruction sheet or set of appropriate actions with which one could live life happily through hardships, joys, sorrows, tragedies, and everyday strivings with an admirable and praised character intact. Aristotle (see Toulmin & Goodfield 1977) was an astute empirical scholar and arguably describing what the living of the good life is amidst everyday involvements, attachments and frailties. Following Aristotle, everyday wellbeing can be said to be a matter of practical skill, practical intelligence, virtuous conduct, that is, mindful and purposive action amidst the insecurities, uncertainties, possibilities and probabilities of a local man-made scene inhabited by other conscious moral agents.

In accordance with the tenets of history-making, any definition of wellbeing is bound to be historically situated and normative of what the human condition is in that historical time period (e.g. Kuhn 1962/2012). Wellbeing as a theoretical property reduced into the agent can be generalized into ahistorical measures, but not without losing the situatedness, particularity, and timeliness of the phenomenon (Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945; Heidegger 2011; Oakeshott 1991a). A neo-Aristotelian interpretation of wellbeing resists such reductions (Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). Consequently, from an Aristotelian point of view the metatheory of wellbeing is arguably more important than a particular theory about wellbeing, because the metatheory through its underlying premises directs the theory to be expressed in the landscape of action, and thus also amidst everyday vulnerabilities and uncertainties (e.g. Nussbaum 2001).

To live a good life in the uniqueness of the moment and still in relation to significant others and the permeating society, conceivably, does not require or build upon universal and tenseless knowledge one learns in school like episteme, but practical knowledge more along the lines of phronesis (Chia & Holt 2008; Flyvbjerg 2006; Holt 2008; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nonaka et al. 2014; Nussbaum 2001; Tsoukas & Cummings 1997). Phronetic knowledge is acquired through experience (Annas 2011; Nussbaum 2001), and timely and local moral knowledge can be discursively educated and learned (Chia & Holt 2008; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001; Dewey 2011). It is conceivable that the character of interactional wellbeing is of this kind, a practical skill of acting and living well in an uncertain world and a discursive ability to reason and argue for what represents a harmonic balance according to one’s own point of view.

Put in dramatistic terms, here we propose that interactional wellbeing is understood through the dramatic openings, insights and dramatic closings of significant events in life (Burke 1945). It thus concerns the unbalancing, struggling and rebalancing of the dramatistic pentad and especially the personally felt and relationally constituted agent-act-scene triad through which the intangible purpose and agency also come to bear on the situation. Theoretically, balance can be achieved by reading and following the scene-governed rules of the situation (i.e. interaction setup), or by breaking away from the scene and formulating a novel and often agent-governed balance in the triad. Theoretically and experientially it is possible to accentuate the significance of any single dramatistic coordinate as a cause of imbalance and as a singular resource needed to re-create a novel balance in the agent-act-scene triad through which the intangible purpose and agency also come to bear on the situation.

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91 To me it is inconceivable how “agency” or “purpose” could show themselves except through one of the big three, i.e. agent, act, and scene. Given that the big three are intricately interrelated, and without unduly narrowing the circumference of the theoretical lens, it can be said the purpose and agency are embedded in the agent-act-scene triad.
The philosophical repercussions of this particular phronetic view on wellbeing might be worthwhile discussing a bit further. If interactional wellbeing has a phronetic character, then to *define* wellbeing more definitively than what we have already discussed may very well be practically worthless (see the chapter of defining wellbeing). To a person who can handle his triad in lived life explaining wellbeing in more general terms most likely does very little to help to actually balance the triad. The same is most likely true for a person who cannot handle the triad in his life. Phronetic knowledge is not learned or educated at this level of abstraction, similar to Platonic universal knowledge (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). Conversely, case-based reasoning about how to formulate and pursue a balance in a particular kind of situation, seems like a fruitful way forward to that end (Burke 1945; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). The practice of psychotherapy in my mind testifies to this point of view (e.g. Wedding & Corsini 2010; Berne 1964/2010).

Indeed, it is worth highlighting, that the neo-Aristotelian notion of wellbeing being personal (Annas 2011) permeates the practice of psychotherapy (Wedding & Corsini 2010). This suggests that the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing can be meaningfully approached perhaps only as a “phronetic” (Flyvbjerg 2006), “probabiliorist” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) or “meliorist” problem or *case* (Martela 2015; 2017). That is, to learn how to balance the triad in real life one probably needs examples, arguments and reasoning about situations in which it may be difficult to balance the triad (Nussbaum 2001). Jonsen and Toulmin (1988: 261) give an apt example of this kind of reasoning in delineating “probabilism” and “probabiliorist” accounts of prudent reasoning:

“When faced with complex issues that you have no chance to reflect on yourself, accepting an opinion that appears reasonable from any sound doctor (‘probabilism’) may be prudent practical policy; but if you have time to undertake a fresh analysis of the issues, the other (‘probabiliorist’) course, which demands that you look for the sounder doctor and the more reasonable opinion, is surely preferable.” (italics in original)

A person can perhaps through mere experience and exposure to life learn how to act with practical wisdom in accordance with probabilism, but there is also value in the tools of thought that enable reflection and the probabiliorist way forward. This type of knowledge most likely contributes to the discursive practice of how to formulate and argue a sense of balance in the agent-act-scene triad (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). This chain of thought leads us to the same frame of mind as exemplified by tragedians in ancient Greece. The tragedians suggested, that practical wisdom and the kinds of “Trouble” (Bruner 2004) or “hard cases” in which it is invaluable, are crucial in prompting reflection and insights about the good life (Nussbaum 2001).

This path of thought suggests that through unearthing, constructing and analyzing problematic, vexing or otherwise difficult cases of lived experience, it is possible to develop and educate oneself and others in phronetic knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2006; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). This backdrop of difficulty brings excellence in action to the fore (e.g. Nussbaum 2001). The development of situational sensibilities (Chia & Holt 2008; Saarinen & Hämäläinen 2010), practical maxims (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) and other moral tools (Martela 2017) have shown to be rather handy in lived life and are thus most likely of use in balancing the triad.

Most of the time the development efforts will, as the Greek tragedies and the historical development of casuistry shows, understandably focus upon cases that are experienced as somehow problematic or requiring a certain level of proficiency. These problematic cases are
interesting in the sense that they bring out relevant disharmonies to the fore (Oakeshott 1933/2015) that cause a sense of imbalance in the triad (see Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). However, a focus upon problematic cases should not be confounded with a negative definition of wellbeing (cf. Seligman 2011), but as a focus upon wellbeing as a non-reductionistic and processual phenomenon amidst everyday vulnerabilities, uncertainties, problematics and vicissitudes that have a bearing on how one is faring in life (see Shotter 2010; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a).

One should also take note that according to this view interactional wellbeing is not merely about the process of balancing or harmonizing the triad amidst the vicissitudes of capricious life. As discussed by Annas (2011), virtuous conduct is also a push into the future toward a best possible self, act and future scene. Thus, it can also be about recognizing disharmonies and imbalances in the present (see Spinosa et al. 1997), and about instigating imbalances in the socially co-constituted triad when appropriate instead of passively waiting for life to cause such challenges (Seligman 2018; Taleb 2013). That is to say, even though most people in a situation might have a shared understanding and feeling about what represents balance in the triad, every conscious moral agent has the possibility to disclose the situation in a novel light, to discursively reformulate a novel sense of balance, and convince other participants about what represents an appropriate course of action in that situation (see Holt 2006; Spinosa et al. 1997). In this sense, relationally balancing the agent-act-scene triad would seem to be engulfed in relational dynamics, because none of the coordinates are stable in a man-made scene of action.

I close this section with a final remark on the issue of reducing the issue of wellbeing to a definition or particular theory of wellbeing, and conversely, about opening up the issue of wellbeing beyond the limits of such a discourse. Approximately a century ago Freud defined wellbeing as the ability to work and love (Kohut 1977/2009); cf. Deci & Ryan 2000; Maslow 1971/1993). This can be thought of as a working-definition of balance in the agent-act-scene triad of everyday life. In all its vagueness, generality, and particularity this may very well be as good as it gets with a general theoretical definition of wellbeing in the theoretical landscape of history-making. Anything more specific, then other aspects would most likely become lost (Burke 1945). Freud’s definition is actually a description of the kinds of involvements (acts) most persons (agents) are capable of doing every day and see as worthwhile doing in our current historical era and man-made society (scene). It is a historically situated description of a life worth living while also describing in highly general terms some of the possibilities of what one can do in life. One can connect with others, get things done, also together with others while being immersed in a co-inhabited world. It can be seen as a good working-definition of everyday wellbeing, to which many footnotes can be added from contemporary wellbeing research (e.g. Cartwright & Cooper 2009; Deci et al. 2017; Wright et al. 2007). Freud’s definition of wellbeing is nonetheless perhaps best understood by way of an analogy:

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92 In this discussion I differentiate between a metatheory and a theory of wellbeing. A developed metatheory, like Aristotle’s, is very useful in thinking about wellbeing and a specific theory about wellbeing is merely one contextual description of what represents balance in the agent-act-scene triad. Any particular theory will most likely have significant omissions, which is nothing to be overcome, because a narrower theoretical circumference means focus and the likelihood of helpful details and practical insights in a particular context. A narrow theoretical circumference is good science, in the Enlightenment tradition (Burke 1945).

“Every serious tradition of moral thought and practice embodies legends and stories which put in a nutshell the view of conduct shared by its reflective, responsible participants. ... Catholic moral theologians, too, talk about the distinguished Father Tanqueray, who spent a lifetime writing treatises on the subject which became ever more concise. He started in his thirties with a seven volume *Summa* of moral theology, then moved, decade by decade, through a five volume *Digest* in his fortieths to a three volume *Compendium*, a one volume *Manual*, and finally a slim *Medulla* (or ‘kernel’) *Theologiae Moralis* in his seventies. In his extreme old age he was asked whether the essentials of Christian ethics could be summarized even more briefly: he took some paper and wrote a single sentence from St Augustine, *Ama, et fac quod vis* – i.e. ‘Love, and do what you will.’” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988: 342, italics in original)

In this study we define interactional wellbeing in organizational settings as an actively co-created balance in the agent-act-scene triad where agency and purpose are also embedded. With the above analogy at hand, this concise theoretical definition does not empty the treasure chest of phronetic knowledge that aims at historically situated moral edification. The more concise a theoretical definition becomes, the more it also loses in relevant details. In order to induce insights about practical wisdom and the good life, more local and timely descriptions of morally vexing situations and their resolutions, i.e. cases, are needed. This is what the neo-Aristotelian heritage and point of view at least suggests (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). The cases are at least as important as the more general descriptions of wellbeing, if not more so.

### 14.5 Learned relational incompetence – the case of trauma

When Freud argued that psychoanalysis was a new science both to what it is a science about, namely the mind, and how it is practiced, that is through discourse and analysis, he was probably for the most part correct about the novelty of the approach but not about all the details of the mind (Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008). Freud, as an academic pioneer, consistently made both too precise and generic assertions based on a handful of case examples. He generalized too far from unique historically situated persons and the particular zeitgeist of fin de siècle Vienna (Burke 1984; Janik & Toulmin 1996). Freud nonetheless understood and posited that that many personal problems were of a historic character; that there could be such as “trained incapacity” (Veblen cited in Burke 1984).

This advancement has been encapsulated in the well-known and commonsensical notion of trauma and in approaching personal lives as historical case studies, as is commonly done in psychotherapy. Instead of understanding learning and skill attainment as an a priori positive phenomenon which always magically leads to positive outcomes in life, learning perhaps ought to be understood as a neutral phenomenon of ‘living a life’ which is not always and all the time conducive of intelligent and well-attuned conduct (Bateson 1972; Burke 1984; Nussbaum 2001). The vulnerabilities in life have much to teach about the good life (Janoff-Bulman 2004; Nussbaum 2001), and this is arguably the case also with trauma.

The chief point of this section about trauma and posttraumatic growth, is to show that the agent-act-scene triad and accumulated experience about how to balance the triad can also be used to understand the issue of trauma and posttraumatic growth. Our chosen metatheory of wellbeing, the dramatistic pentad, is able to highlight both fragilities and harmony in life. As discussed earlier, Greek tragedies specifically argue that the many different vulnerabilities in
life have much to offer to the understanding of the good life, and thereby also to understanding wellbeing. Thus, the aim of this section is fairly straightforward: to show that with our hitherto developed vocabulary, which has thus far incorporated emotions, civil conduct, and virtues, it is possible to discuss trauma and posttraumatic growth as well. The overarching conclusion is that the dramatistic frame of reference can benevolently and beneficently be used to understand wellbeing, and thus also interactional wellbeing in organizations.

Weick (1993) refers to a crisis similar to trauma as a cosmological shift that destabilizes the prior orderliness of one’s reality. To put it in dramatistic terms, the scene and thus the agent-act-scene triad is not static, but alive and connected to beliefs about the efficacy of one’s actions (act) and also about oneself (agent) within one’s imminent scene of action (Burke 1945). If the previous section on relational moral competence is seen as fine-tuning and perfecting balance the agent-act-scene triad, then, the example of trauma shows the obverse example of when the alignment between agent, act and scene is as far from each other as conceivably possible (Burke 1945).

Traumatic symptoms are not necessarily located in the agent similarly as wellbeing is not necessarily reducible into the agent, but it can be understood as located in the relations between acts, agents and scenes (e.g. Nussbaum 2001; cf. Kahn et al. 2013; Weick 1993). Nor are ‘symptoms’ necessarily causal endpoints in a chain of events, but rather a process or a set of learned adjustments based on past experience. The point of view that is furthered in this study is that traumatic ‘symptoms’ are not necessarily the result of a disease or illness, but can be viewed as quite normal, everyday learning that can emerge out of extreme experiences (Bateson 1972; Ellenberger 1971; Szasz 1974). Outcomes like trauma cannot be predicted with certainty because the events do not become traumatic or impede intelligent conduct if they are handled with skill and ease. For example, an event most often becomes noticeable as a traumatic event when one cannot cope with the situation; it is stereotypical of a situation which requires copious amounts of conscious handling (Joseph 2011; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004).

Personal crisis and traumatic events may for example sensitise to and disclose the world in such a way that it can have both short-term and long-term impeding effects on one’s situational attunement (Janoff-Bulman 1992; 2004; Joseph 2011; Seligman 2011). The ability to perform with appropriate situational self-disclosure and self-enactment may thus be burdened by concrete life events. Events that are named as traumatic events often disclose truthful possibilities in life (Janoff-Bulman 1992; 2004), which have a significant impact on their understanding of themselves (agent) and their inhabited world (scene). Persons who experience a traumatic event can learn to lose their grip on life, but also to gain a novel and more steadfast hold of it (Frankl 1946/2010).

In Shattered Assumptions, Janoff-Bulman (1992: 4) explores the “psychology of daily existence” through the topics of trauma and victimization. According to Janoff-Bulman (1992: 5) there have been multiple conceptualizations about the same underlying phenomenon, that is, “a conceptual system, developed over time, that provides us with expectations about the world and ourselves.” She calls it the “assumptive world” (see also Janoff-Bulman 2004; Joseph 2011; Kelly 1963). In this study we may understand the assumptive world as the way in which the agent-act-scene triad comes together and thus how one can act purposively and successfully in the co-inhabited world. Janoff-Bulman argues that there are three fundamental beliefs which

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94 Janoff-Bulman utilizes several cognitive pre-conceptualizations such as internal models, schemas, representations and internal hierarchies which arguably stem from Cartesian metaphysics. I despite these deficits find much value and insight in Janoff-Bulman’s work and have utilized her conceptualizations with care.
form the bedrock of her theorized conceptual system: these are the beliefs about the benevolence of the world (1), the meaningfulness of the world (2) and the worthiness of the self (3).

With the benevolence of the world Janoff-Bulman (1992) means an understanding of one’s surroundings and oneself in it in which it makes sense to aspire and endeavor for betterment in life (i.e. the act-scene and agent-scene ratios, Burke 1945; see also Antonovsky 1993; 1996; Bandura 1977; 1982; 1989). The second belief is that the world makes and can be made sense of as to enable purposive action (i.e. act-scene ratio, Burke 1945). That the world is somehow and to some extent meaningful, comprehensible, just, and orderly so that a person can with his own actions engage and cope with the vicissitudes of life. For some people this belief may be in the form of straightforward control of one’s destiny whereas others may have more moderate and probably more truthful expectations about their own agency. The third belief of self-worth can be portrayed as the belief in one’s capabilities and in their own goodness as moral agents (i.e. agent-act ratio, Burke 1945). According to Janoff-Bulman these three broad and potent assumptions coexist at the core of one’s assumptive world. In Burke’s terms, to engage with the world requires assumptions about how the agent-act-scene triad works and trust that one can operate the triad with success.

According to Janoff-Bulman (1992), persons early on learn a way of relating; how to form and live with and within relationships, which are constitutive of the assumptive world (for similar accounts see Macmurray 1960; Seligman 2018). Janoff-Bulman draws on the work of Bowlby and Winnicott in arguing that it is the caring environment in one’s childhood which gives rise to the deep-ingrained core assumptions (see also James 1890/2016; Erikson 1959/1994; Macmurray 1960). How to live within and engage interactions are according to Janoff-Bulman what the core self in essence ‘is’ (for a similar account see Goffman 1961b). Janoff-Bulman argues that basic preconceptual trust, confidence, safety and security – “ontological security” as Giddens (1991/2012; R.D: Laing 1960/2010; May 1983/1994) and others call it for short – is an essential component of engaging with the world, or as we call it here, the agent-act-scene triad. According to Janoff-Bulman, this trust is formed beginning from the very first interactions in childhood:

“The child’s view of self, world, and their relationships originate in the infant’s early experiences, which center around interactions with a caregiver (or caregivers), usually the mother. In these early preverbal interactions, we begin to establish expectations about the world, about the nature of our caregivers, the nature of ourselves, and the nature of the interaction between the two.” (Janoff-Bulman 1992: 13)

This assumptive world and thus the trust that one can balance and engage the agent-act-scene triad can be disturbed by traumatic events. Evidence of misplaced trust can give rise to a sense of disharmony in the world and of oneself in it (cf. Spinosa et al. 1997). Janoff-Bulman (1992) argues that trust, security, positive expectations and the like are in part unsubstantiated “positive illusions”, for which there is no dearth of experimental and psychological evidence (e.g. Taylor & Brown 1988; 1994; see also Seligman 1990/2006). To talk of positive illusions may not however be entirely appropriate. What can in my mind be asserted without overgeneralizing the phenomenon is that persons live within a world which is not Reality, but always a working-understanding of what the world is from the standpoint of past experience (Dewey 1958; 2011; Oakeshott 1933/2015). To call a working-understanding of one’s world an illusion may confound the overarching phenomenon of Being-in-the-world with Cartesian assumptions of Reality.

95 Borrowing from Piaget, Janoff-Bulman (1992) argues that novel life experience is variously “assimilated” into the prevalent...
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worldview one holds. At times “accommodation” may however occur, when there is a more thorough revision of one’s understanding of the world (see also Argyris 1976; Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1990). Janoff-Bulman (1992: 39) consequently comes to a concordant understanding of what is practiced and accomplished in psychotherapy: “At a meta level, psychotherapy can be regarded as an attempt to effect change in people’s fundamental beliefs about themselves and the world.” That it is “rebuilding of this trust – the reconstruction of a viable, non-threatening assumptive world – that constitutes the core coping task of victims” (ibid.: 69). In our vocabulary, it means re-establishing a sense of trust in how the agent-act-scene triad works and is successfully engaged with.

Trauma is “an event that is appraised in such a way that it shatters the core of our conceptual system” (Janoff-Bulman 1992: 53). Put differently, they are out of the ordinary events that alter one’s Being-in-the-world or agent-act-scene triad to a significant degree. Or as Janoff-Bulman (1992: 60) puts it, traumas amount to a “massive disintegration of the individual’s symbolic world” which renders routine and automatic activity more or less impossible.

Following a trauma there would seem to be two divergent pathways to reassemble one’s assumptive world and thus the agent-act-scene triad. One is the denial or complete disassociation of the traumatic event (Janoff-Bulman 1992). The disharmony of the event is by various means kept out of one’s world without attempting to integrate the event and its understandings to the triad. Even though the event has happened, and intelligent conduct would perhaps require an alteration in how one intelligently conducts oneself in the world, this nonetheless does not take place. The process can be understood as an active accomplishment of disintegration of experience in order to keep one’s grip of the version of the world one is prepared to handle (Janoff-Bulman 1992).

The other means of reassembly of one’s world is the active encounter of the event. The memory of the event may pop into one’s mind in inopportune moments, one’s conscious thoughts may revolve around the event, there might be recurring nightmares and so forth (Joseph 2011; Seligman 2011). In these cases, coping with the trauma is directed at making sense of the event and normalizing it as part of one’s world. Janoff-Bulman (1992) repeatedly points out that any integration of trauma requires significant “cognitive processing” (see also Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004). To bring such an understanding to a non-Cartesian worldview, it could be called “intense engagement” in disclosing a new world much akin to how Spinos et al. (1997) describe the phenomenon of history-making in everyday life. The difference of course being that everyday history-making according to Spinos et al (1997) requires intense engagement to bring the disharmonies to the fore whereas a trauma seems to work the other way around by providing the disharmony outright but leaving the issue of the rest of the world unsettled.

In making sense of traumatic events persons, according to Janoff-Bulman (1992), use different “cognitive strategies.” These strategies are of significance to this account also for the reason that they are strikingly similar to history-making practices as described by Spinos et al (1997). Janoff-Bulman (1992: 118) describes the issue of cognitive strategies and the practices they involve:

“There are three major strategies used by survivors. One involves appraisals based on comparisons with others; more specifically, survivors compare their experiences with the real or imaginative outcomes of others, particularly other victims [cf. cross-appropriation, communal mode]. A second strategy entails interpretations of one’s own role in the victimization and
involves instances of self-blame [articulation, contemplative mode]. A third process focuses on reevaluations of the traumatic experience in terms of benefits and purpose, reflecting attempts at ‘meaning making’ by survivors [reconfiguration, pragmatic mode]. By engaging in one or more of these reappraisal processes, survivors ultimately facilitate the assimilation of their victimization.”

In comparing traumatic experiences, what is done is a re-relating to a world that has been experientially disclosed to be much different than what one previously thought it to be. One may have on a reflective level acknowledged that crimes happen, life is uncertain, and there are bad people in the world, but those thoughts are seldom linked to one’s self-image and to realization of real possibilities in one’s local surroundings (Janoff-Bulman 2004). After a traumatic event, the significance and concomitant understanding of the event is re-established in a new working-sense of the world and oneself in it.

The assimilation of the traumatic event into one’s world is facilitated when multiple victims disclose the world as altogether different than what one had before presupposed. The scene becomes reinterpreted. The past view of the world is disclosed as disharmonious and inaccurate (Janoff-Bulman 1992). In self-blame the victim makes sense of the experience from the perspective of learned lessons and personal control, or the agent-scene ratio. Apparently, the more concrete the victims’ understandings are as learned lessons about themselves in the world the better the coping outcome especially in comparison to making global and de-situated negative assessments of one’s character (Janoff-Bulman 1992).

The third strategy Janoff-Bulman describes as making sense of or making use of the event in the re-construction of one’s purpose in life (see also Frankl 1959/2006; Joseph 2011; Seligman 2011). This can be understood as re-establishing the act-scene ratio. An understanding of the event is formulated as a tool, or practical “maxim” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) or life narrative which also makes sense of one’s self in relation to one’s involvements in the world (agent-act ratio). The trauma can be said to disclose personal strengths, concretize and reinvigorate one’s purpose in life (Janoff-Bulman 2004), when it is reconfigured into a tool to balance the agent-act-scene triad. In accordance with the threefold structure of relationality, Janoff-Bulman (1992: 172; 2004; see also Folkman & Moskowitz 2004) highlights that: “Three factors are likely to be of particular significance in the recovery process: (1) the victim’s ability to tolerate arousal and distressing emotions [present-at-hand]; (2) the victim’s ability to creatively rework and reappraise the powerful new ‘data’ [ready-to-hand]; (3) the support of close, caring others [Being-with].”

In recovering from trauma, Janoff-Bulman (1992; 2004) forcefully argues that the process is nothing similar to recovery from illness or a disease. A survivor does not return to the state he was in before the traumatic event. His life is altered, and he learns to master and cope with his new world. The agent-act-scene triad does not return to its prior working-understanding of how the triad is successfully engaged. Albeit Janoff-Bulman frequently emphasizes the “cognitive processing” involved in the reconstruction process of a new assumptive world, she however does not forget nor undervalue the significance of and sensitivity which victims have for close relationships, action and the feedback that is received from one’s actions in the recovery process:

“Through their ongoing interactions with others, survivors learn directly about their world postvictimization. In a figure-ground sense, people are the moving figures that provide victims
with the richest and most available information about the world. Through their interactions with other people, survivors simultaneously learn about themselves and their perceived self-worth in the eyes of others. Throughout development, people provide us with important information about who we are and what we are like; as captured in sociologist Charles Cooley’s phrase ‘the looking-glass self’, people are mirrors that enable us to view and understand ourselves” (Janoff-Bulman 1992: 146).

It can be said that in addition to directly reflecting upon the significance of the traumatic experience upon the agent-act-scene triad, novel experiences and the support from others help victims of trauma to experience success in balancing the agent-act-scene triad. All of these pathways seem to help re-establishing trust in the assumptive world and thus the agent-act-scene triad.

### 14.5.1 Posttraumatic growth

Since the landmark work of Janoff-Bulman, the topic of posttraumatic growth has taken the academic community by storm (Joseph 2011; Linley & Joseph 2004; Maitlis 2020; Seligman 2011; Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004). Janoff-Bulman remarked about the prospect of posttraumatic growth, but she did not give it a central stage in her account: “For the survivor, the traumatic experience serves as an unexpected source of strength rather than weakness. There is a feeling of personal triumph, of mastery in spite of the extraordinary difficulties and demands of the experience. There is also the sense of possessing a new special sort of wisdom, which derives from the most potent type of education – personal experience.” (Janoff-Bulman 1992: 175)

Joseph gives a similar account of posttraumatic growth, which may lack the concept of practical wisdom or phronesis in it (see Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), but one may find the gist of the same phenomenon in his description:

“Three existential themes are at the core of posttraumatic growth. The first is the recognition that life is uncertain and that things change. This amounts to a tolerance of uncertainty that, in turn, reflects the ability to embrace it as a fundamental tenet of human existence. The second is psychological mindfulness, which reflects self-awareness and an understanding of how one’s thoughts, emotions and behaviours are related to each other, as well as a flexible attitude towards personal change. The third is acknowledgement of personal agency, which entails a sense of responsibility for the choices one makes in life and an awareness that choices have consequences. Trauma leads to an awareness of all three of these existential truths. In turn, this awareness seems to provoke changes in the way that people talk about themselves, the way they feel about life, and the way they go on to lead their lives.” (Joseph 2011: 20-21)

Joseph’s (2011) depiction of posttraumatic growth and Nussbaum’s (2001) account of the value in tragedies, are astoundingly similar. Personal knowledge and insights about the vulnerabilities in life can lead to self-discovery, mastery and valuable insights about the world (Janoff-Bulman 2004; Nussbaum 2001). Janoff-Bulman (2004: 30) has outlined three models of posttraumatic growth, which are not mutually exclusive: “strength through suffering, psychological preparedness, and existential reevaluation.” The first model consists of experiences about newfound self-reliance and personal strength. The second model establishes a new grip of the world in a way that is better protected or resilient in the face of traumatic experiences. The
third model is a profound shift in one’s values and shows a newfound appreciation toward life and for one’s own existence in the world.

The previous quote from Joseph (2011) and the models from Janoff-Bulman (2004) can be interpreted in light of Burke’s dramatistic pentad, and especially the agent-act-scene triad. The person who experiences growth after a trauma experiences the scene as uncertain but not impossible to engage with. The new grip on the world is more resilient and thus less susceptible to novel earth-shattering disturbances. The agent-act-scene triad is consequently more flexible and realistic. He acknowledges his own thoughts about himself as pertinent to how he acts in life, i.e. he sees the agent-act and agent-scene ratios with renewed clarity. Personal mastery is increased through insights about the agent-act and act-scene ratios. With these insights the agent-act-scene triad is reconstructed. The person is thereafter able to engage with the triad with novel wisdom about the efficacy of his acts, flexibility about his own self (agent), and acceptance of an uncertain scene whilst seeing purpose in engaging with it (see also Maitlis 2020; Nussbaum 2001).

In a recent review about posttraumatic growth at work, Maitlis (2020: 410) argues that there are still many unanswered questions about posttraumatic growth, and “a real dearth of research on posttraumatic growth in the context of work.” Maitlis (2020) argues that especially the personal experiences that instigate posttraumatic growth at work and the kinds of conditions and practices that facilitate its emergence are of particular interest but have hitherto received little attention. Albeit this study is not about posttraumatic growth, the burgeoning interest in growth following adversity suggests that there is a general interest towards, and recognition of, the importance of tragedies and vulnerabilities embedded in work, but the research is still in its infancy (see e.g. Kahn 2019). This study about interactional wellbeing is situated in the same realm of scholarship as posttraumatic growth but comes to the field with an alternative way of thinking and connecting phenomena, and consequently with a somewhat different vocabulary.

In sum, we can conclude that both trauma and posttraumatic growth can be described with the help of the dramatistic pentad and especially the different ratios and how they affect the sense of balance in and engagement with the agent-act-scene triad. Moreover, more studies are needed about living proficiently with vulnerabilities and difficulties at work (Kahn 2019; Maitlis 2020).

14.6 A forward-looking summary of understanding interactional wellbeing

1. Moods, states-of-mind and emotions stem from and concern the agent, the act, the scene and the balance between especially these coordinates of the pentad in situated action. (Burke, Heidegger, Goldie)
   a. Moods, states-of-mind and emotions are always accompanied with situated understanding of the actualities and potentialities of a situation. Both the actualities and potentialities inform and are reflected in the experienced mood, state-of-mind or emotion.
   b. To deal with a situation is a moral act by dealing with that particular situation then-and-there above other possible involvements or desired future states of affairs. Purpose is thus embedded in the situation and in the act of dealing with it. There are consequently emotions involved and dependent on one’s
situational understanding of to what extent one is doing the right thing, at the right time, and at the right place.

c. Moods etc. can go unnoticed or equivalently be ready-to-hand when absorbed in dealing with a situation. They can also show up and thus become present-at-hand and in itself need to be dealt with if there is an unexpected imbalance between one’s actions and the dealt situation.

d. One often deals with situationally inappropriate emotions because the emotion is considered significant due to the emotion’s ‘mineness’ and because it is or may become part of the ongoing social situation.

e. Emotions differ from moods and states-of-mind by being focused at something specific and by being imbued with intentionality, which makes emotions intelligible and directed at the current and/or desired future state of affairs.

f. Emotions have the special character of being able to cause lock-ins with an interpretation of a particular state of affairs or agent-act-scene triad. In such cases the emotion can define the situation for the person. In the eyes of other participants, the person is seen as in the grip of an emotion. To be in the grip of an emotion means that other participants perceive the person’s actions to some degree ungrounded, inappropriate or disproportionate to the situation at hand. It instigates an emotional episode. Release from an emotional episode is usually accomplished by achieving the desired future state of affairs the emotion is directed towards. In making sense of a person’s felt emotion one attempts to interpret their situational understanding of the agent-act-scene triad.

g. The significance of an emotion can be tied to the social significance of the person who experiences the emotion. This ties the emotion to a definition of the situation, and consequently the agent’s emotion defines the social situation and thus a specific understanding of the agent-act-scene triad. If the person is considered of significance to others, then it is usually required to attend to the emotion and thus also the person’s definition of the situation.

2. Civil encounters, interactions and other forms of copresence are shared engagements with a local and mutually negotiated and often instantaneously agreed upon scene, set of appropriate involvements in that scene, a fitting mood, a level of engagement, rules of relevance and irrelevance, as well as understanding of the self- and other-worth of each participant in connection to the local scene and the involvements in the encounter. Agents, scene and acts are thus intimately tied to one another through the man-made and mutually agreed upon rules of social worth, the definition of the situation, the involvements, the face of the participants, and the agreed upon mood of the encounter. (Goffman)

a. A civil encounter can be understood as a scene-governed situation, i.e. where the agent-act-scene triad is governed chiefly by the implicit and explicit rules of the situation, like face-work.

b. Face or a line is a self-assigned and socially constituted sense of worth that is relationally coupled with other participants (agents), the situation (scene), and the involvements in the situation (acts). A change in the situation or situated actions often correspondingly change the face of participants. The agent-act-scene triad is tightly coupled, and its state and fluctuations tend to become
visible through changes in participants’ actions for claiming, expressing, corroborating, affirming, invalidating and maintaining face in a civil encounter.

c. Tensions and corresponding emotions in encounters arise due to a sense of discrepancy between a person’s experience of the ongoing agent-act-scene triad, and what the triad should be based on one’s sense of self, situated judgement and past experience. The particular emotion one experiences in a situation corresponds with the details of the situation, the fit between the act and the situation, and the self-implicatory meanings about one’s social worth and other socially acknowledged agentic attributes in the situation.

d. Composure, social skills and tact are attributes of the agent that concern the handling of tension in encounters. These learnable skills along with deference and demeanor form the cornerstones of face-work and consequently civil conduct.

3. The agent-act-scene triad forms a communicative medium which is mutually shared and maintained through interaction rituals and other social acts that assign and corroborate self- and other-value and other socially acknowledged attributes of the participating agents. A violation of the rules of face-work can violate the shared understanding and sense of what is going on, i.e. the mutually negotiated and often immediate sense of the agent-act-scene triad. A discrepancy in the ongoing agent-act-scene triad tends to impede and confuse communication. (Burke, Goffman)

4. Practical moral reasoning concerns the formulation of a sense of balance or harmony in the dramatistic pentad and especially the agent-act-scene triad. Relational moral competence as an agent-governed attribute is both a form of personal mastery in situated action (practical consciousness) for balancing the triad as well as a discursive skill (discursive consciousness) for how to argue for what represents a balance – a fair, fitting, and reasonable act (epieikes) – in the agent-act-scene triad. (Aristotle, Burke, Jonsen & Toulmin, Giddens)

a. Knowledge pertaining to practical moral reasoning is most likely phronetic knowledge which by definition cannot be coded into universal, de-situated and timeless propositions of moral conduct.

5. Experienced eudaimonia is a personal experience of the actively accomplished and successfully engaged balance in the agent-act-scene triad. (Annas, Aristotle, Burke)

a. Phenomenologically, relational moral competence concerns the ease and ability as well as observed excellence in handling the balance of the agent-act-scene triad. A sense of purpose and agency are often embedded in one’s sense of the appropriate act and experienced ability to balance between the big three in the triad, even in frustrating situations.

b. Virtues and other good deeds are irreducible to any single coordinate of the dramatistic pentad. Virtuous conduct by a single agent concerns especially the skill, character, and accumulated experience that enable him to balance the agent-act-scene triad especially in unforeseen, problematic and novel situations.

6. Interactional wellbeing is defined as an actively co-created balance in the agent-act-scene triad, where agency and purpose are also embedded. The process concerns the relationally accomplished unbalancing and rebalancing – dramatic opening, handling
and the closing of the drama – of the agent-act-scene triad. (Annas, Aristotle, Burke, Goffman, Goldie, Heidegger, Jonsen & Toulmin)

a. Balance in the triad is relationally enacted and discursively formulated. Interactional wellbeing is accomplished by enacting changes and formulating new relationally constituted balances in the agent-scene, agent-act, and act-scene ratios that form the agent-act-scene triad.

b. Balancing of the triad is mindful and purposive action enacted by conscious moral agents amidst the insecurities, uncertainties, possibilities and probabilities inherent to a man-made scene.

c. In organizational settings purpose is often embedded in the ongoing scene (setup), which makes the choice of an act (that is not scene-governed) into an agent-governed act of a conscious moral agent who can by definition choose a different purpose for his actions.

d. Wellbeing generative processes are those that seek to ease tensions in the mutually experienced triad, and thus balance or seek and accomplish an improved balance in the dramatistic pentad and especially the agent-act-scene triad. Wellbeing degenerative processes are those that cause tension and imbalance especially the agent-act-scene triad without disclosing a novel and improved balance in the pentad.

e. Knowledge about what constitutes a balance in the agent-act-scene triad and how such experiences are either relationally or personally created are best explicated through real-life cases. The explication of such cases contributes to phronetic knowledge about interactional wellbeing.

7. The definition of interactional wellbeing can be used to make sense of at least civil conduct, virtuous conduct, eudaimonia, emotional episodes, trauma, and posttraumatic growth as well as the practice of casuistry, counselling and psychotherapy.
“What science can achieve must be welcomed.” (Berlin 1996, chapter 2)

Part V builds on the previous insights from the first encounter and the hitherto developed interactional and relational perspective and its vocabulary. Here we investigate the empirical material once more, but with renewed theoretical muscles developed in Part IV. In Part IV we broadened the linguistic scenery and theoretical “circumference”, by exploring the interconnections between the dramatistic coordinates of “scene,” “act,” “agency,” “purpose,” and “agent” (Burke 1945). Part IV provided the overarching historical, scientific, conceptual, philosophical and theoretical backdrop for investigating a historically situated phenomenon and understanding of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

With this second encounter with the empirical material the aim is to narrow the circumference once more to the scope of the empirical material whilst being conceptually disciplined and mindful (Burke 1945; Oswick et al. 2002) about the development of the ensuing theory so that it is constructed according to the described philosophical and theoretical commitments. In this second encounter, the agent-act-scene triad that is integral to interactional wellbeing is filled with content and situated specificity whilst connecting this understanding with, for example, the previously proposed setups in Part III. For the sake of brevity, here in Part V I have omitted a similar and partly overlapping step-by-step description of the empirical research process as in the first encounter with the empirical material. Instead, I have focused the discussion on synthesis and the relevant theoretical steps that I needed to gain a novel handle on the empirical material.
15. Second encounter with the empirical material

“Truth cannot be out there – cannot exist independently of the human mind – because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own – unaided by the describing activities of human beings – cannot.” (Richard Rorty 1989: 5)

The general method of reasoning and use of judgement in this study has been outlined in the beginning of Part III. Here I expand and elaborate on some consideration that the discussions in Part IV give rise to as well as detail the subsequent analysis of the empirical material in the second encounter with the empirical material. At the end of this section a Figure (6) of key theoretical building blocks from Parts III and IV are synthesized to provide a narrowed theoretical circumference onto which the second empirical part of this study builds upon.

The contribution of this second encounter is formed into five empirically grounded relational frames. I use the term relational “frame” (Goffman 1974) as an action mindset that puts together the coordinates of the dramatistic pentad together in a way that provides an intelligent and heedful course of action within local organizational settings. The concept of relational frame encapsulates the general insights we have hitherto discussed through the concept of the “scene” of action (Burke 1945). I call it a relational frame to accentuate that the frame is co-constituted and a locally shared understanding of what is going on and how one should act proficiently and morally within a typical situation; i.e. it grounds the agent-act-scene triad to a particular scene of action. These relational frames build on the first encounter with the empirical material and especially on the notions of relational balance, wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination and the different setups: ideal setup, organization setup, relationship setup, interaction setup and incident setup.

15.1 Method for analyzing relational frames as situated moral encounters

In the first encounter with the material we clarified the core phenomenon of interactions with a “factor-analytic” (Cornelissen 2017) style that, despite all its merits, we found to confine the analysis to a general and thus all too narrow circumference (Burke 1945). The analysis could not grasp persons as morally responsible agents immersed in incessantly changing relational circumstances and similar vexing situations as is accomplished in much of psychoanalytic scholarship (e.g. Laing & Esterson 1964; May 1984; O’Hanlon & Wilk 1987; Seligman 2018; Smail 1984). As Seligman (2018: 257) puts it, “psychoanalysis is founded in the exploration of indeterminacy,” which is also the theoretical landscape of relational frames and the acts of conscious moral agents.
The factor-analytic analysis brought forth the generic relational dynamics and structure in the investigated interaction setups, but it did not open up the significance and other important details that might be relevant in those interactions. That is to say, it did not open up the enlivened “world” of those interactions (Heidegger 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Seligman 2018). This presented a problem for how to analyze and present the material in a systematic form and yet include the richness of what occurs within and surrounds the interactions that interviewees considered significant for their wellbeing at Techcorp Finland.

These omissions, like the lack of sensitivity to the scene of action, gave rise to the theoretical discussions in Part IV, that explored the entire dramatistic pentad and especially the theoretical relationships in the agent-act-scene triad from the point of view of wellbeing. Subsequently, I trusted that if I follow the material and try to be true to the interviews a suitable format to describe the material and the process of analysis would present itself (Weick 1996). This could be described as trying to find a suitable descriptive mix and conceptual level that would capture some of the relational life-world often found in psychoanalytical case descriptions (Seikkula & Arnikil 2006; Seligman 2018) and a more general level of description fitting organization studies (Dyer & Wilkins 1991; Weick 1999). Thus, to capture some of the “richness” of real life (Weick 2007) in-between a micro moment-to-moment analysis and a macro focus on global relational patterns in life (Seligman 2018).

My overall sentiment at the time and since then has been captured rather well by Cornelissen (2017: 380): “we (as authors, readers, reviewers, and editors) [should] become less restrictive in our judgements about what counts as a theoretical contribution from qualitative research, and appreciate a much greater variety of ways of theoretically making sense from data.” Subsequently, I began going through the interviews anew, a third and fourth time, and picking out and re-coding important sentences and descriptions of interactions. Now I began to pick out everything I thought was illuminating and important – what I immediately understood as related to and providing details to what I had become to understand as the core phenomenon of interactional wellbeing.

At this point my understanding had developed so that I understood the core phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings to be a combination of relational structure and especially different setups, relational dynamics, and balancing of the agent-act-scene triad. I also understood these pieces of the puzzle to be at the core of a broader organizational landscape of a gamut of man-made institutions and agreements that variously enable and impede agency and self-disclosure and self-enactment through deontic powers and in which every scene and act is infused with purpose and most often involve some form of “coordination” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009).

My main problem at this point was to figure out a suitable way to present this understanding and thus to incorporate quotes and implicit understandings into structured narratives with actual persons and their situated acts. My aim became to enrich the generic interactions outlined in Part III with contextual background and to write qualitative case narratives with a suitable mix of historical locality and descriptive generality (Berlin 2013a; 2013b; Collingwood 1946/2014). In this endeavor – mixing psychotherapeutic, micro sociological and organization studies descriptive styles to describe interactional wellbeing – I found several theoretical resources to be of help. Burke (1945; 1984), Goffman (1974; 1981), Moscovici (2008), Shotter and Tsoukas (2014a; 2014b) and Jonsen and Toulmin (1988) to be more precise.

These resources gave me an understanding of how I could describe an in-between or “phronetic” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b) level of the “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945)
consisting of some interactional generality and contextual particularity in the descriptions. That is, situations with risks, options and indeterminacy (Seligman 2018; Taleb 2013). Figure 5 shows a conceptual schema of the level I was interested in capturing in my analysis. An already talked about notion that captures this in-between level – which I later came to designate as relational frames – opens up through the lens of immersed moral action “within a landscape of possibilities” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b: 377). I, in other words, used the term “frame” (Goffman 1974) to set a shared local scene for action, and then began to look at the different acts, possibilities, judgements, and rationalities that were linked to those relatively generic and thus recurring scenes.

![Figure 5. The relational frames and a phronetic level of investigation. The relational frames combine generic interactions with particularity of the situation. It is this phronetic level of investigation that is between the general interaction setup (a situated level) and the uniqueness of each and every actual encounter (a situational level).](image)

What we had gathered thus far from Part IV was that the scene of the act matters. Our analyzed situations and the acts within them concern ethics, and acts are ethical in character when they are considered above and beyond mere motion (Aristotle 2005; Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1945; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Mills 1959/2000). According to Burke (1945: 136), “when one talks of the will, one is necessarily in the field of the moral; and the field of the moral is, by definition, the field of action.” (italics in original) Or as he states elsewhere: “Action is fundamentally ethical, since it involves preferences” (Burke 1984: 250). I thus found myself in the analysis of ethical deeds and the ethical scenes in which the actions were enacted. To be explicit about this move, I began to capture interactional wellbeing in organizational settings through a vocabulary and theoretical mindset that portrays the phenomenon as situated moral action (e.g. Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

Aristotle (2005) has taught us that this landscape is the analysis of form (Bateson 1972; Kovesi 1967) or plot in more modern terms (Burke 1945; Toulmin & Goodfield 1965/1977). Burke’s (1945) analysis of the word “should” provided a key insight as it connected action with
context (act-scene ratio) in his analysis of the dramatistic pentad. According to Burke, “should” is used in relation to the act-scene ratio. Burke states the relationship between act (action) and scene (context) thus:

“[T]he scene-act ratio can be applied in two ways. It can be applied deterministically in statements that a certain policy had to be adopted in a certain situation, or it can be applied in hortatory statements to the effect that a certain policy should be adopted in conformity with the situation.” (Burke 1945: 13, italics in original)

The scene is the warrant for the statement of laudable “ought to” or the blameworthy “ought-not” concerning the act. The moral claim however stems from one’s habitual orientation or “character” (Annas 2011), “which involves a vocabulary of ought and ought-not, with attendant vocabulary of praiseworthy and blameworthy” (Burke 1984: 21). I came to understand that this vocabulary that connects and discloses imbalances and balances in the agent-act-scene triad is instrumental to understanding and analyzing persons’ descriptions about their interactions in organizational settings, especially in connection with interactions that concern wellbeing.

Goffman (1981) has similarly noted that a theory of “moves” (act) in an interaction requires a theory of context (scene), because a move can be a move in one context but is not necessarily a move in another. Goffman (1981) notes that the context can even actively define the interaction setup and not only provide passive “context” for the moves that transpire, thus reminiscent of Burke’s (1945) sentiment in the above quote. Where the scene actively directs the act, Goffman (1981) calls it “situational” (cf. scene-act, Burke 1945) whereas in cases where the context is merely informative he calls “situated” (cf. act-scene, Burke 1945). These theoretical resources provided a vocabulary and general answer to the question of “what” I was interested in explicating, i.e. the situated relational dynamics that balanced the agent-act-scene triad, as contextually rich performances of situated moral judgement (see Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b).

To answer the question of “how” to study this focus, I felt like I needed help once again, especially in understanding the chain of reasoning that allows me to connect post-hoc interviewee accounts to situated understandings about moral action. With the help of the previously mentioned theoretical resources, I came to understand that the analysis of the often implicit moral fiber in case descriptions and utterances can be approached from at least two angles, one that stresses knowledge and thus pattern recognition and completion (e.g. Berger & Luckmann 1966; Moscovici 2008) and another that accentuates action and thereby purpose and interest (Bakhtin 1993; Burke 1984).

As discussed earlier in Part IV (action as a mode of language, language as a mode of action), there is knowledge in action, and conversely, there is action in uttered knowledge through the use of language; that is to say, in the chosen perspective knowledge and action are viewed as different sides of the same coin (e.g. Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b; 2001). So the “how” can be illuminated from both angles, how one understands or knows the situation and what one did, would do, and why in that kind of a situation.

96 Goffman’s (1967; 1981) own analysis of the morality in communication takes him to a ritualistic analysis of everyday interactions. In these ritualistic enactments it can be, as Goffman (1959; 1967) has shown, profitable to dissolve the scene out of the interactions and focus on the more or less general ritualistic rules of interaction. I do not believe that a similar theoretical foci would be equally useful in this account and given the empirical material at our disposal. There is more to the scene of interaction than a repetitive interaction ritual, especially in organizational settings.
According to Burke (1984: 173) “mind is a social product and our very concepts of character depend upon the verbalizations in our group. In its origins, language is an implement of action, a device which takes its shape by the cooperative patterns of the group that uses it.” Burke expands on his view thus:

“We discern situational patterns by means of the particular vocabulary the cultural group into which we are born. Our minds, as linguistic products, are composed of concepts (verbally molded) which select certain relationships as meaningful. Other groups may select other relationships as meaningful. These relationships are not realities, they are interpretations of reality – hence different frameworks of interpretation will lead to different conclusions as to what reality is. [...] We learn to single out certain relationships in accordance with the particular linguistic texture into which we are born, though we may privately manipulate this linguistic texture to formulate still other relationships.” (Burke 1984: 35-36)

Coming from the angle that stresses action, Burke’s view is that there are “survivals” (Oakeshott 1999) in local use of language itself which contain a motivational and moral “linguistic texture” that guides social cooperation (Burke 1954/1984). The language itself is directed at picking and organizing particular experiences and especially social settings into identifiable and easily understandable molds (see also Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Goffman 1974). With the shared language, situations and relationships are put together similarly, which facilitates coordination and cooperation (Goffman 1974). As discussed earlier under A grammar of management, intentionality and motive are embedded within acts and communication – in addition to being found in recognized scenic objects (Heidegger 1962/2008) and the scene of action (Goffman 1967) – and grasping and performing the shared intentionality is key to successful cooperation (Bratman 1992; Searle 1995; Weick & Roberts 1993).

This suggests that there are patterns of relationships and judgements about moral situations embedded in the linguistic texture of a language community which is openly available for analysis and interpretation. To sum up the argument from the action point of view, language directs acts and the moral fiber implicit in employed language and consequently in situated action can be analyzed through the described relationships and the relevant circumstances surrounding particular situations. From this point of view, relational frames can be considered as “organizing frames” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) that glue together the judgement, experience and relevant understandings which allow one to make sense of the situation and its relation to the other coordinates of the dramatistic pentad (see also Goffman 1974).

Approaching this issue from the point of knowledge, Moscovici (2008) describes the connections between language, knowledge and action through the theoretical lens of “social representations.” According to Moscovici, a “social representation”, a term which he borrows from Durkheim, is “a model which, once it has been assimilated, taught, communicated and shared, shapes our reality” and thus “allow human beings to make physical and social reality intelligible” (Moscovici 2008: xxvi, xxxi). He continues,

“social representations organize images and language because they identify and symbolize acts and situations that are, or will become, common to us all. [...] Ultimately representations produce and determine behavior because they define both the stimuli that surround and provoke us, and the meaning of our responses to them. To cut a long story short a social representation is a particular modality of knowledge, and its function is to shape inter-individual behaviors and communication.” (Moscovici 2008: xxx, italics in original).
According to Moscovici, there is particularity and generality to a social representation, because it is simultaneously a “psychological organization” but also a product of its historically situated surroundings. Social representations are according to Moscovici (2008: 10, 14, 18) “dynamic ensembles” of “indirect knowledge” and a social representation “brings together experiences, vocabularies, concepts, and modes of behaviour.” Their contribution is thus directed at “processes that shape social behaviour and orient social communication” (Moscovici 2008: 30). Moscovici thus comes to a similar view of what a social representation does as Burke (1954/1984) of “orientation” and of language more generally (see Part II, see also Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b about orientation).

Moscovici states that, “a social representation is a ‘preparation for action’, it is not only to the extent that it governs behaviour but above all to the extent that it remodels and reconstitutes the elements of the environment in which the behaviour takes place. It succeeds in giving meaning to behaviour, and in integrating it into a network of relations” (Moscovici 2008: 9). Seligman (2018) has in the psychotherapeutic context drawn together several similar concepts from the relational tradition, including “implicit relational knowing” and unconscious “relationship format.”

To summarize, what we may gather from Burke’s, Goffman’s and Moscovici’s kindred accounts, at the very least, is that in describing important social situations and acts that had a bearing on their wellbeing in the organization, the interviewees in this study most likely drew from a shared linguistic texture infused with indirect knowledge and a shared moral “orientation” (Burke 1984; see also Boas 1928/1986; Elias 1998). The embedded knowledge in the use of language can be assumed to have a more or less similar way of perceiving acts and situations, and thus how to put together and apprehend relational balance and imbalance between the coordinates in the dramatistic pentad. This collective stock of indirect knowledge and implicit moral understandings of how a shared sense of balance in the agent-act-scene triad is enacted and employed in effective communication – for example the understandings often underlying a “should” statement (Burke 1945) – is unlikely a merely local schema specific to the person or the studied organization (Burke 1984; Moscovici 2008). This is because the language and understandings are most often more general than strictly confined to a specific organization or subgroup. The described moral situations were in fact so easily understandable, easily understood as descriptions of either praiseworthy or blameworthy acts, which to me testified to the idea that the descriptions played on more commonly shared indirect knowledge.

Although it might have been acceptable to analyze the material and provide an interpretive account solely based on these premises and understandings, I nonetheless felt that I needed some further clarification about how to think about these issues. I had thus some additional considerations to attend to in order to analyze the material in a disciplined and reflexive manner (Alvesson et al. 2008b; Cunliffe 2003; Weick 1999). How to include and analyze implicit or background knowledge in an empirical investigation, as it is by definition impossible that an empirical audit trail can be shown to such knowledge? That is, indirect knowledge is at least partly left unsaid and instead assumed and used implicitly in the accounts of the interviewees. I thus had a new set of concerns, which concerned the use of background knowledge, the analysis of form in acts, and the analysis of moral notions and situations. I have added more detailed discussions on these topics in Appendix C.
To make a long story short, in order to show the acts with their respective scenes in particular interaction setups I have chosen to describe them as relational frames that are similar to casuistic cases (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). A relational frame consists of situated acts; it describes a particular constellation of an agent-act-scene triad in which purpose and preferences is by definition of a moral act infused into the description (Burke 1945; 1984). The actions are enacted in an organization and thus a tightly coupled web of man-made relations, thus the name relational frame.

Historically speaking, casuistic cases have been used to educate and reason about the morality or “goodness” of particular acts, and this suits our purposes here. The history of moral reasoning has shown this style to be an efficient form of reasoning and communication when discussing different constellations in the dramatistic pentad (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). All of the presented relational frames build on the previously presented framework of Parent, Adult and Child communication pairs (Berne 1964/2010) and the overall relational structure and relational dynamics that together give form to the interaction setups.

A relational frame and its implicit organizing capacity of how a situation is put together, can be used to praise or blame another, or to reason about the goodness and badness of particular acts (Burke 1945; Goffman 1981; Macmurray 1960). Often a single reported empirical case is however in short supply of details other than indirect knowledge concerning a more general relational frame of how the situation is put together. An interviewee can point out perhaps only one or two bits of information that efficiently define the scene for a moral act. Here is, for example, a short case described by a manager, where I have very shortly described the relevant background as it was brought forth and the comment that puts together moral blame, the pattern in a series of acts (organizational changes through dictation), and what was not done was scenically described as part of understanding the act (no asking, listening nor interest for local history):

There was a new HR-director in Techcorp Finland who made a lot of changes to company practices by his own accord. The sheer amount and style how they were communicated, that is to say, dictated, made the director quickly unpopular amongst many employees and managers at Techcorp Finland: “A new person came and dictated the new way of how things are done and did not even ask or listen to how things are here and how they have been done before.” Manager#33

It is clear from this short case description that the interviewee (manager#33) and the HR-director had dissimilar readings about the scene and consequently about the appropriate set of actions in that scene. However, such cases, if described one by one, would in all likelihood show a rich variety of unique cases but unfortunately poor in common contextual details. It would probably mix particulars with generalities in a way that would make it difficult to discern the one from the other and more general patterns related to relational frames. One method that overcomes this limitation is to compile several empirical cases into one general casuistic case rich in detail. Kohut (2012) has, for example, in a historical study about the life of “a German generation” assembled eyewitness accounts but decided to present the findings by putting together actual experiences from tens of interviewees into the richly described lives of two fictional characters. One could say that the creative means fitted the purpose of the exposition.

In case study research often multiple accounts and sources of information are compiled to form a single description of events (Eisenhardt 1989; Flyvbjerg 2006; Silverman 1993; 2000; Yin 1994). The method herein is largely the same, albeit with some minor amendments. I have
chosen to show a similar pattern of judgement and situated action across several cases, at times from multiple angles, and at times including, for example, the reasoning of both the Parent and the Child participants in a relational frame. Although the actual empirical cases and presented quotes do not necessarily concern the same unique incidents, here I have taken the liberty to compile them in a way that connects them as if they did. I believe this way to be true to the general phenomenon under investigation. The “warrant” (Ketokivi & Mantere 2010; Toulmin 1958/2003) that allows for some quotes and description to be assembled into one is that of adequate “similarity” (Kovesi 1967), which has been discussed in more detail in Appendix C.

How cases are put together, presented and conceptualized represents one empirical contribution of this study.

Following the labelling and organization of quotes and short cases, and the methodological investigations mentioned previously, I wrote a thirty-page description of the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing based on the empirical material (cf. Eisenhardt 1989). From that thirty-page description and the quotes, labels and cases they drew upon I then condensed multiple cases into more general relational frames similar to “type cases” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). In casuistic reasoning a type case is a common frame of reference that provides a moral orientation for how to put together a particular situation and onto which situationally specific details can be added to assess the goodness or badness of a similar and yet particular act. In principle, the discussed relational frames serve the same purpose of portraying empirically grounded cases of moral reasoning in relatively typical situations to modern work like. I also included counterexamples – the “ought to” with the “ought-not” (Burke 1945) – which I thought in unison showed more than only blameworthy or praiseworthy cases would have accomplished separately. In other words, I decided to describe cases of enacted imbalance and balance in the agent-act-scene triad in order to show a more general pattern of reasoning.

The five relational frames are:
1. The mindful agent
2. The informed tour guide
3. The resourceful caretaker
4. The setup planner
5. The mindful organization

15.2 A theoretical synthesis of Parts III and IV – narrowing the theoretical circumference

Before we delve into the five relational frames, it may be helpful to formulate a concise theoretical backdrop for how to understand what occurs in the theoretically dense relational frames. Theoretical density here means that they are construed with the help of a densely interconnected network of theoretical prototypes and proto-ideas that extend to a range of subjects like scenic construction, emotions, trauma, and organizing (see Parts II, IV). Given that our main interest is in interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, Figure 6 presents a synthesis of the four main theoretical components that give rise to the five relational frames:

1. Relational structure
2. Face
3. Wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination
4. Relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad
All of the four main components are already in themselves condensed frameworks (see Parts III and IV), consisting of numerous entwined proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes. This shows the density and possible complexity of what can occur in relational frames.

15.2.1 Relational structure

To recap from end of Part III, relational structure refers to relational positions, interaction setups, relationship setups, organization setups, ideal setups, incident setups and other intimately related concepts like move, relational disorientation, setup disharmony, footing, participation framework, and production format (see Berne 1964/2010; Goffman 1981). In a grammar of management in Part IV many concepts within the relational structure like participation framework and production format were implicitly expanded through discussion of differences in man-made deontic powers, relational positions in intentionality formation, different types of speech acts, and what kinds of relational knots can occur when, for instance, acts, setups, and deontic powers become entangled. In short, the relational structure comprises a vocabulary and a way of giving form to interactions (Burke 1945; Aristotle 2005), in a way that connects the acts of conscious moral agents to a proximal and relationally constituted scene of action.

Building on the threefold structure of relationality, which was presented in a grammar of management, previously introduced and employed concepts of interaction, relationship, organization, ideal and incident setups can now be theorized in a phenomenological framework, which helps in connecting interviewee accounts to a more general theoretical framework. As discussed in Part III, in organizational settings relationship setups (I and Me, Mead 1934/2015; Being-with, Heidegger 1962/2008) and thus the habitual and experience-based relational agreements and thereupon built expectations of teamwork and cooperation is the most often expected backdrop for an interaction.

When an encounter was not performed in accordance with the expectations implicit in the relationship setup, it was experienced as an unforeseen interaction setup, as something that happened to the person (the Me, Mead 1934/2015). It is felt like “present-at-hand” to the surprised interactants (Heidegger 1962/2008). The breakdown of the relationship setup can thus initiate an incident setup, which is experienced as a disharmony in the ongoing situation equivalent to an imbalance in the agent-act-scene triad. From previous studies we know that such incident setups require composure and social skills to alleviate the felt tension in the encounter (Goffman 1967).

When one experiences a discrepancy between the relationship setup and the interaction setup, the disharmony most likely prompts a moral judgement of how that interaction should have been organized and conducted (Burke 1945). This is the ideal setup (the I, Mead 1934/2015) and represents a person’s experience and locally situated sense of relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad. The ideal setup can be the same setup as the relationship setup or another type of setup, depending on the circumstances of the situation (see Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). The organization setup is the sum of explicit and implicit agreements that formulate how coordination in a specific encounter or setup ought to take place within the organization. It is “ready-to-hand” (Heidegger 1962/2008) and thus most likely a taken for granted form of interaction for most participants where there is an organization setup in place.

The organization setup and the ideal setup concern two different types of should statements (see Burke 1945). The organization setup represents an interaction setup for how a setup ought to take place given “standing agreements” (Searle 2009) of how such issues are handled in the
organization. It is a scene-governed (act-scene ratio) enactment of moral conduct (e.g. Goffman 1967). The ideal setup is person’s or community’s implicit preference which is often aroused forth once a situation is not handled properly; an agent-governed point of view (agent-act ratio) (e.g. Annas 2011). Usually one could expect the ideal setup and the organization setup to be aligned as a shared sense of relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad. However, as will be shown, “standing agreements” (Searle 2009) are not always the only relevant determinants that direct practical judgement about how a situation should be handled.

Organization setups were perceived as primary to relationship and once-occurrent interaction setups. This was the case as long as there were no exceptional circumstances involved and the organization setup actually managed to be heedful, thoughtful, and benefit coordination (Weick & Roberts 1993) – to provide “direction” and “alignment” (Drath et al. 2008) – and thus through proper coordination help accomplish the overarching purpose of the organization. If these aspects were not accomplished by the organization setup, then there was most likely setup misalignment between the enacted organization setup and the ideal setup.

15.2.2 Face

The concepts of “face” and “face-work” (Goffman 1967) have been discussed at length in Part IV. In the framework for understanding the role of relational frames in Figure 6, face is good to understand as significance or value inherent to interactions. It complements the relational structure by imbuing relational dynamics with socially constituted value. Certain relational positions are valued and therefore sought after and others eschewed, because of their implications on face and the agency and positive and negative freedoms one’s face provides in a given situation (see Berlin 2013b). And conversely, the relational positions are co-constructed, ascribed and enacted through mutual recognition of face and the conjointly understood circumstances of the situation (Goffman 1967). Because every involved agent participates into the shared sense of balance in the agent-act-scene triad, every situation and act is connected to each participants face. Face is the reason why the agent-act-scene triad is a triad that includes the agent and not merely the act-scene ratio (see Understanding interactional wellbeing).

15.2.3 Wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination

In Part III, three theorized wellbeing generative and degenerative processes of relational coordination were discussed: positional proficiency and incompetence, relational affirmation and invalidation, and setup alignment and misalignment. From this point of view there can be relational coordination that is wellbeing degenerative even though the actions of conscious moral agents emit qualities of organization.

In Part IV, these processes were indirectly discussed and expanded. Positional proficiency was for example explicated as tact, social skills and composure (Goffman 1967) which eased tensions whilst engaged in an interaction setup. Positional incompetence was indirectly discussed through tension in encounters and through trauma and the subsequent inability to engage successfully in the social formation and enactment of a balanced agent-act-scene triad. Thus, the components of positional proficiency and incompetence are intimately related to the agent-coordinate in the agent-act-scene triad. Relational affirmation and invalidation built on Gergen’s (2009) work on “relational being.” In a grammar of management this notion was discussed through, for example, civil conduct and more specifically “face-work” (Goffman 1967). Relational affirmation and invalidation are intimately concerned with the ratios between the
agents and the act and the scene (agent-act, agent-scene) ratios in the agent-act-scene triad. Setup alignment and misalignment concern the scene of action and thus especially the scene-coordinate and its influence upon the act in the agent-act-scene triad. In sum, wellbeing generative and degenerative forms of relational coordination concern relational balance and therefore balancing the agent-act-scene triad.

Through face we specifically discussed how the “communicative medium” (Burke 1954/1984) is kept clear and in working order by mutual recognition of face, which keeps the agent-scene and agent-act ratios at harmony through mutual relational affirmation. Setup alignment and misalignment was discussed especially in connection with relational moral competence and eudaimonia (Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Setup alignment represents a sense of harmony and relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad and misalignment a sense of tension and discord in the triad. If an imbalance occurs, it was theorized that relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad could be reinstated primarily by agent-governed or scene-governed means. Agent-governed actions indicate that the act stems primarily from the character, skills and preferences of the agent, whereas scene-governed means that the act is particularly well performed according to the implicit and explicit rules of the situation. The primary tension in the agent-act-scene triad is thus foremost in the tension between the agent-act or the act-scene ratios, wherein “purpose” and “agency” are most often also embedded (see Burke 1945).

How one engages a misalignment can also be theorized, with the help of hitherto developed tools of thought in Part IV. In accordance with the threefold structure of relationality, upon experiencing a misalignment between setups and thus an imbalance in the agent-act-scene triad, a person can aesthetically contemplate (contemplative mode, Macmurray 1960) and “articulate” (Spinosa et al 1997) the problem in the interaction setup as a contrast to an ideal setup, engage in “cross-appropriation” (Spinosa et al. 1997) to discursively formulate (discursive consciousness, Giddens 1984; communal mode, Macmurray 1960) a novel agreement and mutual understanding of how such interaction setups should be handled in the future, i.e. to design a new relationship or organization setup. Or one could try directly to “reconfigure” (Spinosa et al. 1997) the subsequent interaction setups by other available means (practical mode, Macmurray 1960, practical consciousness, Giddens 1984) according to one’s own preferences and thus strive for one’s sense of the ideal setup of how such situations should be handled.

It is probably self-evident that positional proficiency, relational affirmation and setup alignment are at least in part mutually reinforcing and can occur all at once, leading to a relationally coordinated and enacted sense of harmony in the dramatistic pentad and the ongoing situation. Compared to this backdrop, the five relational frames in part aim to discover novel insights about relational coordination that contribute to wellbeing generative and degenerative processes within organizations.

15.2.4 Relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad

The agent-act-scene triad has already been mentioned on several occasions while discussing the first three frameworks that comprise the narrowed theoretical backdrop for relational frames. The neo-Aristotelian (Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) thoughts and Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad, which mainly contribute to the formulation of the agent-act-scene triad, add a processual, situated and dramatistic character to the relational frames. Relational frames as casuistic cases can be understood to have a dramatistic opening, handling and closing of drama by experiencing an imbalance, handling it in some way and re-forming relational balance amongst the participants in the local scene of action. In accordance with our
discussions in Part IV, it can be said that cases that show how a relational imbalance is initiated and how the relational balance is reformed contributes to historically situated phronetic knowledge about interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

15.2.5 Synthesis of frameworks

To draw these four already condensed frameworks that comprise the backdrop for relational frames together into a single and even more compact frame of reference here I utilize and expand on the more general model of practical moral reasoning developed by Jonsen and Toulmin (1988). In a sense, it is a generic schema for how to understand the theoretical role of relational frames within the broad spectrum of studies and understandings that comprise the interactional and relational perspective, as outlined at length in Part IV of this study.

Figure 6. The model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. The model builds on the model on practical moral reasoning by Jonsen & Toulmin (1988) and the Toulmin model of argumentation (Toulmin 1958/2003). The model depicts how relational structure and face give form and valence to relational frames. Relational frames are used as type cases to assess relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad of a particular situation. Wellbeing generative and degenerative forms of relational coordination are used as warrants in the assessment process. The collective mind is used as backing.

Figure 6 builds on the casuistic formula for practical moral reasoning (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), which has been augmented and supplemented with additional insights discussed in prior parts of this study. In this framework the relational form of the interaction – symmetric and asymmetric Parent, Adult, and Child relations – is used to make sense of the relational structure and especially the situated interaction setup (Berne 1964/2010; Macmurray 1960; Goffman 1967; 1981). As shown in Part III and the first encounter with the empirical material, the interaction form is narrated forth into an interaction setup through plays and moves that affect or utilize the relational positions as cues about, for instance, one’s “footing”, “participation framework” and “production format” in the situation (Goffman 1981). The interaction
form is thus complemented with additional relational characteristics stemming from the more encompassing relational structure developed in Part III. The relatively generic relational structure and how it is molded into a singular interaction setup is used to understand the form of the acts in the relational frame (Aristotle 2005; Bateson 1972; Burke 1945).

The relational frames occur in a historical backdrop of habitual and encultured civil conduct that give language and action an implicit moral fiber (Burke 1984; Moscovici 2008; Oakeshott 1991b). In everyday interactions civil conduct manifests as maintenance of “face” and a sense of a socially constituted self- and other-worth (Goffman 1959; 1961b; 1967). Face thus imbues relationally constituted significance into the relational frames to complement the form in the relational structure. Social worth is an implicit characteristic of relational coordination, which has a bearing of the scene of action and its involvements (Goffman 1967). Face is practically the enacted and socially constituted agent in the relational frames. Face also includes the historically situated rules of decency and indecency (Elias 1998), or “face-work” (Goffman 1967), and it encompasses historically situated understandings of the appropriate emotions and moods fitting a situation (Heidegger 1962/2008; Goldie 2009).

Following Goffman (1974) and Jonsen & Toulmin (1988), I theorize that the relational frames constitute the basic “organizing frame” (see Fauconnier & Turner 2002) of a moral “type case” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) in which, inherited interpretations of civility, previously experienced and enacted interaction setups, and case specifics are added and synthesized. Understandings that comprise the relational frames can include assessments of presence or absence of ritualistic pleasantries or face-work, which give some initial indicators to the moral badness or goodness of an act in the form of assigned and corroborated self-worth (Goffman 1967).

Based on the premise that wellbeing is considered the chief merit of goodness or badness of an act, wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination can be understood as the general moral “warrant” (Toulmin 1958/2003) for if an act is judged to be good or bad (see also Ketokivi et al. 2017). The performances in the relational frames give clues to what extent the acts are relationally coordinated and thus contribute to wellbeing generation or degeneration and subsequent sense of relational balance. These moral warrants can colloquially be expressed as general maxims that fit the context of the relational frame (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). For example, a frame violation of a relational frame through relational invalidation can be expressed as a more general maxim concerning such situations like “one should not unnecessarily undermine colleagues.”

The concept of “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993) in Figure 6 can at this point be taken as a “backing” (Toulmin 1958/2003) for the moral warrant in the relational frame. To assess to what extent particular performances in the relational frame are wellbeing generative or degenerative, they are contrasted with the sought-after aims and cared for concerns implicit in the collective mind of the organization. It can in other words be understood as scenic “social validation” (Pratt et al. 2006) or collective legitimation (Benford & Snow 2000; Giddens 1984; Suddaby & Greenwood 2005). The collective mind as backing is what roots the relational frames and the concomitant situated moral judgement in a local setting (see Lawrence & Maitlis 2012), imbued with purpose (direction, Drath et al. 2008) and agency (deontic powers, Searle 2009). The concept of the collective mind will gain further features in the ensuing relational frames and general discussion.

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97 One should note that this premise within the presented framework of practical moral judgement does not give precedence to any particular school of ethics, but arguably incorporates Aristotelian, Kantian and utilitarian paths of thought. In this framework, it is the communal organization of the relational frame that directs which maxims and schools of thought are most likely used to reason about the merits of the case.
In moral reasoning, the general form of the interaction can also be straightforwardly used to assess and warrant the moral conclusions and thus proper and improper conduct in a particular case. To be treated as a Child at work can be perceived as a general moral violation in our era of Enlightenment (Kant 1784/2009). It is a case in point of relational invalidation. In these simple cases and moral judgements other characteristics of the situation are normally omitted or deemed irrelevant, and the warrant is consequently directly based on the form of the interaction. In more nuanced and vexing cases where there is a more specific scene of action, achieved relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad through appropriate relational coordination becomes the main template for how to assess the morality in the unique situation and in the act.

As discussed in Part IV, any judgement about a situation and appropriate actions in response to the situation is a moral judgement which in itself contains presuppositions of moral preferences, that is, of goodness and badness (Burke 1945; Kovesi 1967; Nussbaum 2001). The interactional form, relational structure, civil conduct and face are in other words most often in the background of the moral cases. They are embedded “cues” (Rerup 2009; Sutton 1991) that are used to make sense of particular encounters and to judge particular actions and developments to what extent they are wellbeing generative or degenerative. This information is subsequently used to judge and warrant the claims of moral “goodness” or “badness” of the performances in the relational frame.

The Figure 6 can be understood both as representing a “personal construct” (Kelly 1963) and as a social construction that can be described using Searle’s (1995) formula “X is Y in C.” For example, the action X is a good action Y in the case context and relational frame of C. In social settings like organization such personal constructs are often more encompassing and shared “social representations” (Moscovici 2008) that allow one to assess how a person has acted considering all the relevant details of the case (Goffman 1961b; Searle 1995; 2009). In the case of relational frames, we assume that the relational frames are collectively established organizing frames often implicit in the shared language (Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Goffman 1974). This is because they are used collectively to make sense of frequently encountered situations in a similar fashion and thus employed as the shared “medium of communication” (Burke 1984; see also Goffman 1974). Consequently, the collective enactment of relational coordination and thereupon accomplished relational balance can well be understood as a “collective capability” (Lilius et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002), enacted by all those who have participated in the successful enactment of the relational frame.

At this point it is probably relevant to point out that the plurality of the relational frames is an important feature of the entire framework in Figure 6. We can suggest some general insights if we bring together the general moral maxims utilized to warrant moral claims in each relational frame. All of the maxims are probably rather general and thus concern maxims in association with relational frames akin to casuistic “type cases” instead of particular cases (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988). This means that the relational frame is a starting point for moral reasoning used in reasoning about single cases. Moreover, any single maxim may seem commonsensical and reasonable as it is presented in that relational frame, but taken together, the maxims can become overlapping and contradict one another (Berlin 1997; 2013b; Nussbaum 2001). It is probably not very difficult to come to think of examples where two or more general moral maxims would be in contradiction with one another (e.g. killing is wrong, but protecting your nation in case of war is right etc.; see Berlin (1997; 2013b) and Robin Letvin (1998) for more general discussions about the generalizability of morality). This is to suggest that the developed
theoretical frame of reference is philosophically aligned with the overall perspective and theoretical backdrop of history-making (see Part IV).
Table 4. The five relational frames. The table shows the five empirically grounded relational frames and their characteristic relational structure, scene of action, type of relational coordination, grammatical focus, and types of frame violations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational frame</th>
<th>Relational structure</th>
<th>Scene of action</th>
<th>Relational coordination</th>
<th>Grammatical focus</th>
<th>Frame violations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mindful agent</td>
<td>Symmetric Adult-Adult relationship setup</td>
<td>The collective mind</td>
<td>Positional proficiency</td>
<td>Act-Scene ratio</td>
<td>Passivity, unthoughtfulness, lack of ownership, unheedful orders, micromanagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed tour guide</td>
<td>Complementary roles: scene investigator (Parent) – uncertainty suppression (Child)</td>
<td>Ambiguous collective mind</td>
<td>Positional proficiency, Setup alignment</td>
<td>Scene-Act ratio</td>
<td>Required subordination without a global scene of action in place, relational confusion, breakdown in relational coordination, separation from the collective mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourceful caretaker</td>
<td>Complementary roles: resourceful care-giver (Parent) – care-seeker (Child)</td>
<td>A Child's inability to act independently and appropriately to achieve relational balance</td>
<td>Positional proficiency, Relational affirmation</td>
<td>Agent-Agency-Act ratios</td>
<td>Unattentive conduct, pulling rank, unwarranted directives, disruption of communicative back-channels, loss of a sympathetic ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setup planner</td>
<td>Complementary roles: setup planner (Parent) – target interactant(s) (Child)</td>
<td>A past, present or prospective relational imbalance</td>
<td>Positional proficiency, Relational affirmation, Setup alignment</td>
<td>Agent-Act-Scene Triad</td>
<td>Disengagement in face-work, complaining, not caring, silence, defacement, taking the scene of action as set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindful organization</td>
<td>Symmetric Adult-Adult ideal setup or organization setup</td>
<td>A breakdown of the collective mind or the scene of action</td>
<td>Setup alignment</td>
<td>Agent-Act-Agency-Scene-Purpose ratios</td>
<td>Situationally unyielding organization setups, mismatch between ideal setup and the organization setup, sudden situations with multiple misaligned representatives of the collective mind, deliberate breakdown of the collective mind, designed relational knots between organization setups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is recommendable to read the five relational frames in the order they are presented. As Goffman (1974) has originally suggested, frames can overlap, weave into each other, and coexist as plausible alternative framings of a situation. The five presented relational frames build on this theoretical legacy. Table 4 presents a concise summary of the main characteristics of the relational frames.

16.1 The mindful agent

Oxford online dictionary defines an agent as “a person who acts on behalf of another person or group” or as “a person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect.” Mindful is defined as “conscious or aware of something.” In an organization a mindful agent can be expected to be heedful to their actively changing surroundings and the goals of the organization, to partly represent the organization in one’s acts on behalf of the organization, and to take an active role of producing value to the organization. Being a mindful agent was the expected status quo for organizational members at Techcorp Finland, and one may surmise this to be the case in an “enterprise” organization more broadly (Oakeshott 1991a).

To comprehend the probable generality of this relational frame, it is worth pointing out that an enterprise organization (see enterprise association, Oakeshott 1991a) – i.e. those organizations that systematically and explicitly aim to produce and sell valued efforts within society – are oriented toward a common purpose (Drath et al. 2008; Holt 2006). There is collective intentionality in the organizations’ activities (Bratman 1992; Searle 1995; 2009). The chief impetus behind an industrious enterprise organization is consequently rather simple. Instead of relying on the effectiveness of Adam Smith’s (1776/1982) “invisible hand” as an indirect coordination mechanism for individual efforts within society, the enterprise organization establishes a tightly coupled unit which is molded together by a more efficient direct and deliberate coordination of valued efforts (Drath et al. 2008; McGregor 1960/2006; Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). The enterprise organization is a unit with a “purpose” (Burke 1945) and is consequently purposively designed to achieve that purpose as efficiently as possible. This in turn is the impetus behind organization setups. The collective purpose of the organization serves as a proxy for the gamut of particular and personal interests of those that partake in some measure in the joint endeavor (Giddens & Held 1982). This is the general context for the mindful agent relational frame, in which direct and deliberate coordination is achieved through “heedful interrelating” (Weick & Roberts 1993).

The mindful agent is in other words mindful of the aimed for purposes of the organization and of the duties and actions of other agents in the organization who are also acting on behalf of and towards the general “direction” of the organization (Drath et al. 2008). Mindful agents incessantly adjust and articulate their past and future actions to fit the actions of others in the organization in order to achieve mutually beneficial and “aligned” coordination ((Drath et al. 2008; Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). One can say that the actions and pursuits of other agents within the same organization is a constitutional and yet incessantly developing “scene” for a mindful agent’s actions (Burke 1945). In this study we conceive of this general background for action as the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993; see also “group mind”, Lewin 1948). It can be understood as the scenic “organization-in-the-mind” (Armstrong 2005) as a continuously evolving “social representation” (Moscovici 2008) upon which one mirrors one’s own

99 How direct and deliberate coordination takes place was discussed in-depth in the chapter on a grammar of management.
actions in deliberating and choosing a prudent course of action (Burke 1945). Such mutual contemplation and everyday reasoning can be perceived as “heedful interrelating” (Weick & Roberts 1993) or “smart compromise” (Holt 2006). Through such “democratic” (Lewin 1948) and “communal” (Macmurray 1960) actions the “we” is formed into an organization (Lewin 1948; Mead 1934/2015). The organization comprising scores of conscious moral agents thus gains deliberate and direct “direction” and “alignment” (Drath et al. 2008). In the mindful agent relational frame, wellbeing generative relational coordination is principally accomplished through positional proficiency which contributes to “accountability” and “predictability” within the organization (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). It is relationally a symmetric Adult-Adult engagement where every participant is expected to act as a mindful agent with the backdrop of other mindful agents (see Bateson 1972; Berne 1964/2010).

At Techcorp Finland one was expected to be a mindful agent, and when one was not, it was most likely a burden on others in one’s close proximity and for the company as a whole. In terms of the synthesized framework, the mindful agent relational frame consists of two key characteristics: (1) that individual agents keep a keen eye on the constantly molding collective mind and (2) actively adjust their own actions to fit the collective mind of the organization. One manager crystallized one of the key insights she had learned during her career at Techcorp, which shows how the collective mind should be taped into and thus how to achieve relational coordination through everyday communication:

“I’ve told my employees and friends and relatives, it’s something that’s valid all around, to criticize without suggestions for improvement is just acting out. If you want to criticize something to a superior – of course you can – but it has to include a suggestion of how things should be done in the future. You don’t send emails like ‘This is really stupid, it won’t work.’ That’s useless. You just destroy your own reputation. It’s not worth destroying your reputation. You can put it professionally: ‘In my mind this hasn’t worked well in the past. I’ve noticed problems with this. Therefore I would suggest. Can we in the future do it so? Another alternative would be to do it so.’” Manager#10

Those that were mindful of others and of the man-made surroundings could be of help to one another – to “leap in” or “lead ahead” (Heidegger 1962/2008; Tomkins & Simpson 2015) of the other – with their professional duties and obligations. If the sought-after aims of the organization were truly shared, then supporting one another was aligned with one’s own role expectations as a mindful agent of the organization. Consequently, many team members supported each other at Techcorp Finland, colleagues consulted each other, and nonetheless individual agents, at best, had vast personal discretion and autonomy – room for the “I” (Mead 1934/2015) – concerning their own dealings within the company:

“It’s great that I’ve been given an independent role. Sure, I report and tell my line manager what’s going on on a daily basis. We are close in the sense that we talk daily. [...] Our relationship is great. I have a rather independent role. Instead of having to ask ‘what should be done next’ I can think for myself how to handle things and then at times to just tell what’s going on and check that we’re still on the same page. [...] It also goes the other way; my line manager might come several times a day to ask my opinion on something. I feel that we are more like a team.” Manager#33
When a team or a unit comprised of mindful agents, they regularly supported and consulted each other, which was in itself a show of mindfulness towards others and an act of collective reasoning about the fit between the appropriate action and the collective mind of the organization. Such practical expressions of “heedful interrelating” (Weick & Roberts 1993) and the show of “common understanding” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009) about the priorities and the joint path forward was especially appreciated in cases where someone was not reaching their personal targets. It was considered “good leadership” when such heedful actions were coordinated amongst coworkers (cf. Sveiby 2011):

“In my mind [people here appreciate] equality and that people help each other out. People are really supportive of each other, at least that’s how I experience it. [...] In our work community we don’t leave one another behind. If someone for example can’t reach their targets, then we help out and see who can do what. That’s what I think is good leadership. To organize, and that people have clarity about their duties.” Manager#17

The reliable show of heedful actions by other agents could then be understood as becoming a stable characteristic of the scenery in the organization. Some called it “atmosphere,” “culture,” or “leadership” akin to how Kahn (2001) has described the emergence of a nurturing “holding environment” or “secure base” (Kahn 1995; see also Edmondson 1999; Giddens 1991). This general phenomenon could be described as generalized “trust” in others (Luhmann 1988), in one’s relational surroundings, and that deliberate and coordinated efforts would be taken to help one another in order to reach the organization’s purpose. It was a trust that the scene comprised of mindful agents, and thus formed a helpful and supporting local scene for one’s actions. Proximally one could call it an expectation of an Adult style of communication (Berne 1964/2010) in which an ontologically secure (Giddens 1984) and interdependent “we” was formed beyond isolated personal accountability (see Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). It was a trust in oneself and others to respect and affirm each other’s “face” (Goffman 1967), provide the relevant facts of the situation, to learn from each other, and to engage in wellbeing generative relational coordination:

“I would say that it [what people around here appreciate] is honest openness, it’s number one. If you can trust a colleague, what that person says is an honest and true opinion. That there is no room for doubt, doubting was it really like that or how it all went down. This is what I think people appreciate and to a surprising extent what people actually do. [...] Foremost we are extremely good at being collegial.” Manager#19

“We have very seldom any kind of skirmishes. Here [in Finland] people understand it very well that we can’t fight amongst ourselves. We pull together and try to get this site to work well and look smooth and as efficient as possible within the larger corporation – professional as we are.” Manager#10

“In our unit we managers from different teams gather amongst ourselves to talk. It’s been really fun. People dare to voice their opinions and new thoughts. They are actually presented in a way that they get discussed and someone can be of a different opinion, but it’s not said as a bad thing. Instead it’s just the right sort of adult conversation where people voice different points of views and angles to issues and discuss openly. Somehow, I’ve
Being mindful of the organization and the agents within it was not only a question of how to adapt one's own actions to those of others, but it could also be a source of resourcefulness in accomplishing one's own obligations. Knowing the scene of action and thus the proximal collective mind made a mindful agent into a resourceful agent:

“I have it good that I’ve been around for so long that I know all the key players. If I have a question, I know who's the right person to answer it. The easiest way, if the issue is so small that it doesn’t interrupt the other’s work and doesn’t require any deep analysis, then I walk directly to that person’s office and ask, or send email.” Manager#19

To choose a suitable course of action in a variety of situations, to be resourceful and solve issues independently whilst following broader rules and guidelines, and yet at proper occasions to openly consult others to figure out a fitting course of action, could be interpreted as individual instances of “representing”, “subordinating” oneself to and “contributing” into the formation of the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993). These actions are what mindful agents commonly did at Techcorp Finland. In many situations, to grasp the scene of action is to grasp also the correct action itself (Aristotle 2005; Burke 1945; Goffman 1981). The scene comprising of mindful agents is constantly in motion through their individual and collective efforts. Thus in coordinating future actions one, at different occasions depending on the situation, takes on the accommodating “Me”, the creative “I” (Mead 1934/2015) or the communal “We” (MacMurray 1960; Lewin 1948). One should note that according to this view, the collective mind as “backing” for moral “warrants” (Toulmin 1958/2003) in the framework on moral reasoning is not stable, but an active, situated, and timely accomplishment and man-made understanding of the local surroundings.

To be able to prudently choose between the three modes of engagement with the collective mind (Parent, Adult or Child) on different occasions implies that one has gained a trusted moral “orientation” by which one navigates both familiar and novel situations (Annas 2011; Burke 1984; Shotter & Toulmin 2014b). One has thus become encultured into the organization and consequently become a trusted member of the community. Reasoning a proper course of action could be done by oneself, when suitable to do so, or with others when joint coordination was preferred. A manager in R&D, described this process as how “deep trust” towards others takes form. The account illuminates when one knows that an employee will act appropriately, which is to say, that they can navigate their surroundings autonomously and thus act with apt judgement and proficiency:

“Deep trust, that builds slowly with time and based on performance. People show what they are capable of and show that they can be trusted with responsibilities and that the work gets done as agreed and with quality. Trust is that people get to and can realize themselves. That’s what it’s at its best.” Manager#33

One can thus say that the mindful agent purposively engaged in the formation of a shared scene or “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993) and in coordinating intelligent and moral actions
with in, bringing accountability, predictability and common understanding to life within the organization through wellbeing generative relational coordination (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009). Here good moral action is helpful to understand as actions that fit into or perhaps even transform the scene of action so that there is alignment in the act-scene ratio (Aristotle 2005; Burke 1945). Setup alignment was thus accomplished mostly through positional proficiency, and consequently, there was relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad, because the actions were fitted with the collective mind of the organization.

16.1.1 Frame violations

The trust and expectation that all should act as mindful agents (Burke 1945), could be let down in a variety of ways. The two principal characteristics of a mindful agent relational frame could be accomplished by frequently playing or putting another in the relational position of irresponsible and passive Child, or by not engaging the collective mind whilst engaged in relational coordination. These were actions that broke the expectations and trust inherent in mindful interactions and concomitant heedful interrelating; mindlessness in one person’s actions made it that much harder for others to act mindfully. The chief complaints were directed at someone else as not acting as a mindful agent, that one could not expect others for support even though it might be in the best interests of the organization, an order from above was not always mindful of the relevant circumstances, or that someone did not trust the recipient of an order to be a mindful agent. One manager described her thoughts on the lack of mindfulness in others this way:

“I don’t want to generalize but there are some people who have a sense of ownership and can walk through walls and get things done, but there are those who are like ‘I can’t right now, nobody has told me that this should be done.’ Some of us, we’ve been puzzled about what’s behind it. Is it that they don’t have the know-how to do it or is it that they don’t care to think about matters themselves?” Manager#47

He described onwards the rationale of a mindful agent, which he was advocating as a principle of how to conduct oneself properly in the organization, and at the same time tacitly condemning the actions of those who did not conform to the mindful agent relational frame:

“We should get rid of the thought that we can wait for someone to come and decide for us. We should take the decision-making authority one step lower. [...] This site and especially managers should get with the program that they have the power to make decisions, ‘don’t wait for a VP [vice-president] or the like but instead make decisions on your own as far as you can.’ I would say it’s better to decide and take issues as far as you can instead of waiting for someone else to come and decide [for you].” Manager#47

One could say that a sign of passivity or disinterest, lack of “commitment” (Drath et al. 2008), waiting for orders, not thinking for oneself what is the best course of action in a situation, were taken as breaking the implicit expectations in the mindful agent relational frame.

Another way of breaking the relational frame was by dictation or drawing upon rank as an organization setup. By drawing rank in order to form a Parent-Child interaction setup a participant in practice changes the “production format” for his utterances, which also correspondingly changes the “participation framework” and “face” for the others in the encounter (Goffman 1981: 124 ff; Goffman 1967). To draw rank thus changes one’s own “footing”
(Goffman 1981) in the encounter to a Parent position of intentionality formation, but also in a complementary fashion (Bateson 1972) forces the footing of other participants into a Child position (Berne 1961/2016). This tends to result in relational invalidation. A seasoned manager described the sentiment when getting, what could be described as, mindless orders from a superior:

“In a normal case if a manager asks an employee to do something – let’s imagine we are talking about seasoned employees – in the normal case the manager gives a task with, just with ‘what for’ and what’s expected. Here [in this unit] you don’t get that. You are told to give some details or calculation about something in a very specific way. You are not given a specific task with a problem, analyze this or to even come up with a solution or what options there are. Here the senior managers want to think for themselves what should be done, but they don’t do the leg work and they outsource it to someone with bad instructions and without necessarily realizing that it can’t be done according to their instructions. And that causes, well not conflicts, but dissatisfaction.” Manager#25

“I get absolutely furious if my expert opinion is not taken into account. I try incredibly hard to think of all relevant aspects and then say ‘that’s it’ [the limits of possibility for the resources and schedule for an R&D project]. Then someone else says ‘I don’t care’, the timetable is shortened [beyond possibility] in spite of [my expert opinion]. That’s a kind of really bad place to be for a [rationally oriented] Finn.” Manager#10

To be allowed to use one’s own discretion about the best course of action and daring to participate openly in a discussion about sensitive issues was on multiple occasions referred to as “trust” by the interviewees. To act as a mindful agent required one to trust others, and in their abilities to engage in relational coordination. At Techcorp the issue of trust came up especially in connection with “micromanagement”, which was often portrayed as antithetical to trust:

“Micromanagement is one of these [problems]. Some [managers] are worse than others, but there is a lot of it. Then there is this how people are treated, it’s not necessarily respectful, not the way I’ve learned. Sure, you can have different opinions and should, but it’s the way it’s done around here. It’s been at times really below all standards. Like, people don’t necessarily even listen to each other. That’s a big thing. [...] For example, this is by the way related to leadership, if a person is given the task to give a report then that person prepares it but cannot present it because here you are generally not allowed to present anything. It’s kind of a joke really. Some listen to ask questions and others to understand. Here 90 % are of the former. People here listen with the intention to interrupt and ask. That’s a general habit around here and a really bad one at that.” Manager#25

Micromanagement occurred especially when a manager or upper managers meddled in issues that were experienced as within the confines of a subordinate’s duties or expertise and thus of what the subordinate had an own mind about as an accountable mindful agent. Micromanagement thus broke with the subordinate’s “positive freedom” (Berlin 2013b) and deontic power (Searle 2009) to engage the collective mind and thus to actively formulate and describe what would be an intelligent course of action in that situation. In such cases the subordinate, both employees and managers alike, had to comply to the order of a superior who was pulling rank.
In most cases this violated wellbeing generative relational coordination. More specifically, it violated positional proficiency, relational affirmation and setup alignment all at once and consequently, was most often experienced as an incident setup and therefore as a relational imbalance in the agent-act-scene triad.

Trust was a frequently highlighted quality of a well-functioning organization at Techcorp Finland, which speaks for the intimate and entwined connection between the act and the scene (see Part IV), and especially how the scene inhabited by mindful agents is implicitly employed in the acts of mindful agents. The cases of micromanagement are however interesting in that they showed trust in a dynamic light, as enactment of distrust within this relational frame. Micromanagement could be seen as antithetical to trusting in the subordinate’s ability to engage the collective mind. For example, when new employees came into the organization, they were expected to take the role of the apprentice. In other words, to play the responsive Child in order to learn what actions are intelligent and thus what actions are in line with the “moral orientation” (Burke 1984; see also Schein 1992) implicit in the collective mind of the organization. With time, and time meaning the reliable and frequent show of personal “representation”, “subordination”, and “contributions” into the collective mind (Weick & Roberts 1993), this process of learning and enacting resulted in the simultaneous “freedom to” of autonomy of mind and to the “freedom from” the assertion of mind from others (Berlin 2013b).

There were multiple examples of situations in which managers or employees got orders from above to perform a task, and as a result there was a dissatisfaction with the orders. It could be for the orders to be unmindful of the subordinates situation and amount of work already on their plate, it could put the subordinates other duties at a standstill without really knowing if that was in the best interest of the organization, or it could be that there was a lack of understanding the reasons or “scenery” (Burke 1945) for the orders, so what one could make sense of the rationale in the orders (Weick 1993; 1995a), if they truly were necessary, given the scene of action (i.e. act-scene ratio):

“Sometimes we get all kinds of requests for reports from the division. [...] A tremendous amount of completely unimaginable ad hoc requests which we curse. [...] ‘List all your projects, their critical paths, how they are going, how much have they cost, and we need this by tomorrow.’ It’s mean. It stops everything and everything else must wait. We’ve gotten a lot more of these lately.” Manager#42

“We were in a situation where people were really negative and didn’t understand why they were all the time told to do this and then that, and now this and...like that. We’ve gotten more understanding to the team about why we do things like this and the like. It’s been a swamp. It was a situation where we got a lot of dictation, now we do things like this, we need to finish this, and that needs to be in the inventory by tomorrow, and people didn’t have any clue as to why. Orders just came down that this is what should be done. [...] Since then we’ve created systems and thought out how people could understand why. We can’t manage the fact that we get orders, but we can increase people’s understanding towards [the reasoning from] where those orders originate. Like, is it the market or something else that’s putting a pressure, really?” Manager#37
At times middle managers could be blamed for a mindless order or situation, that they did not push back enough especially when the orders made little sense and were thus not mindful of all relevant circumstances:

“People do not offer any hardness upwards. It’s just delivered downwards, and people are told what to do. That’s a characteristic that’s connected to a lot of issues. There’s a fear of the Lord or something like that. Very few of those managers use a kind of filter that they would dare to say that ‘this doesn’t make sense, we can’t do that.’ Sure, if someone above at the end of the day says that we do then we do. Somehow it just feels that everything just pours swiftly downwards and ‘just do’ without even considering if it makes any sense. That in part increases the workload.” Employee#40

Orders could be given also quite deliberately despite understanding the possible relational consequences. This following extended example highlights a case in which there is a sense of discrepancy in the wellbeing generative and degenerative processes that “warrant” (Toulmin 1958/2003) the conclusion of a right course of action. One senior manager described the rationale for why he at times felt that dictating specific tasks to others was the best course of action, even though he knew it could and to some extent already had caused a plummeting popularity within the organization:

“People don’t always like me, but...because, I get things done, that’s one of the main reasons I am where I am, I get things happening. [...] On my level what it takes is to be sufficiently stubborn and demand enough of people.” Senior Manager#51

The senior manager acknowledged that he at times deliberately pulled rank and formed unpleasant Parent-Child interaction setups with subordinates by being stubborn and demanding. In these situations, through order-giving the manager took himself to be the mindful agent in comparison to the subordinate, thus implicitly stating that he knew better than his subordinate what was best for the organization. Such claims, by instigating a Parent-Child interaction setup, implicitly claim that the subordinate is not a (adequately) mindful agent, the form of the interaction and the relational position of Child implies as much (Macmurray 1960). The manager seemed to acknowledge that this admittedly lowered the “face” (Goffman 1967) of his subordinates and consequently they could have an understandable emotional counter-response to it, which was dislike of him (see Goffman 1959; 1961a; 1963b).

The manager nonetheless reconciled the moral dilemma of being disliked by relying on the moral “maxim” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) or general judgement of something of the kind “getting things done is better than being popular.” This understanding is backed-up by the implicit assumption that he was promoted to the position of a senior manager due to this manner of conduct (see promotion as cultural embedding mechanism, Schein 1992). Thus “social validation” (Pratt et al. 2006) shown towards a pattern of past actions is used to warrant similar conduct in future actions. He assumes that the “collective mind” of the organization, the means and ends he ascribes to within the company, implicitly supported the morality of his actions. In this case his perception of the collective mind functions as the chief “backing” (Toulmin 1958/2003) for the conclusion that the end result is better than if he had gone through the motions of wellbeing generative relational coordination.
This case is interesting because here the manager was enacting relational invalidation of his subordinates, but he reasoned that he was also enacting positional proficiency in the best interest of the company, given his understanding of the collective mind. Moreover, there seemed to be the assumption that the interaction setup and organization setups were aligned given the circumstances of the situation including the collective mind; the manager thought he was in these instances and situations acting in accordance within how one should act given the status of a senior manager. For the subordinates these situations reportedly felt as immoral due to relational invalidation and consequent lack of trust; it violated the expected symmetric relationship setup assumed in the mindful agent relational frame. The manager’s actions differed from the typical mindful agent relational frame by assuming himself to be a mindful agent and that the other was not. This assumption directly led to the act of breaking the relational frame of mindful agent (cf. McGregor 1960/2006) and merely employing parts of the relational frame to reason about the morality of one’s own actions. In the typical case of the mindful agent relational frame, the agent assumes that both he and others are mindful agents, and both act accordingly and with trust in the other’s abilities and reasoning.

Situations in which a person thinks the actions of another are unintelligent, inferior or perceived as immoral are cases in point of alternative renditions of a case and thus also of the use of dissimilar framings of the scene of action and subsequent use of moral warrants (Goffman 1974; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Equivalently, in one situation a person may understand himself to have the best understanding of the situation at which point he can be adamant to dictate to others the proper course of action and also implicitly the correct moral warrant in that kind of a situation. This is a typical case in which a person assumes a higher “line” and consequently can be “in wrong face” (Goffman 1967) according to the other interactants (see the chapter on civil conduct). While assuming a higher line a person concomitantly assigns a lower face to the recipients of the orders.

The empirical material overwhelmingly demonstrates that this general form of action, enacted asymmetric relations as orders and commands without a symmetric Adult interaction style or scenic details providing “common understanding” underlying the orders (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009), was a chief complaint amongst the employees at Techcorp Finland. It broke the relational frame of mindful agent. Such actions lead to increased distrust towards others within the organization, meaning distrust in especially particular managers’ abilities to act and treat others as mindful agents.

In some units at Techcorp Finland persons often minded mostly their own business and, consequently, there was not an established culture of sharing burdens or joint coordination. In these cases, relational coordination mostly relied on rank and that a manager could instigate interaction setups to share a person’s burden:

“It always causes some schisms between people especially if you yourself have to be like ‘Could you begin to work on my thing?’ It’s not fun to go to another person like that all the while you know how much is on their plate. It’s difficult to share. In these cases it’s good that there’s a line manager who can point to that and that person, ‘you could do more of this.’” Employee#30

In other units there could be an established culture of order-giving and dictation. Such actions did have its consequences both on the “atmosphere” and the style of participation and
consequently how one took responsibility and how self-directed they were, as some managers remarked:

“There hasn’t been and isn’t a good atmosphere [at my unit]. Something ought to happen for it to improve. From a commanding style to a listening culture. You get the sense at times that we’re not in the same boat. [...] Trust, do you trust your employees, is there respect and trust? If mutual trust is missing, then it’s really hard to build a good atmosphere. People don’t have to be best friends, but to have respect for each other’s professionalism and respect each other [as persons]. It’s basic things, basic values.” Manager#24

“People who have been here for 10-20 years, they are so downtrodden that they don’t have own opinions anymore and don’t dare to do anything without asking permission first.” Manager#25

As was with the formation of “trust” – trust in that the scene of one’s actions consist of other mindful agents – to become understood as a local atmospheric quality of the organization (Kahn 2001), it takes multiple instances of such actions as adequate evidence of the general image. So it was also with distrust, irresponsibility and dissatisfaction at Techcorp Finland. One could argue that such ingrained qualities of the scene of action were learned (Argyris 1976; Janoff-Bulman 1992; Schon 1984; Seligman 1990). A distrust in relational coordination can thus also be a “trained incapacity” (Burke 1954/1984) of the organization, which seemed to be equally accomplished in some units like trust in other conscious moral agents was in other units at Techcorp Finland.

16.2 The informed tour guide

A tour guide can in most situations be expected to be knowledgeable of the surroundings and to be able to give informed accounts of the local scene of action. At Techcorp Finland this was not easy on a day-to-day basis and especially in the flux of knowledge work (Orlikowski 2002). When mindful agents at Techcorp Finland did not have a broader picture about the scene in place, which was needed to figure out an appropriate course of action, then there was often novel information at play that was difficult to situate and translate into an appropriate response. There could be a need to understand the rationale behind the new orders to actually implement them in the situated context of work. In these cases, employees as well as managers often turned to their tour guides, often direct line managers for further information:

“I see my role as having to do as much as possible so that their [employees] work can continue uninterrupted and I do all manners of investigations and other things that doesn’t need to take their time.” Manager#23

“I tell my team that I’m a kind of umbrella above them, I protect them from all kinds of company illnesses. [...] On their behalf I chew through all corporate instructions and the like. [...] If something is decided on a division level then we can get [orders] like ‘everyone should do this new task at least once a year’ and then my team goes ‘do we really have to because we have this project and we are all really busy.’ Then I say ‘stop’, and I go
In these situations, the tour guide and his subordinates formed complementary roles constituted by complementary rights and obligations (Searle 1995; 2009). The tour guide took the role of an active investigator and subsequently the representative of the collective mind, once the scene of action was grasped. The subordinates in turn engaged in active uncertainty suppression (cf. Kahn 2019). They continued as if nothing had occurred until the tour guide returned with the relevant understanding of the scene of action and the locally attuned translation into appropriate actions. Thus, novel information instigated the tour guide relational frame for the managers and employees, and it was closed by a sense of re-established harmony in the scene of action. This balance was accomplished by first getting a clear picture of the situation and the local scene of action, and then by formulating an intelligent response to the changed scene, if such action was warranted. The informed tour guide relational frame is consequently focused on setup alignment as a form of wellbeing generative relational coordination. In this relational frame, setup alignment occurs when the relationship setup, the ideal setup, the implicitly enacted organization setup and the interaction setup are aligned by the complementary role performances.

These kinds of complementary role performances and their frame specific relationship setups in unison illustrate the situationally specific “moral division of labor” (Goffman 1961b: 107) between supervisors and subordinates and the kind of tacit rights and obligations and thus expectations could form between a manager and his employees in a shared relational frame. Once the new scene of action was grasped the informed tour guide relational frame most likely turned back into the expected general status quo of the mindful agent relational frame.

Being the tour guide for one’s employees was considered an unofficial obligation by several managers, which enabled the employees to continue work amid the ceaseless flow of information within Techcorp Finland. It was how they contributed as managers by enabling an uninterrupted workflow for their employees. This was perceived by the managers as engaging in positional proficiency. They saw their role as investigators and translators of the everchanging surroundings, who would acquire the relevant information and the purposes behind the information, translate the information into understandable language and actions for employees, and control the emotional tone of the messages, so that no unnecessary counter-reactions or “postplays” would occur (Goffman 1961a; 1981). For subordinates, positional proficiency was enacted in the ability to continue work as if nothing had changed, until the new information was put into actionable instructions within the relevant scene of action. By both playing their complementary positions in this situated interaction setup, relational affirmation most likely also took place, as everyone was playing their expected positions and roles. The combination of actively accomplished setup alignment, mutual engagement in coordinated positional proficiency and relational affirmation, most likely also contributed to the sense of relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad.

For many managers the function of the informed tour guide, however, could be more complicated. Upper echelons of management could both unexpectedly and regularly demand detailed information about projects, resources and schedules. In those situations, the relevant scene was often the manager’s own area of responsibility. Demands for detailed information could at times come without forewarning, and the tour guides competence was assessed also
based on how well they were able to on the spot answer such unsolicited questions. Being the tour guide in both directions, and thus at times also the Child subordinate, and the Parent who represented the collective mind in one’s area of responsibility, could result in feelings of being “micromanaged” or that one was required to do so onto one’s subordinates:

“I recommend [to new managers] that in their team they should go really deep into task management, what they do so that at some point you can show that you can control your team and that way grow it [trust]. You will get the kind of questions where you have to go really deep and be able to answer and show and be up-to-date and that’s when you get leeway. [...] I’m required to micromanage. Not that I do, but I have to be aware of everything. That’s what’s required when I’m required [without preparation] to be able to answer questions of the smallest detail.” Senior Manager#14

For many managers the question of scenery and the “level” of the discussion was an overt issue. In Burke’s (1945) terms, the question of “level” can be understood to concern the level of abstraction and amount of details of how the fit between the act and the scene is formed (see also “tactic” and “strategy” in de Certeau 1974/2011). Managers could be asked to present the smallest details of a project, but at the same time could have trouble with understanding the global scene in which they represented and tried to formulate their part of the collective mind. They in other words could have trouble getting clarity over general policy, overall preferences and the direction of the business surrounding their own area of responsibility. For informed tour guides, understanding the relevant scene of action was essential but difficult in order to fulfill their duty as informed tour guides:

“At times it’s been tough to find the right level on which to discuss. At times they [leadership team] could go down to really deep levels of detail, and at times I think they didn’t give answers to the really big questions on policy, exactly what one would have hoped from the leadership team. They were apparently comfortable talking about the small issues. [...] The discussion can really often revert to extremely small details. [...] That causes a lot of pressure on middle management because they have to be able to know, I mean a lot of details, and still keep the big picture in mind. [...] The level of discussion is at times really difficult to determine, at what level should the issues be discussed. [...] I mean, do you want to micromanage, or do you trust the organization’s abilities? Some micromanage a lot and at the same time are unclear about larger issues. I wonder at times, it’s chaotic balancing that’s going on in this company.” Manager#24

In these cases when one felt micromanaged, the discussed scene of action was narrowed unto a manager’s area of responsibility. It often went against the grain of being a trusted and mindful agent of the company. When there was confusion or ambiguity about the collective mind – which was frequent in an R&D intensive organization with multiple businesses and scores of projects that had their own twists and turns – how one was allowed to participate in “contributing” and “representing” the collective mind was a key issue, instead of merely being expected “subordination” (Weick & Roberts 1993). Managers could need assistance in building “common understanding” (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009) about the global scene of action, which would help them formulate a proper course of action and thus represent the collective mind within their local area of responsibility. However, the discussions could go deep into formulating the
course of action itself, without a broader picture of the scene of action in place for the managers. To merely report details about the local situation of a project and to receive orders was not a preferred modus operandi amongst the interviewed managers nor the senior executives within Techcorp Finland. And yet, occasionally that seemed to be the result.

Another problem facing the informed tour guides could be that the employees or team had a too narrow interest on some particular scenic details. In these cases, the informed tour guide had to rebalance the value of particular bits of information and thus shift their “frame” (Goffman 1974) or “orientation” (Burke 1984; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). For example, a senior managers emotional reaction to an issue might take precedence above and beyond the other scenic details. What did not cause a tantrum in a senior manager could become viewed as the only criterion for an intelligent course of action, regardless of other circumstances. A middle manager had to battle this framing so that his team would regain focus of the relevant scene of action, and thus by themselves form an intelligent and appropriate course of action:

“My line manager is not the best of listeners. Very determined, regardless of cost. And at times somewhat immature and at times very unfriendly, extremely unfriendly. It’s something even my team notices. [...] The fear is concrete, it’s tangible. And they ask me all the time, ‘what will my line manager say about this, if we do things like this.’ And I’m like, ‘Come on, we carry the responsibility.’ I can inform him how we think about things, but there’s no reason to be scared. There’s a kind of fearful atmosphere.” Manager#24

The informed tour guide was thus not only a passive source of information to whom mindful agents could turn to when they required knowledge about the pertinent scene of action. The tour guides could be active disseminators and constructors of the relevant scene of action (see Kaplan 2008), especially when there was an overt discrepancy between how employees were framing the situation and how a manager thought the situation should be perceived and acted upon.

Not only managers could have the role of the informed tour guide. All were not necessarily tour guides on a day-to-day basis, but at times the role might land in their lap nonetheless. For example, an employee representative described bad or miscommunication as the kind that required action from their part in the form of follow-up investigations:

“It [announcements and bulletins] has failed if it causes only more questions and bafflement and is too vague. If it’s badly communicated, then we employee representatives get calls and are asked ‘what does this mean and why’ and that puts weight on us.” Employee#13

In sum, the informed tour guide relational frame invoked “complementary” (Bateson 1972) roles and actions. Being mindful agents in the company meant that in unclear circumstances that obfuscated the relevant scene of action, the informed tour guide relational frame was mutually enacted. The manager tour guide sought relevant information to formulate and communicate the novel scene and help formulate an appropriate and local response to the changed scenery. The complementary role as a mindful agent employee was to suppress the uncertainty that had arisen and act as if nothing had occurred until the relevant information and a fitting course of action was available. For managers the role of tour guide was experienced as difficult
because for them the role of tour guide could relationally be both a Parent and a Child position depending on the issue.

16.2.1 Frame violations

As with the mindful agent relational frame, there were several ways to frustrate this relationally coordinated pattern of action. If the manager did not hold his relational position as the representative for the collective mind or act as the informed tour guide, then dissatisfactions could result down the line:

“A couple of times my manager has told us that ‘we should do things like this.’ And my reaction was ‘no, let’s do it like this.’ Then he said nothing. And we began manufacturing as I said. Afterwards it nonetheless turned out that we should’ve made them as he said. And then we had to dismantle. That pisses me off. Why can’t he say to me that I’m wrong when I’m wrong. It doesn’t matter if I’m right or wrong but the fact that we have to go through loops to find out. He should’ve been able to stand his own ground.” Team Supervisor#41

This example illustrates the status differential between a manager and a team supervisor and the concomitant expectations about their complementary rights and obligations (Berlin 2013b; Searle 1995; 2009). There was the expectation that the manager should know the scene of action better than the team supervisor, albeit that was not always the case. It was nonetheless expected that the manager be adamantly assertive in accordance with the expectation of representing the collective mind of the organization. The understanding of the pertinent scenery, the details which make an act into an intelligent act given the circumstances, and which a competent tour guide should know is in the following quote expressed as “the big picture”:

“If a manager is not in a sense strong enough then a sort of ‘lower’ management shows its head. Someone else takes charge. It creates a kind of asymmetry about what we should do, what the targets should be and where we are headed. [...] In certain instances when the manager does not use his power or seems unsure, which is normal and understandable, then someone else takes over and ‘now we do it like this.’ That’s not necessarily a good thing. Sure, it solves the issue then and there but not in the long-term and with the big picture in mind. It also undermines the manager. ... And between colleagues it’s ‘how come you are deciding this, you can’t do that?!’” Employee#28

This quote, which was shortly discussed in Part III as an example of relational disorientation, aptly illustrates the consequences of what can occur when a manager, who is expected to be the informed tour guide and thus represent the collective mind, did not perform his role according to expectations. In these cases, it would have been expected and thought proper for the manager to take the position of Parent if there was discord in the team about the proper course of action. Positional proficiency in this case would have been to respond by taking and keeping to the Parent relational position if another person had tried to take the position of intentionality formation. When this did not occur, a subordinate took and was allowed to take the position of Parent, which subsequently resulted in relational disorientation. There were multiple reasons for the self-inflicted confusion. The relational position of the manager was undermined, the status of the assertive employee became “in wrong face” (Goffman 1967), and
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It became unclear if the suggested action actually fit the big picture of the collective mind. It became unclear if the relevant scenery was taken into account in the employee’s suggested course of action. One can become uncertain of the “big picture” and its fit between the decision, if the action is not recommended or directly supported by the informed tour guide.

There were also situations in which a manager was not given the possibility of performing as an informed tour guide or Parent. Amongst all the conducted interviews, there was a “tragic” (Nussbaum 2001) and “distressing” (Kahn 2019) case that was in itself so puzzling and complicated that it requires a relatively lengthy exposition to do it justice. It is a case in point of a breakdown in relational coordination through setup disharmony. I became aware of the case in another interview. An informant told me about an employee whose health and wellbeing were suffering. Interestingly, the informant described it as inadvertent and partly self-inflicted degeneration in wellbeing by the person in question.

The informant could not accurately describe how it was self-inflicted, but when I interviewed the person in question it was not difficult to reach the same conclusion. The reason for why it is difficult to describe such a case is that it requires a number of interconnected “formal elements” (Kovesi 1967) to build a partly self-inflicted entrapment or relational knot (see Seligman 2018; cf. the depression loop in Joiner et al. 1999; see also double bind in Bateson 1972). This is a case in point of vexing circumstances in which everybody seems to be trying to do their best, but the result is an ongoing tragedy (see Kahn 2019; Nussbaum 2001). When I interviewed the person in question, he described the interconnected elements one-by-one but did not seem to grasp how they might be entwined. His own reasoning and moral “orientation” (Burke 1954/1984) showed him only one solution out of his predicament, which probably also blinded him for other alternatives (see Kahn 2019; Seligman 2018). At this point it is worth reminding, that the chosen qualitative methods and metatheory of wellbeing is sensitive to precisely these kinds of complicated situations (see Nussbaum 2001). The elements the person described were:

1. He described independence as for him the most important characteristic of work. That it was important that his work assignment was clearly defined, he could work independently and that he understood what was his and what belonged to someone else.
2. He felt that the worst thing about his work was that he had too much of it. He felt exhausted. Despite his best efforts and frequent long days, he never could manage to do everything he had tasked. Moreover, he felt that his long days to deal with the workload was not appreciated by his immediate line manager.
3. He thought that no one else could do the work he did. After an unsuccessful reorganization he finally ended up with almost the exact same job description. Most crucial aspects of his work could be done by others, so he could go for example on vacation, but everything else was left undone. What was left undone therefore accumulated while he was away, which in itself contributed to a vicious circle, as he described it. (Another informant thought that much of what was left undone was unnecessary or unimportant.)
4. He had frequently talked to his manager about needing a new recruitment, a helping hand with the workload. The manager had told him to prioritize, to do the work less carefully and to leave work undone if he didn’t have the time to do all of it. He felt that this was impossible. He expressed “everything has to be done.” He felt it was wrong to leave work undone or if some of his work was delegated to his coworkers.

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\(^{100}\) See Appendix C for a discussion of the analytical tools that are used in this example.
5. He felt that he could not leave work undone as other people in the organization were dependent on him. People apparently knew that he kept his promises and if he promised someone that something was done, then he did it as promptly as he could. This is why people came to him when they needed something, which he seemed proud of.

6. His manager wanted to know what was being left undone, but he felt that if he would make such reports each day, he would not have any time to actually do the work. He prioritized his own work and criticized his manager for not being able to help him on how he should do his work.

7. He felt that the manager sometimes tried to micromanage him and thereby distrusted him. He felt that his manager should trust him to do his work and if the manager had questions about his work then the appropriate course of action would be to ask him.

8. He did not understand his manager’s actions and felt that the manager was reluctant to understand the situation he was in. He thought that his manager was useless and openly stated that he didn’t respect his manager at all. He felt that his manager either could not or would not improve his situation, he did not know which one for certain. Conversely, he felt he got criticism from his manager because he had not developed his work practices; and the manager had commented that compared to the amount of work he got done his salary was more than appropriate. This added to his sense of being unappreciated.

9. He summarized his situation as crappy but would continue to do the work as best he could. He felt that the only way out of his predicament was that the manager would recruit a new person into the team whom he could mentor or alternatively that he would suffer from a severe illness and become unable to work. “I do what I can, it’s all that I can do.”

Although a “tragic” situation for sure (Nussbaum 2001), this singular case presents several “formal elements” (Kovesi 1967) that should be highlighted. In this case it could be argued that the person’s solution had become part of the problem (Kahn 2019; Watzlawick et al. 1974): to frequently work long days was arguably part of the problem or even the most significant problem given that the solution had already resulted in health related symptoms.\textsuperscript{101} For the person, it was still part of the solution which only needed minor amendments to solve the situation. Due to his paramount desire for independence of work no one could help him organize his work, or at least he didn’t accept any help in that regard as it went against his sense of independence. There was setup disharmony between the employee and his manager, arguably exacerbated by the consequent disconnect with the collective mind of the organization. The crucial formal element is that he by his own accord put a set of own standards and thus moral warrants of what represented positional proficiency upon his work, which was not relationally coordinated with his team, manager or the collective mind. It was not connected to the dynamic scene of the organization and all other agents within it, i.e. the collective mind of the organization. In the employee’s mind, that “everything has to be done,” seemed to be a statement about the local reality of the situation instead of realizing it to be a personal moral preference. All aspects of work seemed subservient to this standard, even the mind of his manager, whom one could have expected to be the informed tour guide.

He was in the understanding that everything he had on his plate had to be done by him, which another informant and his manager did not agree with. He had come to the conclusion that he

\textsuperscript{101} The person had already sought professional medical assistance at the time of the interview.
needed a new recruitment to share the workload, which at least one informant did not agree with. He was in this sense alone with his predicament, partly because he had created his own scene of action dislodged from the collective mind of the organization and from relational coordination. Only with a new recruitment could the workload be managed, and it was his manager’s duty to understand his situation as stated by him and consequently alleviate it by getting the permission and resources for a new recruitment. Apparently, all attempts by the manager to manage, to delegate, to suggest alternative courses of action, and conversely also to unmanage were perceived as bad management.

To delegate, to accept help from others in his team, to jointly organize and prioritize the work, to openly communicate and jointly solve problems with the workload were all countered with his own sense of work morale or personal preferences for independence. It went against his personal moral preferences and understanding of the situation, in short, it went against his mind and thus what he “cared” for (Heidegger 1962/2008; see also Ryle 1949/2000). Perhaps most illuminating about this case is that the person was utterly unable to understand his manager’s mind in the matter, which can be considered typical in setup disharmony and in relational knots (see Seligman 2018).

The formal elements of this partly self-inflicted relational knot were:

1. Independence of mind
2. Too much work to handle independently according to one’s own mind
3. Inability or disinterest to subordinate and jointly form a collective mind; that is, to re-prioritize, reorganize, and redesign the work with others
4. Other relevant parties reluctant to accept and abide according to the person’s own independent mind
5. Re-live a vicious cycle between exceptionally long workdays and subsequent leisure without a long-term change in the pattern of action.

This case can be understood as a radical example of a breakdown in relational coordination – and an example of a setup disharmony amplified to the level of a relational knot – that can form when a person’s actions are disconnected from the collective mind of the organization and thus the shared scene of action. It has many elements of a classic tragedy – good intentions, much effort, a relatable rationality and moral preferences, and a somewhat complicated situation (Nussbaum 2001). This is however not a Greek tragic drama, but real life in a contemporary organization. This case has similar to the Greek tragedies probably much to teach us about wellbeing in organizations (see also Kahn 2019).

According to my analysis, the case teaches us, at the very least, that a disconnect between an independent employee and his manager, the presumed tour guide, will lead to dramatic trouble. If the “communicative medium” (Burke 1954/1984) and thus the shared agent-act-scene triad breaks down between the employee’s mind and the managerial representative presumed to be knowledgeable of the scene of action, then it can result in a vicious cycle of ill-being by habitually performing acts that do not necessarily fit the scene of action (see also Kahn 2019; cf. Goffman 1961b; Szasz 1974/2010). Put differently, if the scenic collective mind breaks down and becomes disconnected from the moral reasoning process of individual agents, then, individual reasoning within the organization can become severely impeded. The result is a situation in which both the employee and the organization most likely lose out. In these occasions the industriousness and “commitment” of the employee is not “directed” and “aligned” with
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the rest of the organization in accordance with the collective mind of the organization (Drath et al. 2008). The result is a tragedy.

16.3 The resourceful caretaker

The resourceful caretaker relational frame is similarly to the tour guide a complementary form of wellbeing generative relational coordination, in which an employee seeks help and often one’s line manager acts as the Parent, responsible for alleviating the Child’s problem. This is accomplished through relational coordination that in the end alters the care-seekers relational position from a Child to Adult, and thus alters the relational conditions of satisfaction (Searle 2009) in the interaction setup during the encounter.

In this relational frame the employee considers himself to have the “deontic” right (Searle 2009) to ask and get assistance from his resourceful caretaker, whom is thus considered to have the deontic obligation to help the employee to solve the situation. The resourceful caretaker is thus one’s anchor of support when in need within the organization. This complementary relationship setup can be understood as the caregiver-care-seeker relational dyad as explicated by Kahn (1993) and is reminiscent of a “patron relationship” (Goffman 1961b: 252 ff) or “servant leadership” (Greenleaf 1998; van Dierendonck 2011). Caretakers are at their best when they are resourceful, and thereby can make a difference in a situation that is brought to them by the care-seeker employee. The expected end-result and closing of the relational frame is however accomplished when the temporary asymmetric and complementary Parent-Child interaction setup is changed into an Adult-Adult through diverse means of relationally accomplished “empowerment” (Spreitzer 2008; Thomas & Velthouse 1990).

As a complementary interaction setup, the resourceful caretaker relational frame bears many similarities with the informed tour guide relational frame. Whereas the informed tour guide could support his employees by investigating and representing the collective mind or equivalently by providing relevant knowledge about the scene of action for a mindful agent, the resourceful caretaker can take care of his subordinates in a range of problematic situations. In the informed tour guide-frame a manager was an employees’ means (agency, Burke 1945) to grasp the purpose and relevant going-ons within the dynamic and collective scenery consisting of other mindful agents.

In a similar vein, in the resourceful caretaker relational frame it is often the subordinate who provides the situational details to the resourceful caretaker who is turned into the employee’s “agent” who can “leap in” (Heidegger 1962/2008) for the employee, preferably with a diverse set of means at his disposal (agency), and whose “purpose” it is in this interaction setup to support the collective mind by directly supporting the mind of the employee (Burke 1945; cf. “goal-oriented problem orientation” (Kanungo & Menon 2005: 53). The resourceful caretaker relational frame can be understood to consist of an interaction setup where there is alignment between the relationship setup, the organization setup and the ideal setup; that is, the manager enacts a role specific performance emitting positional proficiency and relational affirmation by giving the employee help when all minds including the collective mind are of one mind that the employee should receive immediate assistance (Burke 1945). Put concisely, the resourceful caretaker relational frame chiefly concerns the agent-agency ratio in a dyadic relationship.

At Techcorp Finland the longing for resourceful caretaker was overt and widespread, as perhaps could be expected within a large transnational organization. Several managers and employees expressed the improvement suggestion that the company should again consider having
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a single spokesperson for all operations based in Finland. They yearned for something akin to a national CEO who would have the duty and right (see a grammar of management for a lengthy discussion about these notions) to care for the employees across divisions and thus could hold the entire Finnish sites side in the corporate hierarchy:

“We need a single [national] CEO. [...] This place needs a single big person who would take care of the locals. It’s after all Finnish people who work here. If they are all the time left in the shadow of large global initiatives, their wellbeing is forgotten. In the long run that’s completely backwards. [...] People need a person who they can contact about even the smallest of matters. [...] There isn’t a common, shared [national] CEO.” Employee#31

One should note that in the above quote the employee limits the organization’s collective mind to the Finnish site and to its employees, not Techcorp transnational more broadly. Similarly, a manager (#39) described it as a good thing that one of Finland’s senior managers was rather high up in the corporate hierarchy of Techcorp transnational. The manager hoped that there would be more Finns among the senior executives. His reason was that if push comes to shove, then one could go talk with them directly instead of them being unavailable or at best reachable only by phone or email. Another manager (#42) expressed it as significant the he could get time from his senior manager almost immediately, much thanks to working in the same building. He said that it speeded up work. The same sentiment about the significance of active support from one’s own line manager was expressed by many at Techcorp Finland. The following quote aptly illustrates the common need for caretakers even amongst managers who most of the time were successful in being mindful agents of the company:

“Only when I have a problem which I cannot by any means figure out by myself, then I put an email to my senior manager ‘The situation is this, can you as you are there [abroad] walk to that and that room and dig into the issue as there are too many inconsistent messages.” Manager#10

A senior manager described a similar understanding from the angle of the caretaker:

“I think the single most important improvement we could make is that people would actually have the best managers one could think of. In that case everything else would fall into place as well. [...] One thing I think is terribly important, as important or even more important than management training, is that those who are managers to managers would develop them as well. That one would take the time to develop that person to the next level in the organization. That would be even more fruitful. Good managers also need good managers.” Senior manager#52

In contrast, some employees could go as far as to resign most of the responsibility on an issue to their resourceful caretakers. In this case a person relied on the implicit organization setup and especially the hierarchical structure of the company as the ideal setup for how decision-making should be handled in the organization:
“I like to work with my hands. [...] I’ve left the brainwork to others. I always say ‘let the horses decide, they have bigger heads.’ I can have my toolbox with me as long as someone else bears the responsibility.” Employee#16

And some executives could actively pull the mat and thus one’s “footing” (Goffman 1981) from under their subordinates:

“There are really self-centered persons here who are noticeable through their lack of ability to listen, their power talk and how they dismiss people’s presentations even though it might be an expert and have put two weeks into the presentation and you still might get, ‘that can’t be true.’ It’s their total lack of arguments and not grounding it on anything except their off-the-top-of-the-hat idea or gut feeling.” Manager#25

As discussed in the first encounter with the empirical material in Part III, both forms of conduct that either eschewed responsibility and thus being a mindful agent or unreasonably took it away from others by producing an asymmetric Parent-Child interaction setup was generally seen as distrustful, disrespectful, irresponsible and perhaps even unintelligent in the long-term for Techcorp Finland. To be a successful and respected caretaker, the “style” (Spinosa et al. 1997) of relational coordination and of how situations were solved made a difference (see Aristotle 2005; Annas 2011). When an employee – due to the circumstances of the situation and the sense of not having adequate agency – came as a Child seeking support from his caretaker Parent, the successful caretakers’ style of handling the situation was embedded in the act. There was the aim of transforming the temporary Child-Parent interaction setup between a care-seeker and caregiver into the status quo of Adult-Adult relationship setups between mindful agents. The Adult manner of handling the situation which did not put the subordinates into “not-fully-adults” (Goffman 1961b: 108) positions was appreciated:

“My supervisor isn’t excessive; she somehow understands that I’m doing the best I can and what I can and if there’s something that I cannot then she’s really supportive and immediately is like ‘how can we get this forward.’ She’s not the kind that, like, ‘how come you didn’t get this, why did you do this the wrong way?’ She never puts the blame on me or puts me down. As with so many others if you blunder a bit or something didn’t go as smoothly as planned then she’s like ‘how should we go forward.’ It’s a solution she’s after instead of digging in the past and blaming people. That builds a good atmosphere around here.” Employee#30

It would be a simplification to say that all Children preferred “empowerment” (Spreitzer 2008) into an Adult style when in need. At times, and thus depending on the circumstances, even managers could want the responsibility off their shoulders and thus rely on the resourceful caretaker to take charge of the situation:

“Considering that oneself has a managerial role I think it’s good that one can give the final responsibility to someone else. In that sense it’s good that there is a hierarchy. If I feel that the issue is too big for me then there’s always the next level where you can take it. [...] In that sense I think it’s always good that there’s someone you can rely on in making decisions. You don’t have to be alone.” Manager#37
In this case, which was discussed from the point of view of setup misalignment in Part III, the manager (#37) describes common situations where he should be in a Parent role whilst making a decision, but the apparent significance of the decision prompts the manager to delegate the decision upwards to his own resourceful caretaker. He thus by his own accord prompts a Child-Parent interaction setup with his own line manager who is given the final responsibility and the subordinate manager prefers to take a Child position in the matter. It is worth noting that the manager considers this a helpful relationship setup.

Even though asymmetric Parent-Child relations were by far and large judged as an unacceptable form of interaction because it was at odds with the mindful agent relational frame, there were circumstances in which such shunned interaction setups were nonetheless considered appropriate and fitted the circumstances of the situation. In this case the relationship was good when the Parent-Child interaction was instigated by the Child in order to find an apt resolution to the Child’s problematic situation. In this particular case the circumstances of the situation centered upon a “too big decision” which prompted the mutual enactment of the resourceful caretaker relational frame.

The resourceful caretaker relational frame not only expects the formation of a caregiver-care-seeker dyad, but in addition expects that the caregiver should also be resourceful. As one might expect, resourcefulness can take a variety of forms within a large organization (see Kahn 1993; Spreitzer 2008). A senior manager (#52) described that one of his major accomplishments in the organization had been the successful lobbying of new R&D intensive projects and thus novel resources as investments in people and technology into Finland. According to his account, he achieved the investments by showing and arguing to the company executives abroad that the Finnish site was trustworthy and competent to handle the R&D intensive projects (see Kanungo & Meno 2005). The manager told that it is not generally known that such internal lobbying in order to marshal trust and resources is very important in a large enterprise organization such as Techcorp transnational. Another seasoned manager expressed similar respect towards his senior manager for his accomplishments as a resourceful caretaker:

“We had bottlenecks and capacity issues [at a factory], and my senior manager was the motor who dug everything. I mean numbers, forecasts, sales numbers, everything, gathered it all and kept the motor running that we need this kind of an investment in order to build new lines and this and that. Nobody else could have done it, seen the whole [big picture] and what strings to pull and actively push it forward and explain what’s going on, including the details. And when the answer is that this isn’t enough that a new report is needed on this, he delved into it and ran the entire show to get that extra capacity.”
Manager#49

Resourceful caretakers were also relied on when there were personal skirmishes and conflicts between employees. If two employees took a “crossed” (Berne 1964/2010) Parent-Child interaction setup which resulted in an incident setup because both behaved as the Parent and treated the other as Child, then, a third person or the trusted caretaker was turned to in order to resolve the situation. The caretaker was the relational Parent to both, and who can relationally make a difference in the Children’s reciprocated disrespect for each other:
“If for instance two of my workers had trouble working together then I would have to be like – to talk with them individually and give both of them the opportunity to understand each other. To try to explain the situation that the other might be a bit wrong but it’s bad to say so to them directly. [To explain] That the other person probably thinks this way about the matter.” Team supervisor#43

In this example, it is good to notice that the style is of an “Adult” nature in which common understanding is facilitated (Berne 1964/2010; Goffman 1961b). Moreover, the way of approaching the conflict is not by altering perceptions about involved agents in the conflict, but by “reframing” (Goffman 1974) the situation so that the involved parties in the conflict could better understand each other’s point of view.

In some cases, resourceful caretakers could also be turned to when the situation involved terminating an employee’s contract. The emotional burden of doing such deeds seemed to be heavy, and some managers, as already discussed shortly in Part III, preferred that a more emotionally distant senior manager did the deed. Such strong preferences, despite situational factors, testify to the strength of the relational bond and the moral obligation to conduct oneself in accordance with the resourceful caretaker role and its relationship setup, once it had formed between a manager and employee (see DeRue & Ashford 2010; Milgram 1974/2009).

16.3.1 Frame violations

Sometimes the full form of moral expectations concerning an act and its frame comes to the fore only once it is breached (see Garfinkel 1963). The relational frame of the resourceful caretaker would seem to be of this type. It was always a possibility that a caretaker would not in a particular situation perform according to the expectations of employees. The mostly tacit relational commitments and the relational coordination in a “moral division of labor” as interdependent rights and obligations in a Parent-Child relationship could be let down in a variety of ways (Goffman 1961b). At Techcorp Finland the expectations one had of a “good” manager were seldom intimately reflected and detailed accounts, but on the contrary, often the statement of an occurred immoral act was implied to be enough to understand the moral indignation and the moral shortcomings in the described incident setup (Burke 1945; Kovesi 1967). Repeatedly breaking the expectations of the resourceful caretaker relational frame could lead to harsh judgements about the person’s character:

“In my mind my superior doesn’t lead as he should. He is unempathetic, cold, a hard person, who clearly enjoys...he enjoys that he can create a bad atmosphere. He doesn’t care for people’s feelings. [...] He talks only with other managers. Everyone else is, puff, air.” Employee#31

Some employees and even managers contemplated leaving Techcorp Finland because of their manager, because the caretaker-care-seeker dyadic relationship setup was not working according to their expectations and preferences. One employee thought that her line manager was in most cases a good resourceful caretaker, but when it came to her salary, she suspected her manager for deliberately being unresourceful, for not putting her foot down as she could do with most other issues:
At Techcorp Finland one could not talk about anything related to workplace wellbeing without going into the subject of the HR-department [human resource department] and especially one senior manager in HR. The relatively new HR-manager was often used to exemplify recent discontentment within Techcorp Finland more broadly or with the HR department more specifically. The issues ranged from how the company had been turning more hierarchical (Kärreman et al. 2002), how the role of HR had changed from a support function to a management entity that foremost “stipulated means” and “ends” in the form of instructions and directives (Goffman 1961b: 162), and how the new senior manager in HR showed disregard and contempt towards the organization’s past history and established practices.

“The general sentiment is that things have gotten worse. Previously HR was closer to people. If someone was troubled then you could go talk to them, a bit like to a therapist. Nowadays HR is a management department where you send forms and from where you get a response by email.” Manager#42

The new senior manager in HR made a lot of changes to company practices by his own accord. The sheer amount and style how they were communicated, that is to say, given as orders made the director quickly unpopular amongst many employees and managers at Techcorp Finland:

“A new person came and dictated the new way of how things are done and did not even ask or listen to how things are here and how they have been done before.” Manager#33

“HR, now you foremost get directives; that you need to do this and that and this way and that way and so on. The support side has remained rather limited. [...] In some way we managers, a lot more has been put on our shoulders, all kinds of things to do, handle or investigate. [...] And there’s a high threshold to ask or email because they [in HR] are apparently so busy [...] that we shouldn’t bother them with at least any trivial matters.” Manager#39

“Our HR-director has forgotten that he should be driving employee issues instead of the firms. I can say that everyone you talk to and begin to talk with, they say that the HR director has forgotten his most important job. That is the wellbeing of the employees.” Employee#16

According to employee#16 and others, if there was a situation in which a dispute arose between employees and the financial interests of the company, the HR-director should (Burke 1945) be on the side of the employees. A manager (#38), described the expectations toward the senior HR manager by an analogy to family dynamics: Management has the role of the stringent father whereas HR is the sympathetic mother, to whom one can turn to when father was unreasonable. The mother is attentive to the needs and situation of the employees (Children), the one person one could and should turn to in order to change father’s mind. Although the father has more formal power than the mother, the mother has moral superiority because she is the
caretaker for the employees. At Techcorp Finland, this expectation of relational coordination was frequently violated by the new HR-director. Moreover, it was violated with force:

“He’s a sovereign. It’s a politics of dictation. If he’s decided something, then that’s how it is. Sure, there’s been many good changes as well but if it’s perceived that they originate from him then it’s immediately a negative change. That’s a shame. [...] Now HR is a managerial bureau. It used to be a service center. [...] Now all you get is orders and managerial politics that’s being disseminated.” Manager#37

“[HR], it’s become more announcing, so to say. Things are not negotiated with others, it’s not discussed. And there’s very little flexibility if opposing voices present themselves. It’s old-school army-style to just inform what’s been decided without anybody knowing who or where it’s been decided.” Employee#40

Resourceful caretakers could be relied to take on or “leap in” and “lead ahead” (Heidegger 1962/2008) and defend the mind of the persons the caretaker was “committed” and “attached” to care for in the organization (Goffman 1961b). The resourceful caretaker was in other words the chief means of agency how to get one’s mind heard in the organization, when problems arose that caused a situation of diminished agency and lack of empowerment.

In the fusion of minds that resulted in formulating the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993), resourceful caretakers were valued assets. Employees trusted their resourceful caretakers to represent their interests and understandings of the situation and what would be an intelligent course of action given the circumstances. One could say that the employees expected their resourceful caretakers to represent their minds in the formation of the collective mind, especially in discussions with ‘father management.’

The reactions against the relatively new HR manager was very illuminating regarding precisely this aspect. Employees from across Techcorp Finland expected the senior HR manager to be their resourceful caretaker, through whom they thought they should get their mind across to influence the collective mind in problematic situations. HR was seen as the means to re-balance the agent-act-scene triad when imbalance had occurred. Most often this involved getting their voice heard by upper management or by a particular manager in cases of relational breakdown. With the new senior HR manager this remedial relationship and back-channel had broken down (cf. unready-to-hand, Heidegger 1962/2008).

The majority of employees were consequently deprived of a way to “circumvent the plug” if such relational breakdowns arose with management or particular managers (see the next relational frame of setup planning). The employees had lost a key resourceful caretaker and the senior HR manager was seen as continuously violating the relational frame. Not only had a caretaker been lost, but the “caring connection” (Kroth & Keller 2009; Martela 2012) had turned into an unsympathetic source of commands and a mind of its own that frequently went against the minds of employees and managers. A perpetual setup disharmony had broken out between the senior HR manager and many of the employees. In addition, due to the frequent orders the actions of the HR manager, the orders were felt as violating the mindful agent relational frame, which made the relational invalidation particularly pungent.

Moreover, because the lost caretaker was the senior HR manager in Techcorp Finland, the ‘mother’, there was nobody to turn to in order to “repair” the relationship (Gottman 2007). The apprehension of lost agency to counteract the situation according to my interpretation gave
rise to an escalation and loading of organizational ‘symptoms’, because there was not a ready-
to-hand course of action the repair the relationship with the mother and re-establish a mutual
sense of relational balance. There was a continuously ongoing incident setup with HR and es-
pecially the HR-manager. The incident setup was never closed because an Adult-Adult status
quo and a return to relational balance was never re-established. All manners of reactions to
emails and other communicative actions bore the significance of the new HR manager as acting
as a dismissive and demanding Parent instead of acting as according to role expectations, the
listening and “therapeutic” caretaker. Often the senior HR manager was seen as asserting his
own mind, disconnected from the perceived collective mind, upon employees. By forcefully
and frequently asserting his own mind as the collective mind, without open dialogue and with
disregard to basic rules of “face-work” (Goffman 1967), “social exchange” (Adler & Kwon 2002)
and “relational economics” (Schein 2009), a chasm began to widen between him and the col-
lective mind present in all manners of “backstage” talk (Goffman 1959) of which the interviews
were a case in point.

The senior HR manager’s actions frequently emitted qualities of wellbeing degenerative re-
lation coordination. If not for their content, the orders were often perceived as unintelligent
in the eyes of employees and managers by being disrespectful or inconsiderate in some other
way. Often the actions did not seem to take “face” (Goffman 1967) into account. The director
was consequently perceived to be in “wrong face” (Goffman 1967). The more he was seen as a
renegade mind of his own, the less he was seen as a representative of the collective mind de-
spite his position as a senior HR manager in the corporate hierarchy. Resisting the senior man-
ger became a “secondary adjustment” (Goffman 1961b), a goal in itself to informally punish
for his moral tactlessness and thus keep the moral rules of face-work intact along with the
resourceful caretaker relational frame. He could thus be resisted with the resistance seen as an
intelligent and moral course of action.

That the HR manager from his point of view frequently experienced considerable “resistance
to change” (Ford et al. 2008) was the result of an ongoing contestation of minds about who
actually represented the collective mind (Kaplan 2008). The more the senior manager asym-
metrically asserted his mind – according to the implicit rules of relational economics (Schein
2009) – the more he got “defacement” (Goffman 1961b; 1963b) and “crossed” (Berne
1964/2010) Parent-Child interaction setups directed back against him either directly or in in-
direct “backstage talk” (Goffman 1959) and “postplays” (Goffman 1961a; 1961b; 1981). Put dif-
ferently, the senior HR manager had engaged the organization from his rank and position in
the corporate hierarchy which he most likely thought amounted to an organization setup that
overruled other setups and relational considerations. The result was setup disharmony. He did
not engage others through wellbeing generative relational coordination that would see him as
enacting positional proficiency and relational affirmation, which continuously lead to setup
misalignment in the eyes of other managers and employees. Consequently, the senior HR man-
ger was constantly seen as violating the relational frame of the resourceful caretaker.

16.4 The setup planner

The setup planner relational frame represents a form of enacted “metacognition” (Seligman
2018: 154) about interaction setups with the outcome of relational balance in the agent-act-
scene triad in mind. Seligman (2018: 160) has described metacognition thus: “This ‘theory of
other minds’ involves a number of specific distinctions: between one’s own mind and those of
others; between intentions and effects; and the ability to imagine that one’s own experience of an external ‘reality’ may be one among many; that is, that one’s thoughts are not the same as the objective world. The child is coming to know that she has a mind of her own, in a world of her own with other people, with other minds seeing the same world as she, but from a different perspective.” (see also Baron-Cohen 1997) Metacognition can within the relational tradition be understood as an awareness of the relational dynamics within co-constituted relationships, which allows for proactivity and deliberate planning of “a fair, fitting, and reasonable act” (epieikes) that promotes relational balance within specific situations (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

The setup planner relational frame can be divided into two types: a reactive and a proactive type of setup planning. The reactive setup planner is a relational frame that comprises of three main characteristics: (1) there is an awareness of the significant inputs and outputs of an interaction setup, (2) a planned interaction setup is deliberately enacted in order to influence another setup, (3) the aim of the deliberately enacted interaction setup is on re-establishing a relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad through a fair, fitting and reasonable act given the circumstances of the situation. These qualities were especially poignant in cases where an interaction setup was planned and enacted in order to dramatically close a sequence of interactions and accomplish a return to relational balance.

The less visible form of setup planning, the proactive setup planner relational frame involves enacted awareness about the relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad. It could take several forms: (1) managing the expected status quo of the relationship setup, and (2) proactively balancing the influence from involved agents and the scene of action on the co-constructed sense of relational balance. Proactive setup planning attempts to keep a balance between the ongoing agent-governed and scene-governed attributions in the co-constructed sense of relational balance.

Deliberate planning of the interaction setup and consequently the shared “communicative medium” (Burke 1954/1984), involves awareness of the significant inputs and outputs of the interaction setup. According to Figure 6 the relational structure and “face” (Goffman 1967) are two seminal inputs that together imbue the relational frames with “form” (Burke 1945; Kovesi 1967) and socially constituted self- and other value (Goffman 1967; Schein 2009). Setup planning consequently includes, for example, consciousness about the effects of the interaction setup on the “production format” and “participation framework” and consequent outcomes of the interaction (Goffman 1981). Like the wedding planner, who organizes the scene for a particular “mood” (Heidegger 1962/2008) and corresponding set of appropriate emotional expressions and speech acts, setup planning includes avoiding certain interaction setups while actively instigating others in order to influence future setups (cf. Grint 2005).

The setup planner relational frame can be considered a show of interactional proficiency or “excellence” (Annas 2011) akin to tact and composure (Goffman 1967), that is, an ability to balance the agent-act-scene triad in an encounter even in the face of significant interactional difficulties and situational turbulence. In balancing the triad, the setup planner relational frame emits historical and situational sensitivity to past, ongoing and future interaction setups. The setup planner is more or less conscious and often actively concerned about the ongoing and future interaction setups and attempts to design the setups to fit the characteristics of the situation, including the overarching purpose for the interaction. In the midst of the complexities involved in knowledge work, deliberate enactment of balancing interaction setups could however be particularly difficult at times.
If the interaction setup is thought of as the proximal scene for an interaction, then the setup planner relational frame includes considering the global scene of action for the proximal scene of action, in planning the interaction setup (see Figure 5). It is akin to reflecting on the relationship in planning the next act, but in the setup planner relational frame the inputs and outputs are more encompassing than merely the status of the relationship setup. At Techcorp Finland the interaction setup was at times deliberately planned by organizational members in order to promote fruitful communication and a cooperative atmosphere in the organization:

“Once I steamrolled a product and a product change with force; that it had to be ready in time. As a consequence, R&D had to give in, also production, manual writers as well, everyone had to give in, and I got it out in time and just the way I wanted. We even had some challenges really at the last moment, but it went out and the customer was really happy. Then I talked with [another manager] that now we need to thank everyone over a coffee service. [...] [I told them] this is what we can accomplish when we work together.” Manager#27

This quote illustrates several aspects of a setup planner relational frame, which shows sensitivity to the adumbrated relational structure and especially the participation framework and production formats in interaction setups (Goffman 1981), and sensitivity to “relational economics” (Schein 2009) and “face” (Goffman 1967) including how they can be taken into account in a subsequent interaction setup. On face value, one might think that the above quote merely exemplifies the general practice of providing intangible and symbolic rewards for past performance (e.g. Etzioni 1975). This quote can however be interpreted as a more intricate example of enactment of positional proficiency through discursive formulation of a situationally attuned sense of balance in the agent-act-scene triad (see Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). In this case relational affirmation and setup alignment is communicated ex post facto, whilst communicating that the out of the ordinary commanding style was knowingly exceptional and yet warranted by the circumstances of the situation (cf. Grint 2005).

The manager in other words engaged in “framing” (Goffman 1974) his prior actions as aligned with the collective mind of the organization as well as discursively formulating that the achieved result represents co-constructed relational balance despite the managers exceptional conduct. In this case, the manager arguably was aware that his stubborn and directive actions might later on amount to blowback because of the negative relational economics implicit in the directive actions. The manager therefore instigated a dramatic closing of events by framing the prior interactions as deliberate and yet exceptional and thus to signal a return to the prior status quo in the relationship setups. This can be viewed as a case in point of reactive setup planning. Smircich and Morgan (1982: 258) have referred to this type of discursive framing as “leadership”: "Leadership is realized in the process whereby one or more individuals succeeds in attempting to frame and define the reality of others."

On many occasions, enactment of the setup planner relational frame was a reaction to a previous interaction, that had not gone according to one’s hopes and expectations. An employee described how one could be resourceful by “circumventing a plug” in communication:

“You have to figure out the path [how to influence]. And then the team supervisor has to be a good guy who wants to change and take those issues forward and his line manager as well has to react with haste. Otherwise, without those, just to acquire a single work
light can take a half a year to a year. [...] Without a good supervisor, with the [bad] kind that is engrossed in his excel sheets and doesn’t have the energy, the idea can get buried in a Post-it on his table and take months. Then it’s good if you’ve been in the house for a while because then you may have contacts and you can so to say circumvent that plug and get it done. If nothing else, you can always go to the next ladder and tell them that that something is really necessary. You can offer to go buy it yourself from the nearest hardware store.” Employee#22

If there was a relational breakdown with one’s line manager and therefore communication came to a standstill and no actions were taken despite hopes and expectations, then the communication channel and the relationship was effectively closed. A line manager can have a stable Parent-Child interaction setup with a subordinate, which can leave the Parent manager inattentive to the situation of the subordinate, i.e. the manager does not perform as a resourceful caretaker. The manager can become a “plug” in the eyes of the Child employee. Then to have contacts within the company could empower one to handle the situation in other ways, either by jumping one step to the “next ladder” in the hierarchy or to just get approval so that one handled the situation oneself. In these cases, a novel interaction setup is instigated to bypass a past interaction setup and thus reach a fitting and reasonable solution in accordance with the details of the situation.

In some cases where the communication between the manager and employee had broken down and stabilized into a Parent-Child relationship setup, it could feel abusive and disrespectful in the eyes of the Child employee. What employees could do, was to circumvent the plug and thus seek a “repair” (Gottman 2007) to the stabilized relationship setup by going one level up the ladder. In one case, an employee had for some time gathered evidence of how his manager had wronged him by unilaterally changing his work description and not responded to his complaints about the issue. With the evidence at hand he went one step up the ladder to his senior manager to sort it out. As a result, the immediate supervisor was scolded by the senior manager. Afterwards the manager had asked the employee if they could change their relationship setup and corresponding style towards more “open communication.” This was ironic according to the employee. The employee thought that this would be fine and what he had been trying for already a year if only the supervisor was actually capable of listening. But the supervisor seemed to have selective hearing by hearing only his higher-ups or the people he liked. This was the very reason the employee had gone to the senior manager in the first place to seek the repair to the relationship setup (employee#44).

In a somewhat similar case, an employee felt bullied by a colleague. He felt overwhelmed by the ongoing relationship setup with the colleague, and consequently urged his manager to solve the situation in some way between the two workers:

“Our chemistries don’t match. That’s what makes my work difficult at times although the work is not terribly difficult, but it does make it a challenge to work as a team. We just can’t...she can’t tolerate me in the same team. I’ve now taken the position that – fine, we’ll do our separate things. [...] An extreme solution was put in place. [...] [they no longer work together or close to each other]. I got some peace of mind to do my work without having to listen to her [unsolicited] huffs and puffs. She’s stated very clearly that I’m absolutely incompetent and that I shouldn’t work here. This is my main challenge that has an effect on the quality of my workday. It’s to a large extent determined by if she’s at work
or not. [laughs] [...] I’m usually good at getting along with people, that’s why I was completely shocked when I first heard comments coming from her mouth, I was like ‘What’ve I done?!’ I was completely confused. But there are some wonderful, cheerful people who came and pushed me forward. ‘Don’t mind her.’ And then it’s good again after a while. [...] They come and hug me and tell me that it’ll all work out. It’s amazing how that can get you to move forward and not let a rotten egg ruin your day.” Employee#21

It can be difficult to force another person into acting differently, but it can be relatively easy to change the interaction setups, which effectively modifies the communication environment the person’s find themselves in (Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011). In the above case, the situation was not taken seriously by the employee’s manager, until the manager was told that it could soon results in an extended sick leave due to an unbearable and stressful situation for the employee. Once the economic motivator was put forth (see Danna & Griffin 1999), actions swiftly ensued. A simple solution, as in the above case, was to separate the two persons from each other’s’ vicinity and organize the work – the organization setups – in the team so that they had as little as possible to do with one another.

In the above example one should also note the significance of “social validation” (Pratt et al. 2006) from colleagues. With their support the employee managed to “reframe” (Goffman 1974) the incident setups from self-doubt and feelings of incompetence that were heading towards burnout, to not letting “a rotten egg ruin your day.” It is an example of a benevolent “postplay” (Goffman 1981) that re-establishes one’s social “footing” within the organization (Goffman 1981). It is a case in point of casuistic moral reasoning that is reminiscent of the “cure of souls” by reinterpreting past experiences in a new moral frame of reference (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Such social support can be understood as a collective validation stemming from a benevolent “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993).

In some cases, a similar relational breakdown could as well be with a coworker, who had seniority. At Techcorp Finland and especially in R&D intensive knowledge work employees and managers frequently worked and coordinated across hierarchies, units, and teams. Sometimes a temporary plug could manifest even in these contexts. Then one could go to one’s own line manager for support and request the manager to take charge of the situation as a resourceful caretaker. The manager could either negotiate the common priorities between the two teams and get the specific facts of the situation and thus reason a joint course of action, or, get the unreasonable Parent-Child interaction setup transformed into a more accommodating relationship format:

“He’s a big personality. If for instance he’s arranged something with a supplier, for instance that we’ll get something a particular date, but we’d like to increase the batch. We may very well get the answer that ‘that’s what’s been arranged, it will come a particular date, and you do things this way.’ And we’re like ‘oops, clear!.’ [...] It can be a wall. He’s decided something and then I scuttle gently to my line manager and say ‘We got this kind of an answer again. Would you two managers like to talk it over and this answer on what’s what?’ [...] Then they communicate with each other or it goes to the next level. And if that’s the situation then we’ll run with it.” Team Supervisor#37

To enact asymmetric Parent-Child interaction setups were commonly avoided at Techcorp Finland, even in cases where such interactions could probably have been warranted. In some
cases, this required creativity in setting up the interaction setup, for example, where an employee had broken company rules. One way to solve the dilemma of disciplining one’s own subordinates, was to change the interaction setup into one in which one was the bearer of bad tidings similar to the informed tour guide instead of the executioner. For example, a team supervisor described that he at times told his employees that their line manager had noticed his subordinates slacking and breaking the rules. After such incidents he went to the line manager to tell him that he had put words in his mouth to keep employees in line so as not to risk the relationship setups with his subordinates (team supervisor #43). The managers did not seem to have a problem with this, that the line manager was put in a Parent-Child interaction setup with the employees in order to keep the immediate supervisor in an Adult-Adult setup with his employees.

In a similar vein, when a team supervisor or other employees “snitched” on someone to a line manager, one manager had taken it as a policy to always say he had noticed the break in conduct himself.

“If someone comes to tell on another worker, as the old saying goes, ‘snitch’ that someone is not doing their work or is having extended breaks from work or similar, I always take the position that it’s me who has noticed it and won’t tell where I’ve heard it so that it doesn’t cause any friction [between the two employees] as a consequence of snitching to a supervisor.” Manager#23

One interaction setup can change other setups, and thus it was at times important to be mindful of how such setups were interconnected. Past setups affect future setups. In these situations, the problem was thus to deliver the message without hurting the relationship setup. The setup planner relational frame was engaged when an agent took such historical and prospective setups into account in their interactions.

The reactive setup planning examples highlight the relevance of proactive setup planning. It has been well established that to force directives upon others can alter the overall perception of the person giving the orders (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Milliken et al. 2003). An act or a pattern of acts can be interpreted into a global assessment of the person’s character and motives (Burke 1945; Goffman 1959; 1963b). In these cases, the agent-act ratio can be said to overpower the act-scene ratio in the agent-act-scene triad similar to the “fundamental attribution error” (Buchanan & Huczynski 2004). In some cases, it can be interpreted as an example of “positive deviance” (Spreitzer & Cameron 2004) as an exceptional show of relational moral competence (Annas 2011; Aristotle 2005).

There can however also be negative cases in which the agent is interpreted as showing exceptional relational incompetence. Through social stigma and other negative social attributions, the interaction setup can become overrun by the face of the agent, i.e. agent-governed, a situation in which relational balance is disturbed by the acts and presence of a single agent. Examples of this phenomenon include cases where authoritative Parent-Child interaction setups undermine trust in others as mindful agents and suspicions about a person’s motives and character often ensue (see resourceful caretaker). In organizations, authoritative actions like directives can, however, in many cases be well motivated and reasonable, but tend to include the risk of leaving a permanent mark on the web of relations (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Goffman 1959; 1963b).
There were however ways to “balance it.” At Techcorp Finland the tactics included managing especially the expected status quo of the relationship, i.e. the relationship setups, by engaging in proactive “face-work” (Goffman 1967), and by instigating and accentuating “frame-breaks” (Goffman 1981) to counter possible negative generalizations about the relationship setups.

Actions that build one’s “social capital” (Adler & Kwon 2002) and established positive “face” (Goffman 1967) were of value at Techcorp Finland for several reasons. At Techcorp Finland many felt that the company had for some years been turning less “humane” and more clinical akin to a larger company culture where everyone was on their own doing only their own thing (see e.g. Schein 1992). There was less emphasis and time for personal relations and “discussion-relations” (Employee#28). New IT-systems, changes in HR and a general lack of time were blamed for the increasing depersonalization of communication. Many felt that small parties, celebrations and other ceremonies were no longer organized in the same scale as before.

Goffman (1961b: 90) has argued that such ceremonies are seminal to the workings of an organization; they are a way of “crossing the line” between persons in other units, hierarchies and divisions by providing “role releases.” In hierarchical organizations where the Parent-Child interaction setups tend to predominate, organizational members on such salubrious occasions “come close enough together to get a somewhat favorable image of the other and to identify sympathetically with the other’s situation” (Goffman 1961b: 90). Such rituals and ceremonies provided “frame-breaks” (Goffman 1974; 1981) and build favorable relationship setups through acknowledgement of face between interactants. These occasions were valued and sought after at Techcorp Finland.

In this atmosphere of hard work and no play an employee (#16) recounted that managers could earn “points” by showing interest and appreciation towards the workers akin to social exchange theory (Adler & Kwon 2002; Goffman 1961b; Schein 2009). Especially employees took careful notice which managers were generally polite and courteous, and thus greeted them in corridors and which did not bother to acknowledge their existence. Which managers in other words engaged in the civilities of “face-work” (Goffman 1967) and “relational economics” (Schein 2009). Daily manners or just by showing one’s face at the factory floor could be interpreted as a sign of interest and thus earn a manager “points.” When a senior manager organized a theme-day off-site at a recreation center, assembly workers had joint activities and the day was experienced as unifying. “That was really good.” (Work supervisor#41). It was a frame-break, but at the same time the senior manager who had organized it had earned points for the action, which amounted to a higher line and improved face on the factory floor. This “frame-break” (Goffman 1974) broke the mold of an unsympathetic Parent-Child relationship setup between the senior manager and the workers. As a consequence, the senior manager was still seen as strict but also fair.

One middle manager was praised for her moral excellence and leadership skills, when she showed control over the “communicative medium” (Burke 1954/1984) in her relationships at work. She was able to “balance” demanding interaction setups on multiple fronts, at least as Child to senior executives and Parent to his subordinates:

“[A particular manager] is very well educated, a civilized person who’s leading an important R&D project at the moment, which is well known to be important. She can maneuver between the American rules and the people. She can balance it. Of course, she has the same demands from above as everyone else. But it’s how she puts it into practice amongst her employees and how she presents things to the Yankees. She knows how to
balance it. It’s ideal leadership if you ask me. [...] [good leaders] respect what they are
told and the prevalent values and practices. But they don’t feel the need to bring all the
crap in front of their employees. They play the role of the superior, but they do it with
respect. There are plenty of good managers here. But then again there are also the little
bosses who can’t cut it yet.” Employee#31

In this case balancing it meant that the manager did not perform Parent-Child interaction set-
ups without good reason, even in situations where a more commanding style might have been
warranted. The above-mentioned female manager had previously been friends with an em-
ployee while they worked in different companies. When the friend sought an employment op-
portunity in the manager’s team, they agreed not to cultivate the friendship any more as long
as they worked as manager and subordinate (manager#38). A recently promoted team super-
visor remarked on the same issue:

“One cannot any longer be a friend-friend [with a team member], because someone may
start talking ‘that’s his favorite, I’ll go complain to someone.’ It’s a bit difficult, there are
some really good guys in the team and it’s hard to be like ‘sorry, I cannot be your friend-
friend anymore.’ But well, this is work, one learns to deal with it somehow.” Team Super-
visor#43

In these cases, the relationship setup between manager and employee was deliberately planned
and set to reflect a broader understanding of the relational matrix, in which it was paramount
to signal that organization setups were primary to relationship setups. In contrast, there were
accounts of lack of setup planning precisely on this issue. For example, an interviewee de-
scribed a situation when an employee had come intoxicated to work. According to the inform-
ant, the line manager did not deal with the issue decisively enough and was too lenient with
the employee. The informant thought that the two were too close friends and consequently
there was too much understanding (employee#28), the relationship setup had triumphed over
the organization setup and resulted in setup misalignment in the eyes of the informant. Similar
incidents were not entirely unfamiliar at Techcorp Finland:

“Some of the managers are good friends...they are more friends that superior-supervisee
relationships. At times some awkward decisions have been made, or not been made be-
cause the emotional attachment has been so strong, and they haven’t had the stomach to
hurt the other.” Manager#47

Such remarks brought forth the importance of proactively planning the relationship setups and
also the interaction setups more broadly. It is worth remembering Milgram’s (1974/2009: 175)
conclusion based on an extensive set of experiments on obedience, namely, that “relationship
overwhelms content” (italics in origin al). In a relationship setup between friends, it can be
considered an implicit agreement that production formats containing “Directives” (Searle
1995; 2009) are excluded. Relationships between friends and a manager-employee dyad tend
to have different relational structures and relationship setups, which has a bearing on the
moral conclusions in subsequently enacted interaction setups.

Between friends, one probably gives much value for the other person’s feelings, which may
even become the main frame of reference for the interaction setup and consequently direct
what is moral action in that situation. The friendly relationship setup can impede actions that would be in accordance with the collective mind. In these cases the agent can lose control over the interaction setup (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Goffman 1961b; 1981). The scene can become imprisoning and experienced as “situational” instead of one’s acts being merely “situated” (Goffman 1981). When certain possibly problematic setups were explicitly and proactively avoided, and consequently the situation of interactions drew primarily from the hierarchical structure of the organization and other organization setups rather than accrued friendship, it can be considered deliberate and proactive setup planning by the involved participants.

I surmised that the reason several senior managers who had on multiple occasions saved someone’s job or saved the Finnish site from more widespread downsizing were not more vocal about such deeds was of similar origin, to control future interaction setups. A couple of managers lamented that they could not tell their employees of their good deeds, presumably because such information might contribute to added insecurity and distrust towards management, to break the “assumptive world” (Janoff-Bulman 1992) of the “holding environment” (Kahn 2001), and thus one’s orientation to what represents balance in the agent-act-scene triad. It would in effect provide an unconducive background (scene) for future interaction setups although it might improve their own face amongst the employees. This can be understood as an example of balancing the agent-act-scene triad, by avoiding disseminating destabilizing information and unconducive information about the surrounding relational matrix.

Proactive setup planning in the form of “face-work” (Goffman 1967) was particularly important at Techcorp Finland from the perspective of balancing the agent-act-scene triad. How one’s face was perceived could result in goodwill or vice versa to hostility towards them personally in future encounters and thus influenced the frame for encounters and most if not all subsequent interaction setups they participated in (see resourceful caretaker). Put differently, setup planning with an eye on the balance in the agent-act-scene triad involves sensitivity to “face-work” (Goffman 1967), because a positive face would seem to allow for conducive framing of a person’s actions and how well the actions fit with the relational balance.

Goodwill can be exercised, for instance, by reaching the conclusion of an exception in practical moral reasoning (see Figure 6). If a manager acted improperly it could be written of as ‘stress’, ‘a bad day’, or the like. Such reasoning resisted global assessments about persons and changed the moral conclusion based on the exception. In contrast, towards some managers there could be even open hostility, and consequently almost everything they did was interpreted as evidence of their negative character, which could become “self-fulfilling prophecies that seemingly validate the labels” (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995: 413; see also Goffman 1959; 1963b). The “act” and the “scene” could become overwhelmed by the frame of the “agent” (Burke 1945). Put differently, the balance in the agent-act-scene triad could become unbalanced merely by loading too much meaning on a particular agent that was involved.

Thus, to engage in self-presentation rituals (Alvesson et al. 2008a; Kreiner et al. 2006; Goffman 1959; Pratt et al. 2006) and relational economics (Schein 2009) can thus be conceived of as proactive setup planning. Especially so, when the purpose is to facilitate relational coordination towards shared ends and not the construction of a particular positive identity, social capital or a balanced identity as an end in itself (see Adler & Kwon 2002; Dutton et al. 2010; Kreiner et al. 2006). One can thus engage in identity work for the benefit of communication instead of falling victim to one’s assigned social identity (cf. DeRue & Ashford 2010; Dutton et al. 2010). The importance of the agent’s ethos or moral character of the orator has since Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* been acknowledged as pertinent to communication. This is because in most
forms of speech acts there is an implicit requirement for some level of sympathetic “identification” (Burke 1950/1969) with the speaker’s situation for the communication to count as effective.

The weight of these practices of self-presentation and relational economics come to the fore with contrasting cases where such are forbidden or severely hindered. Because Techcorp Finland did not contain such extreme circumstances, I here for the sake of understanding, lean on the past findings from a different setting. In Goffman’s (1961b) analysis of “total institutions”, such as prisons, mental hospitals, boarding schools and army barracks, he describes at length the practices of “role dispossession” and “personal defacement” in which most of the common ways of self-representation are deliberately withdrawn from the inmates, alongside practices of symbolic defilement of the self. Goffman argues that inmates do not have control over the situations they are put in, and thus lose their autonomy over their actions. According to Goffman (1961b: 47), “total institutions disrupt or defile precisely those actions that in civil society have the role of attesting to the actor and those in his presence that he has some command over his world – that he is a person with ‘adult’ self-determination, autonomy, and freedom of action.”

Guards took control of the situations with the inmates by habitually labeling the inmates and defacing them. “This automatic identification of the inmate is not merely name-calling; it is at the centre of a basic means of social control” (Goffman 1961b: 81). Put differently, the “agent-scene ratio” (Burke 1945) is saturated by the identification practices, and when the inmates cannot define themselves, they lose control of the act (agent-act ratio) and the scene (agent-scene ratio). A similar tactic of social control could be perceived in the moral discontentment of the resourceful caretaker relational frame. When subordinates “stigmatized” (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995; Goffman 1963b) and thus defined the motives and character of the agent they were in contact with, it took away the person’s control over the interaction setup, despite the fact that the person was a senior manager at Techcorp Finland.

16.4.1 Frame violations

The setup planner relational frame can be thought of as a show of relational moral competence, agency and professionalism in one’s communication at work. Setup planning is not about falling victim to the scene of action, conversely, it is about taking charge of the situation by proactively and reactively molding the immediate relational matrix. The obverse of the setup planner relational frame is thus to take the scene of action as set and constraining to the degree that no fair, fitting or reasonable action can be taken. The typical case of not engaging in the setup planner relational frame was to complain about the scene of action without taking action to alter it.

One could see oneself in an imprisoning relational knot in which the only viable course of action was to not act or care (cf. Bateson 1972). A relational knot can in this context be understood as a situation where personal preferences, established deontic powers and other conditions of satisfaction are crossed and the outcome is an insoluble situation not solvable in any other way than through inaction, complaining or not caring (see a grammar of management). Put differently, the practical moral reasoning is that non-participation is the best course of action to promote relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad. For some such actions had most likely become habitual:
“There are some people who can be said to be depressive. They are against everything and ‘I would have been up to me it would have been done differently’, ‘I told them five years ago’, ‘everything used to be better.’ [...] Some people are really organizational viruses, they poison the atmosphere in a team, just one person [is enough] by being indifferent. [...] Maybe it’s because they haven’t been developed and respected. And its connected to them behaving [arrogantly] as if they are indispensible.” Manager#47

At Techcorp Finland there were a multitude of examples of reasoning in which an interviewee thought they were in a setting they had absolutely no control over, they thought they were forced into a particular course of action, or they thought they were in a deadlock in which the only practical solution was silence or non-participation (Milliken et al. 2003; cf. Bateson 1972; Gottman 2007; Watzlawick et al. 1974). Such thoughts are practically equivalent to taking the interaction setup and the scene of action as given and to understand oneself at its mercy:

“It’s commonly said that communication is directed top-down. We are told. But if we want something, some clarifications are asked bottom-up then it gets lost somewhere. [...] There’s some gray zone where it gets lost. Once in a while we would prefer to know more about this and that. ‘How come’ and then [our manager] promises to get to the bottom of it and we never hear about it again. Something happens to the probes. Answers never find their way back.” Employee#12

Past actions and experiences in which one has tried to influence but the relationship setups and setting has been closed to such attempts can give rise to “learned helplessness” (Seligman 1990/2006) or “trained incapacity” (Burke 1954/1984). In such cases it can perhaps be considered prudent to stop trying. This is one plausible pathway to disengage from setup planning.

At Techcorp Finland occasional layoffs and downsizing were by far and large considered as unpleasant or even traumatic. Such past incidents had left their mark on several workers, who had their own understanding of who were fired and why, including the appropriate course of action given their interpretations:

“If one person is quiet and the second complains all the time you know which one goes [when downsized]. It’s the one who brings up the snags. [...] It’s pathetic, it’s mean. It would be wonderful if you had the kind of supervisor you could trust. But you have to be really careful what you say. You never know.” Employee#16

“They who have spoken out and dared to bring up issues, all of them are now gone and now all the rest of us are silent.” Employee#18

They had thus chosen silence as a general and morally appropriate course of action (Milliken et al. 2003; Morrison 2011). According to their reasoning, employees who “voiced” (Morrison 2011) “snags” were good and engaged employees because they cared for the organization. They openly complained and took issue if rules or other agreements were not followed, if safety issues were not in order, or if the abstract entity often referred to only as “management” was bending the rules in the company’s favor and against the interests of the employees. Such loyal actions often for the best of the other employees were in their mind however later punished by management when the same persons were chosen to be let go. They thus thought that the only
reasonable course of action available to them was to be silent about such matters, in fear of retribution, as other studies have also suggested (Milliken et al. 2003; Morrison 2011). In real life situations people may find a variety of grassroots “tactics” (de Certeau 1974/2011; Morrison 2011) to set the interaction setup or formulate their communication in order to voice their concerns and thus break their silence. When the setup planner relational frame was not engaged, such tactics were not sought.

In addition to layoffs, other occasions where employees had similar sentiments about the lack of agency and influence were in relation to improvement initiatives. Such were frequent all over Techcorp Finland, but they had acquired a special significance amongst the manufacturing employees. In manufacturing the general sentiment was that nothing extra including improvement initiatives should be participated in for its own sake. There were many reasons for this sentiment ranging from issues of pay to dissatisfaction with management.

In my mind it was not difficult to grasp why such initiatives were mostly eschewed by the factory workers. In their daily work the workers had much autonomy and if they encountered problems then they immediately received support from senior employees, managers, process engineers, R&D and so forth. That they could continue their daily work uninterrupted had a high priority in the organization. They felt their work was important and the organization set-ups attested to this understanding. If they participated in development initiatives the situation changed dramatically. For the employees it felt as an uphill battle to get their voice heard, get decisions and information, and to meet with higher managers. One had to live with partial information, multiple simultaneous initiatives, inefficient meetings, abruptly cancelled projects, and lack of focus and authority to finalize projects or set budgets. The factory workers were suddenly immersed in the indeterminacy and contestations in knowledge work (Blackler 1995; Kaplan 2008). Employees could nonetheless be ordered to participate in such improvement projects, which was experienced as a kind of a final insult. A manufacturing employee commented that “It’s easy here as long as you don’t care about anything.” This was given as an in-depth description about the perceived lack of enthusiasm and voluntarism within manufacturing (employee#12).

To not “care about anything” can be conceived as a similar solution as silence in an organization. The accusation was that the organization setups in improvement initiatives were generally flawed. There were not sufficient reasons to participate, they were pushed to work hard enough as it was, the organization setup did not allow them enough influence, the future of the initiatives was politically and economically uncertain, and so on. As the organization setups and their outcomes were taken as risky and often unrewarding, the conclusion was to shun such meetings as far as possible. An often-recounted remedy was to offer bonuses for participation and successful initiatives, to promote “care” (Heidegger 1962/2008) towards the initiatives. It is worth highlighting that these were moral and reasoned conclusions about the appropriate course of action concerning the improvement initiatives. Importantly, the employees did not see such reasoning to contradict the mindful agent relational frame, as the situations were thought to be dissimilar. Improvement initiatives were considered extra and thereby not the actual day-to-day work they did and felt themselves to be responsible for within the organization. The employees did not measure their professionalism and proficiency based on the improvement initiatives but from their expertise in everyday work.
16.5 The mindful organization

A mindful organization can be understood as a continuously molding “collective intentionality” (Bratman 1992; Searle 1995; 2009) with mutually “aligned” (Banford & Snow 2000; Drath et al. 2008) and thus heedfully interrelated actions, relationally “coordinated” (Bechky & Okhuysen 2009) to take into account the relevant circumstances and jointly accomplish the sought-after ends of the organization (Weick & Roberts 1993). The coordinated actions within a mindful organization can be understood as intelligent and perhaps even proactive responses (acts) to the prevailing and upcoming situations (scenes) in the pursuit of the organization’s desired future state of affairs.

A mindful organization can be understood as providing a moral “orientation” (Burke 1954/1984) to its members, which informs on the case specific constituents of relational balance within the organization (cf. Schein 1992). A moral orientation is implicit knowledge about balancing the act-scene ratio (see Burke 1945). The moral orientation directs what should (Burke 1945) be done in typical situations to balance the agent-act-scene triad within a local scene of action and its “assumptive world” (Janoff-Bulman 1992). The formation and adoption of the moral orientation and its implicit assumptive world can be said to provide “ontological security” (Giddens 1991), “trust” (Luhmann 1988), and “psychological safety” (Edmondson 1999) within the “holding environment” (Kahn 2001) and experienced “world” (Oakeshott 1933/2015) of the relationally constituted mindful organization. With an ingrained moral orientation, a person acts with “accountability” and “predictability” within the mindful organization (see Okhuysen & Bechky 2009).

As discussed in conjunction with the mindful agent relational frame, the mindful organization is the presumed scene of action for those conscious moral agents whom are subsumed in a local world inhabited by other conscious moral agents and share a common purpose for their actions (Oakeshott 1991a; Weick & Roberts 1993). There are actions that directly contribute to constructing and maintaining the mindful organization – the shared sense of should and should nots – through the formation and enactment of the local moral orientation and its tightly coordinated organization setups and more loosely defined ideal setups that reflect the implicit priorities and preferences in the organization’s moral orientation. The mindful organization relational frame is employed when the mindful organization scene of action and its moral orientation is attended to.

Typical examples of this relational frame are: (1) articulation of the moral orientation and its way of gluing together the coordinates of the dramatistic pentad into a sense of relational balance, (2) formation of organization setups that provide wellbeing generative relational coordination and enactment of a shared sense of relational balance, and (3) in the absence of agreed upon organization setups, it manifests as the enactment of ideal setups that epitomize wellbeing generative relational coordination and relational balance. For example, in uncertain or otherwise indeterminate situations, the mindful organization relational frame is enacted when a situation is handled in a way that prioritizes wellbeing generative relational coordination and the co-construction of a mutual sense of relational balance. This can be considered as the enactment of an ideal setup that is aligned with the collective mind’s implicit moral orientation.

The following short case description is a case in point about the construction of the mindful organization and thus also about the construction and enactment of the mindful organization relational frame:
According to a manager at Techcorp Finland, when a senior manager presented a five-year strategy for manufacturing to the entire factory floor, it created a feeling of safety and trust in manufacturing employees. According to the manager, employees in manufacturing understood what was pursued, instead of being at the mercy of circumstance or the whims of unknown executives (manager#39).

The presentation of a five-year strategy in manufacturing and its consequence of increased trust and security in the future can be thought of as illustrating something beyond a thematic topic of “strategy” (Mintzberg & Waters 1985) or “trust” (Luhmann 1988). For persons the actions and future intentions were shown to be reasonable and thus “mindful” of the situation at hand (Weick & Putnam 2006). The actions of the organization and its members are shown to demonstrate situated intelligence and thus characteristics of “mind” (Mantere 2003; Ryle 1949/2000). In this case the strategy outlines an understanding of the general situation the organizational members are in, and gives a prudent course of action based on those circumstances accompanied with the often implicit moral understandings that the current course of action is the correct way of acting, thinking and feeling in the situation (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Schein 1992). In this case the articulation of a five-year strategy in other words articulated an understanding of relational balance in the agent-act-scene triad, disclosing how the current actions should be relationally coordinated and aligned within the local scene of action.

The alignment and mobilization of “collective action frames” (Banford & Snow 2000) into a “collective intentionality” (Searle 1995; 2010) can be understood as an ongoing accomplishment within a mindful organization. In the midst of knowledge work there is a continuous need for novel “contributions” to formulate collective intentionality, as well as “subordination” to, and “representation” of the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993). Such alignment requires conscious and continuous effort, as it did at Techcorp Finland. In work settings it could be in the form of everyday confirmation of priorities from one’s line manager, it could manifest as efforts toward improved coordination and communication between units, it could show as deliberate setup planning to facilitate mutual understanding especially about priorities and collective action. One could say that when members of the organization shared a mutual sense of priorities, a similar understanding of what represents relational balance, and how that balance should be enacted through relational coordination, then there was a shared collective mind. In these cases, there is a shared experience of balance in the dramatistic pentad.

In the following case description, a manager describes how one handles a situation in which one needs to re-prioritize duties due to unforeseen events, that is, a situation in which a new local collective mind needs to be formed. The relational frame of mindful organization is tapped into as a moral orientation about the proper course of action for how to, in concert, establish a collective mind that emits the qualities of wellbeing generative relational coordination and relational balance. The case exemplifies and Adult-Adult interaction style in which the collective mind is formed gradually in a sequence of deliberate interaction setups (see Mead 1934/2015; Macmurray 1960):

“When I prioritize, I first try to figure out what is important after which I of course take it up with my line manager that I’ve got it right. And usually [we in] R&D work very closely with marketing. Clients have gotten promises about schedules and that’s why I’m of course also in contact and talk with them. It really depends on the issue and type of schedule really. And if it concerns a client then we look into it with marketing about what’s
important and what can be postponed. [...] We sit together with marketing and with quality at the same table and figure out the situation. I think it’s great that around here we can work like that. We’re all close to each other, [we are physically] on the same floor and even in the same floor segment. So we sit down and figure it out together what should be done.” Manager#17

In a somewhat similar case another manager explained how an implicitly agreed organization setup for forming the collective mind works when one notices that the team cannot reach their targets:

“First comes discussion [if we can’t reach our targets]. We have to look at what parts are achievable and what isn’t. Then we have to evaluate each target, what needs to be reached and what would be extremely good if it was reached. And then we have to think about if there is somehow we can buy room and time to maneuver. We prioritize, that’s what we do. But if it starts to look as if the whole is not achievable by any means then I have to take it up with my line manager. I can talk with her very easily, that ‘we can’t reach this and this deadline.’ Then we mull together about the whole, is my team effective or big enough, or if there could be room for a new recruitment. That’s where it happens, in these manager-to-manager discussions. One could say that the agony that is first felt at the shop floor trickles slowly upwards. These are usually quite slow solutions, but then again if it’s worth it then we have to think together and put things in order. Perhaps we drop something less important or reschedule it. Or then again everything can be so important that we need new resources. Perhaps we can recruit or buy services to get the job done.” Manager#19

As a third exemplary quote of the mindful organization relational frame where as usual an Adult interaction style is enacted (Berne 1964/2010), a manager explains how a novel organization setup was designed when they noticed that the actions between R&D and marketing were not properly “aligned” (Drath et al. 2008) and there was a lack of “common understanding” between the units (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009):

“Communication across organizations? That’s actually quite important. In the past [we in] R&D made our own decisions and marketing was perplexed about what was going on over there. And R&D wondered about marketing, ‘something should come from there.’ This was the issue. When I began in this position, I then interviewed people, I asked different people about all manners of issues. I talked with marketing and with quality. Most of it was unclear, I mean, what the others were doing. When I noticed it, we began a new meeting where we all sit at the same table and now everyone knows who does what and why. And now R&D doesn’t any longer have to make decisions all by themselves; do we do this or that. They can get help from marketing who come in on it and quality as well. So now we figure out what’s best together.” Manager#17

In cases where there was a noticeable lack of alignment and coordination within the organization – situations that were experienced as Parent-Child interaction setups and aroused suspicion instead of trust – a new organization setup in the form of a “standing agreement” (Searle 1995) about how such matters should be handled could be set in place. The novel organization setup often represented the ideal setup for how such situations should be handled within the
organization, typically in an Adult-Adult interaction style that emitted qualities of wellbeing generative relational coordination. In the organization setups positional proficiency, relational affirmation and setup alignment were enacted. An example from manufacturing is a case in point of such wellbeing generative relational coordination in a designed organization setup, where there is a gradual escalation of the problem to include more and more resourceful caretakers into the problem-solving mix:

“We have a system for it [when problems occur]. All teams make particular products and there are always minor faults and the like which need to be corrected. And if there’s a situation where they can’t get on top of the problem then every product has a PE-person [process engineer] who can be called to help. If even that person can’t solve it then they are in contact with R&D. We have this kind of a defined chain what is done in problem situations. And if it would happen that the problem would be so big that it would cause a standstill in our deliveries then even product managers would get involved and start sending letters all across the world about delays and more. This has happened you know. It isn’t left on the team’s shoulders. The teams do what they can and when they can’t they know who to contact.” Manager#23

This illustrates a specific organization setup for how the collective mind was designed to be engaged if one encountered a problem on the factory floor. In this context a problem is good to understand as a situation of “present-at-hand” or “unready-to-hand” where the proximal agent does not know how to go on due to the breakdown of the scene of action (Heidegger 1962/2008; see also Wittgenstein 1953). In the previous example, the problem escalated to include first senior assembly workers, then process engineers, then R&D and finally marketing and even customers until the problem was solved and dependent on who and how many were affected.

This chain of interactions – the designed organization setup – where one after another takes on the role of the resourceful caretaker until the problem is solved effectively shows how the collective mind is engaged when individuals encounter problems within a mindful organization. First one tries to solve it by oneself, but if a solution does not present itself then the problem escalates, and other people are step-by-step recruited to solve the issue. These organization setups were purposively designed to maintain and re-establish a collective mind as effectively as possible, an intelligent and mutual course of action that dealt with the situation in a timely and fitting fashion. Knowledge of such organization setups arguably provided trust in the scene of action, that one was not alone with the problems when and if such occurred.

As discussed in Part III and shown above, when it came to coordination and formation of the collective mind, interaction setups which built on scripted asymmetric Parent-Child interactions were eschewed and Adult-Adult encounters mostly appreciated. The issue was most often to form the collective mind at the “right level” (see mindful agent) so that individual agents and teams had discretion and autonomy on their own level of expertise while larger policy issues were solved higher up the company hierarchy. At its best, this practice of many purposively designed organization setups most likely satisfied a combination of the resourceful caretaker and mindful agent relational frames simultaneously.

The mindful organization relational frame is good to understand as an ordered mix of the implicit priorities and preferences in organization setups and in the ideal setups that enact the mindful organization’s moral orientation. In familiar situations organization setups are
enacted, and in novel circumstances one’s sense of the ideal setup is enacted, guided by the moral orientation. There can however occur situations in which there is some tension between the organization and ideal setups. In mindful organizations the scene of action is presumed to work with intelligence and with a proper moral orientation. It takes effort to accomplish and at times breaks down due to unforeseen circumstances or because of sudden relationally uncoordinated actions.

The design of organization setups can solve some issues, but they can also create obstacles to the enactment of ideal setups. This is the implicit difficulty in the mindful organization relational frame. Coordination and the standing agreements they stand on are purposive in the sense that they contain implicit priorities, which also means that other concerns – even situationaly more pressing priorities – can be deprioritized. A manager recounted the problems with the change in how “sustain”-projects were being handled after the so-called improvement in the organization setup (see Part III):

“It [the new organization setup] rather tightly dictates what designers do. It takes away some of their freedom and some of them experience the situation so that they are more confined in terms of what they can and cannot do. In my mind and in terms of workload the process is a good guarantee that the work that gets done is what the business unit actually wants. [...] In one of our plants, people whine that they find it difficult to get answers from our designers to basic questions, which are nonetheless important to them. The perspective of what’s important gets lost in communication. [...] It doesn’t come across to the designers how important the issues are [on the factory floor]. This prioritization process is partly to blame. With so much to do and if you have a terrible load on, you easily concentrate only on what’s been [officially] prioritized. They [the unofficial requests] can be a really small and quick but crucial [and timely] issues for production.”
Manager#50

Tight coordination of work through organization setups could erode an organizational members sense of autonomy and self-directedness (Deci et al. 2017), thus their ability to form interaction setups according to their own judgement as mindful agents. The organization setup could overrule their sense of a situationally specific ideal setup in order to maintain a mindful organization. The design of organization setups could both limit enactment of the mindful agent frame and go against members’ implicit expectations that others would act mindfully in unexpected situations. In these cases, the organization setups could paradoxically impede what they were designed to accomplish, wellbeing generative relational coordination and relational balance. In these cases, the situation that the organization setups were designed for and the ongoing situation were at odds with each other. With the new “sustain” organization setup, one could no longer expect designers to use self-discretion and make prudent exceptions to the organization setup even if the situation would have warranted such actions.

A similar sort of ambiguity about purpose and priorities could arise in situations where there was no organization setup to manage priorities and to formulate a joint course of action. Some organizational members had multiple units and managers for whom they provided internal services, which could give rise to a local breakdown in the collective mind. These breakdowns were often exemplified by the lack of mutual priorities:
“One problem with a matrix organization is prioritization. If everyone is like ‘this is important, prioritize this’ or requests ‘I’ve promised him this by then and then’ and ‘forget that, this is more important’ in this style. Well it becomes somewhat...try to use your own judgement in a situation like that. If you please someone you displease another.” Employee#40

There were also organization setups that were experienced as deliberately backbreaking – they had other priorities than what some considered prudent for the situation – that the formation of an intelligent collective mind in certain cases took too much effort and time, which was far from ideal considering the situation. The following case description about investment decisions provides an apt illustration:

In one division most managers complained that investment decisions always took too long to make and were made really high-up in the organization. In asking about it from a senior manager I got the following account: “With investments with capital expenditure you have to fill a mountain of templates here and there and go here and there, present it to the [division] group. The decisions are made on a group-level and everybody has something to say and have their objections. And then you go back and remake your templates and so on. If you for instance need a machine right now you can’t get it that fast, it takes two-three months to go through this process again and again to get it done. [...] Decision-making has been taken too high. All big decisions need to be argued. It takes enormous amounts of energy just to produce a completely obvious decision. [...] I think they’ve intentionally made the process so backbreaking that no one does this unless they really really have to.” Senior Manager#51

In sum, coordination and alignment of actions within Techcorp Finland as well as Techcorp transnational were effortful and conscious accomplishments. Implicit ideal and organization setups were employed, designed and re-designed to tackle recurring issues of forming the collective mind of the organization whilst giving birth to wellbeing generative relational coordination and a mutual sense of relational balance. The organization setups could be in the background of everyday action, akin to standard operating procedures one could rely on in vexing situations. In the background of everyday work, they provided trust and security (see Edmondson 1999; Kahn 2001).

However, in many cases, there was no organization setup to rely on or the organization setup was not ideal considering all aspects and recurring circumstances. In these cases, the organization setup seemed to prevent situated practical judgement about wellbeing generative relational coordination and thus cause imbalances in the agent-act-scene triad. Put differently, the mindful organization relational frame and its implicit moral orientation has its own perception of what kind of interaction setup would represent ideal relational coordination and relational balance in a mindful organization given the circumstances at hand. Under particular circumstances these ideal setups together with their implicit preferences of relational coordination and relational balance could become mismatched with an already established organization setup. In these cases where there was setup misalignment between the ideal setup and the organization setup, the designed mindlessness of the organization itself could be blamed.
16.5.1 The mindless organization

When the mindful organization relational frame and consequently the “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993) with its scene of action broke down at Techcorp Finland – intelligent and moral action became obscured – the moral blame was not always directed at leaders or employees, it could be directed at the design of the organization. Thus even organization setups could be thought of as the source of immorality and a contributing factor to the disorder in relational balance. Entwined organization setups could cause relational disorientation. The enactment of positional proficiency and relational affirmation would in these cases require that an exception would be made to the organization setup, and thus reach relational balance in a situationally prudent manner. Interestingly, collective mindlessness could occur in reverse order. In an unexpected situation with no organization setup or equivalent standing agreement in place, mindlessness could be caused by not reflecting on or enacting an ideal setup aligned with the moral orientation of the mindful organization. In these kinds of cases mindful agents seemed particularly mindless of the consequences of their actions.

The following case description illustrates an everyday breakdown of the collective mind, when a situation arose that was not covered by a prior “standing agreement” (Searle 1995) and consequently there was no established organization setup to handle the situation. As a consequence, some employees, due to the ambiguity inherent in the situation, treated themselves to “positive freedoms” (Berlin 2013b) or “deontic” rights (Searle 2009) others did not, causing misalignment and arousing distrust between conscious moral agents. The following case description is an apt case of such disorder:

It was rather generally considered bad if manufacturing employees were treated unequally or if they treated themselves to individual rights merely by assuming instead of asking. Organization setups and other agreements often in the form of rules and regulations were important and considered solutions to concrete cases of injustice. Unclear rules and miscommunication were generally considered bad management. It was known to be an issue of unclear rules and miscommunication if employees could more or less inadvertently assume unequal rights or draw on ignorance for their own personal benefit. This practice was of course considered unfair by those who assumed less and preferred to ask or act in concert with others. Some issues sprung up rather quickly. In the worst case one manager could say one thing, from HR came a different answer, and the next day HR could have changed their mind. Who you asked and if you asked played a role in determining the right course of action. Temporary lack of clarity about the proper course of action caused much aggravation to manufacturing team supervisors as they felt that did not have the deontic right to resolve the issues there and then and nonetheless were forced to take a stand without any clear guidelines to lean on. (Team supervisor#41)

In these kinds of situations “representing” the collective mind (Weick & Roberts 1993) by formulating a sense of proper and improper course of action could be difficult for managers, especially if people were of multiple minds about the situation. Such situations could be stressful for the managers because they were expected to be the informed tour guides who knew the scene of action, and yet a novel situation could arise so quickly that there was not necessarily time to consult upper management about the rules and priorities in such instances. One could feel pushed by the Children to take the role of Parent and make a decision, which could be overturned later on. Consequently, there was the added risk of losing “face” (Goffman 1967) if
one took a stand and got it wrong. Especially in manufacturing, situations with unclear rules were considered situations of mismanagement that tore the organization apart. In those unexpected situations where there was a crack in the designed rules and the locally established “deontic powers” (Searle 2009) to form new temporary rules, which consequently undercut well-being generative relational coordination within the organization. And many were viewed as acting on self-serving interests. One can say that the shared agent-act-scene triad broke apart, or more precisely, agents were seen as breaking away from the co-constructed triad with its implicit sense of relational coordination and relational balance. When the collective mind became disputed or unclear, individual agents began to stand out as mindless agents misaligned with each other and the collective mind. Importantly, in some cases these situations could be recounted as situations of mismanagement and a lack of proactive “organizing” (Orlikowski 2002) instead of blaming individual persons or managers.

Another insightful example of a breakdown of the collective mind was during statutory cooperation negotiations leading to downsizing and significant reorganizations. The statutory eight-week process took a toll on wellbeing generative relational coordination and consequently was an explicit issue to most interviewees at Techcorp Finland. For those not familiar with Finnish work legislation, employee cooperation negotiations is a process of negotiation between employee and employer representatives that take a minimum of eight weeks and are mandatory if employees are to be let go on economic or production related grounds in larger companies. In the official announcement that negotiations will be initiated, it is always made clear which units and thus roughly who and how many are considered part of the planned reductions. An often-heard comment was that it always “sucks” when the announcement is made. A manager gave a somewhat more refined analysis of the event and its repercussions:

“When statutory employee cooperation negotiations are announced everyone is afraid, naturally. [...] It is nonetheless always a shock to everyone close to the ones who are fired. ‘Why that person?’ And then comes as a second phase: ‘Who is going to take over the work?’ And ‘Can we just leave the work undone? No. So what does that mean?’ – This kind of increase in the workload ensues when people are fired. [...] It’s a mess, especially if no one can do the work and it leaves a vacuum. Those are the worst. It’s quite a mess [...] There are cases when the workload can be handled, people are transferred, the workload is reduced, work is prioritized, and projects are cancelled. Then it’s not an issue anymore. It depends.” Manager#29

This quote shows how layoffs lead to problems of coordination and prioritization due to a sudden “vacuum” in handling of particular duties. Coordination in general – accountability, predictability and common understanding (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009) – tended to become obscured. Before the priorities were re-organized and a “common understanding” of what was done and how was established (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009), agents could find it difficult to figure out an intelligent and fitting course of action. Importantly, at the same time with the relative breakdown in relational coordination the previously secure and trusted scene of action became riddled with fear and suspicion.

Another manager described the statutory negotiation process very concisely:
“First comes the sorrow; ‘okay now this happened.’ Then comes the anger about ‘damn, I got more work!’ And then comes the ‘Fine, this is what we’ll have to get by with.’ But that takes a long time.” Manager#27

A team supervisor lamented the fact that layoffs mean that there is less help available. The enactment of established organization setups, the mindful agent and the resourceful caretaker relational frames could become impeded, because there were fewer hands available to enact the previously designed setups and corresponding duties:

“It always nevertheless feels bad, even if it concerns some department that supports us then it immediately affects us as well. If for instance R&D is laid off then it immediately affects us, we can’t get any help from them.” Team Supervisor#43

There are probably multiple reasons to dislike layoffs and the statutory negotiation process. Looking at the issue from the point of view of the mindful organization relational frame, some general insights can be suggested. Here we take the view that the statutory cooperation negotiation process is a form of organization setup that leads to a temporary breakdown in the collective mind and in relational disorientation, thus leading to an outcome that is considered antithetical to what is expected of organization setups. Organization setups are commonly expected to provide wellbeing generative relational coordination and to enable a shared sense of relational balance; they are generally not expected to break these qualities and cause confusion within the scene of action.

The cooperation negotiations instigate a relational imbalance by forcing an unwanted situation and a Parent-Child interaction setup on the employees. Lack of information and a collective mind give rise to relational disorientation. The situation is subsequently dealt with through novel efforts of coordination, and then a novel sense of shared relational balance is sought with the workers that remain in the company. It can thus be considered a deliberately enacted special case about relationally accomplished unbalancing and rebalancing – dramatic opening, handling and the closing of the drama – of the agent-act-scene triad (see Part IV).

Statutory cooperation negotiations offered particularly intensive “emotional episodes” (Goldie 2009). Upon being downsized it is rather clear that decision-makers including managers were no longer acting as resourceful caretakers for all of the employees. They in a sense thus broke an implicit agreement and relational bond between employers and employees. On these occasions and following their aftermath many employees felt a decrease in general “trust” towards management. The general sentiment amongst factory workers, for example, was that some senior managers or ‘father management’ in general had caused harm upon particular members of the organization. To harm someone within the same organization went against the moral fiber and basic idea of a shared collective mind and its mutually sought-after ends. Albeit the actions to downsize were apprehended as within the legal rights of the executives, many nonetheless felt that their actions were morally condemnable. Employees and managers by far and large had alternative readings of these events, which is to say that the scene of action and its “frame” for the events were vastly dissimilar (Goffman 1974). There was no collective mind to help interpret the process and the outcomes during and immediately after the statutory cooperation negotiations.

To my understanding, one aspect that was implicitly condemned was the separation of minds in the form of a breakdown of the caretaker-cared for dyadic relationship that often formed the
nexus between an employee and the collective mind. The breakdown of the relationship and thus of the mutually agreed upon collective mind was unilaterally broken by ‘father management’ by initiating the negotiations. Employees point of view was often the following: they had done their work according to prevalent agreements and expected to be treated fairly for their efforts. According to the prevalent moral orientation, employees’ actions were considered a source of prosperity for the organization. All of a sudden it was not.

The secure and trusted “assumptive world” had broken down (Janoff-Bulman 1992). The instigation of the negotiation process was an action which in itself caused divisions and relational disorientation within the organization, in which one was forced to question one’s “identification” (Ashforth et al. 2008; Burke 1950) and its concomitant “world of experience” (Oakeshott 1933/2015). As Burke (1950/1969) notes, identification implies division. Once identification is not with a shared collective mind of the organization, if the situation is such that the collective mind has recently been deliberately broken down like during and immediately after the negotiations, then understandably divisions within the organization arise.

During the negotiations the collective mind became ostensibly disputed and many had trouble figuring out what was intelligent action by their part, especially during the negotiations. The announcement of the negotiations aroused forth informal talks in corridors and around the organization. What was done, by whom and why became shrouded. Relational disorientation thrived. The collective mind became fragmented and disputed. In other words, the background or the scene of action within the organization became ambiguous. It was often commented as lack or unavailability of relevant information. Informed tour guides could not always be of help, often because of legal restrictions or lack of information, decisions or coordination.

One coping strategy was to just mind one’s own business and keep working with one’s immediate colleagues within a narrowed scene of action. No one wanted to get noticed during the negotiations, either for being unproductive or for trying to impress father management, which seemed to be the two extreme alternatives. Such a situation in which one did not want to communicate anything, was of course an impossible act (see a grammar of management). There was not a shared understanding of relational balance in place, which meant that it was difficult to impossible to safely formulate a course of action that could not be seen as somehow unfitting or unintelligent. The safety net of a shared scene of action accompanied with a collective mind was temporarily unavailable.

The breakdown of the scene of action within Techcorp Finland meant that acts became ambiguous (act-scene ratio, Burke 1945). One could say that there was a lack of a collective mind and its interpretive orientation (Schein 1992) and a lack of understanding of what minds were at play that had given rise to the negotiations. There was a deficit of information. Employees could not be given what they needed to make sense of what would be an intelligent course of action during the negotiations (cf. Weick 1993). Without a collective mind there was confusion, speculation and active interpretation of all manners of communication to create a mind, i.e. sensemaking about the scene of action (Weick 1993; 1995a). Even a senior managers posture could be interpreted as a significant indicator of what was going on. The information that was lacking, I suggest, pertained to the formation of a collective mind that would break the ongoing relational disorientation.

The decisions pertaining to whom was let go could afterwards be suspected to have had hidden agendas of getting rid of elderly employees and troublemakers who dared to express “snags”, meaning they were frequently of discordant mind with the minds of senior management (see setup planning). This shows how the breakdown in collective mind was seen as a
Parent-Child interaction setup forced upon the employees that broke the resourceful caretaker relational frame. For some, because of the statutory negotiation setup between employee and employer representatives the negotiations seemed to be a reminder of Marxian class struggle in which employees and employers are by definition on opposing sides (Giddens & Held 1982). This framing was inconsistent with a shared collective mind. Consequently, during statutory cooperation negotiations a temporary and limited breakdown of the collective mind was evident.

In these situations the historically well-known moral paradox of a benevolent sovereign or in this case a resourceful caretaker became tangible: A resourceful caretaker was beneficial to an employee as long as the caretaker was trusted to serve the employees interests and understandings, but that could turn around if and when the caretaker at times and due to the situation at hand cared first for the collective and only secondly for some of its individual members (Berlin 1997; Machiavelli 1513/1995; see also Margolis & Molinsky 2008; Nussbaum 2001). In other words, senior management can at times be forced to make difficult and morally contestable decisions – “necessary evils” – that go against the preferences and interests of particular members of the organization (Margolis & Molinsky 2008). In these cases, the shared collective mind is deliberately broken for the benefit of a new collective and its good. It has been known since Antiquity and especially since the establishment of city-states that those in ruling positions may have to make moral choices in which there is not an unequivocal moral warrant available (Berlin 1997; see also Nussbaum 2001). It would also seem that conscious moral agents and especially senior managers can and do learn to cope and perform well with such choices (Annas 2011; Aristotle 2005; Margolis & Molinsky 2008).

Nevertheless, that experiences associated with the breakdown of the collective mind afterwards required talks and numerous interactions where all agents once again felt empowered, a sense of self-efficacy was restored, the rules of relational economics were re-established, and all were included in the collective mind once again (Bandura 1982; Biron et al. 2009; Schein 2009). The relationship setups were reaffirmed, and relational disorientation ceased (Goffman 1961b). Following the negotiations, often the relational bond of caretaker-cared for seem to require “repairing” (Gottman 2007) especially given the previously aroused suspicions and distrust.

It would seem that a separation of minds in an organization and Parent-Child interactions are in themselves considered morally bad. It was “politics”, “selfish”, “dictation”, “for financial benefit” or the like. These were actions that were by default evaluated as counter to a collective mind because it did not take the minds of all the Children into consideration. The statutory cooperation negotiations had in other words the effect of instigating a series of Parent-Child interactions that overwhelmed extant relationship and organization setups. A lot happened to employees’ “Me” without the “I” having much to say about it (Mead 1934/2015). People within the organization were often in such cases suddenly assigned more work and because it was the result of unilateral action by management it was often taken as inconsiderate orders. And inconsiderate by definition implies not caring for or taking into consideration the minds of all involved parties or circumstances (Ryle 1949/2000). Only with time and through multiple interactions, reorganization, and reprioritization that re-established a mutually agreed upon collective mind with its priorities and course of action, was the relational imbalance overcome.

102 According to Berlin (1997) it was Machiavelli who managed to bring forth this moral paradox to the level of self-evidence. As a consequence, it essentially broke one proclaimed dream of the Enlightenment; that there could be one and only one eternal, universal and right moral code to a civilization.
and the incident setup closed. As many commented, this took a lot of coordination and time, which shows what mending of the collective mind tends to require. And for some employees, the incident setup was never closed, which perpetuated a sense or relational imbalance and disengagement in setup planning.

A final and extended case description about the mindless organization relational frame is arguably the most perplexing single case in this study. This example showcases the kinds of complexities a qualitative metatheory and methods are able to bring forth in the form of a “hard case” (Nussbaum 2001). To any student of modern-day organizations or with familiarity of them it may be unfathomable how one could design an organization to engender systemic well-being degenerative relational coordination. How could one intentionally accomplish such a design if one for some reason wanted to? At times reality trumps the imagination.

I came to the conclusion that such degenerative relational coordination can be accomplished through entangled organization setups that in themselves provoke relational disorientation. My amazement was heightened by the fact that in a division of Techcorp transnational the design seemed inadvertent and yet everyone I interviewed who were familiar with the situation thought that nothing could be done about it. In this sense, this case is also an example of a contemporary tragedy (see Nussbaum 2001). This example of a hard case builds upon insights in organizational culture studies:

“With growth and success organizations evolve subgroups which evolve subcultures; if those subcultures are not aligned, if they begin to conflict with each other, such conflicts are the greatest source of systems pathology.” (Schein 2006: 297)

The following account cannot unfortunately be shown through direct quotes without serious risk of breaching interviewee confidentiality and for this reason I have decided to first state its design elements and then its more generic “formal elements” (Kovesi 1967). These design elements should be understood as a summary of innumerable interaction setups and how those were interrelated. Interviewees, based on their judgement about the state of affairs understood that the formal elements were related, but could not pinpoint where it all went wrong. It was nonetheless obvious to them that the design itself was to blame. As will soon be shown, the reason why it is difficult to pinpoint where it went wrong is that it wasn’t a single root cause but a set of formal elements that were entangled and in unison engendered the “the chaotic situation,” as one interviewee described it. This is a classic theme in tragedies, how different rationalities and circumstances become entangled and form a “hard case” to crack (Nussbaum 2001).

In one of Techcorp Finland’s divisions the organization was such that stress and frustration was the norm rather than the exception. Interestingly, managers on several levels in the corporate hierarchy were at its locus. Some managers were outright pessimistic about the future of the business due to the design of the organization and how the organization setups and coordination operated on a day-to-day basis. To talk about the “chaos” was in itself forbidden. The problems and mindlessness of it all were actively silenced by upper management through implicit threats of what was and was not beneficial to one’s career within the company. Some of the “formal elements” (Kovesi 1967) that were recounted were accepted and taken for granted characteristics of a contemporary international business environment. Others less so
and consequently heavily criticized. The following characteristics were presented and corrob- 
orated by multiple informants:

1. Decision-making about such as goals and resources was strictly confined to upper eche- 
lons of management, to executives at Techcorp transnational. Resolution of conflicting 
interests was thus made almost impossible on small or local issues such as those con- 
cerning business units. At the level of Techcorp transnational the small issues were no 
longer understandable and thus decontextualized into generic numbers about single 
business decisions. In many cases the decision and the situated problem were detached 
from each other due to the organization setup for investment decisions. Numbers were 
considered pertinent and other situational details devalued in the design for the deci- 
sion-making process.

2. Business units were given practically impossible and furthermore contradicting goals, 
such as increase turnover, market share, gross margin and EBIT\(^{103}\), and decrease capi- 
tal expenditure. The goals were numbers to a very detailed degree, for example, to the 
level of products and product lines. Goals were tightened each year without exception 
and thus did not take grass root knowledge about products or clients into account, 
about what was and was not considered possible by knowledgeable members at the 
grassroot level of the organization. That is to say, the goals were considered unreason- 
able, did not take relevant circumstances into account, and at times were too specific to 
actually do what was in the best interest of the overall business. The numeric goals were 
distributed downwards to smaller units and to managers who could personally or as a 
unit have conflicting goals. Internal rivalry at the lowest level was even encouraged by 
some senior managers. Each should reach their targets regardless of contradictions on 
personal or unit level.

3. Resolution of contradictions occurred only through much effort and on a case-by-case 
basis either within the matrix structure or above it at the division level. Contradicting 
goals that businesses and managers had often remained unresolved on a policy level.

4. The goals were short-term extending a year at best as a result of the annual budget 
process. Long-term interests of the business were de-emphasized. According to several 
managers this was due to the fact that career development for upper executives was 
easier through short-term efficiency gains than through long-term development of 
technological capabilities. Others remarked that a short-term span focused on effi- 
ciency was typical for the type of business the division was in, but did not fit with the 
particular business unit in Techcorp Finland which was more dependent on technolog- 
ical capabilities.

5. The organization had done away with formal decision-making authority at lower levels 
by organizing the division and businesses as a matrix structure. All managers working 
within the matrix had to collaborate because their personalized goals vastly exceeded 
their personal authority. The personalized goals and the coordination of efforts thus 
required personal lobbying and influencing across structural divides. Within the matrix 
persons had conflicting goals and no formal authority to resolve conflicts. The manag- 
ers were “playing a matrix by resolving issues incredibly low which nonetheless could 
[unexpectedly] escalate really high” as one manager remarked.

6. Managers had personalized goals based on short-term business unit goals. Personal- 
ized goals could contradict the long-term interests of the company, as the managers

\(^{103}\) Earnings Before Interest and Taxes.
saw it. Within the matrix managers felt they were in a position to either maximize their career and thus the short-term business goals or do what they thought was best for the business in the long-term at their personal expense and at the risk of getting fired for poor short-term performance. For example, regularly maximizing short-term business goals at the expense of R&D was generally considered long-term suicide. Long-term interest of the business was seen as the interest of the employees which made the issue into a heightened moral dilemma for the managers.

7. Managers on different levels tried to decide what they could within the matrix in order to avoid standstills and disorganization. Senior managers could and did demand, praise and blame their subordinate managers for everything that took place within the matrix and thus also for their inability to influence others to adopt the senior managers preferred priorities. Even upper executives recruited personal agents from within the matrix to get it their way. It would seem that even upper executives felt as individuals somewhat powerless to get any hold of the happenings within the matrix.

8. Single executives above the matrix could at times overrule consensus decision stemming from within the matrix. Managers at different levels could decide on issues concerning the organization under them, just to be overruled later by another manager or by a decision a level above. That some managers were in Finland but most directors and executives in the U.S. added to this element. This indetermination and continuous making and breaking of hard reached agreements and coordination was a source of much frustration.

9. It was actively prohibited to talk about the inconsistencies between the goals, the long-term unsustainability of the short-term goals or the problems with the centralized decision-making. This effectively inhibited talk about the real state of the organization and the long-term sustainability of the business.

Some of the symptoms that this formal structure lead to were: Lack of ownership within the matrix, felt helplessness, felt inability to influence, demotivation, exhaustion, lack of transparency about decisions and motives, inability to prioritize, fragmented understanding of what was going on, much influencing through personal relationships and authoritative demeanor, micromanagement, case-by-case compromises, misalignment between personal and business unit goals, risk aversion due to short-term EBIT maximization, communication through numbers as the shared language of significance, snowball email-chains and huge meetings just to make even small decisions within the organization, managers conveying ideas such as goals to their employees which they did not themselves find possible or good for the long-term interest of the business, and a disbelief in future prospects and borderline fatalism (“things just occur”, “nothing can be done”, “I can’t change anything”).

What puzzled the managers was the apparent economic efficiency of the business unit. The business unit was very efficient in short-term EBIT maximization, which was the deliberate strategy of the business division (Mintzberg & Waters 1985). This caused confusion amongst several managers because they felt that in the long-term the business was “running into a wall” without the possibility of even talking about it. The truth of the matter in all likelihood remains to be seen. If the business is still successful in some years with this kind of (dis)organization, it will be of much interest how it is actually possible. If it is unsuccessful, then one can perhaps call it foreseeable due to the lack of coordination and frequent breakdown of the collective mind in the organization.
The formal elements of this organization can be characterized as follows:

1. Conflicting goals in the form of numbers were given to a single organization, which effectively disabled a single and obvious intelligent solution to almost any issue. The numbers had no mind to them in the form of scenic understanding, intelligent acts, most important goals and so forth. The mind of how the numbers should be reached was moved downwards in the corporate hierarchy, for the middle managers to bring the solutions and suggestions to the table.

2. Conflicts occurred between different individuals at different times due to conflicting goals and lack of a single authority, organization setup or other standing agreement that would provide an orientation to how the matter should be handled, how to think about the matter or how to prioritize conflicting goals. Individual minds inevitably and frequently clashed, and clashes could escalate unpredictably due to lack of agreement on how to settle conflicts.

3. The inability to resolve conflicts was actively furthered by removing formal authority and other deontic powers from the level at which the collective mind was supposed to be formed. There was a lack of collective mind and corresponding moral orientation and warrants to settle arguments in a directed, aligned and coordinated fashion. That the strategy-in-use was the maximizing of EBIT meant that all decisions were more or less short-term ad hoc decisions and all agreements to how individual minds were reconciled were temporary and disputable in the next ad hoc case.

4. The conflicts and their systemic character were actively silenced by upper management.

This case of designed wellbeing degenerative relational coordination was a tragic and complex case where positional proficiency is actively thwarted, relational invalidation occurs frequently and setup misalignment were characteristic. This hard case and its entanglements perplexed me for quite a while and took many interviews to sort out as to its character and composition. The frustration, anger, and helplessness expressed in many interviews about the organizing at one of Techcorp Finland’s divisions cannot be accurately conveyed through the detached words of academic discourse, a tragic drama would most likely do it more justice (Nussbaum 2001).

Managers, who had the implicit obligation to make sense of the organization and its collective mind, thought the organization was in many ways mindless. Relational disorientation seemed frequent. The managers could not accomplish the formation of a benevolent “assumptive world” and predictable “act-scene ratio” (Burke 1945), where one had a secure moral “footing” that would provide some sense of coherence about the right thing to do in a given situation (Goffman 1981). The scene of action within the particular division within Techcorp transnational did not provide much of a “holding environment” (Kahn 2001), “trust” in the organization (Luhmann 1988) or “psychological safety” (Edmondson 1999). The managers were frequently and unpredictably engulfed in interaction setups where their relational position was devoid of any relationally trustworthy anchors. The scene of action varied restlessly due to instability of the collective mind.

It is worth noting that the formal characteristics of this organization are astoundingly similar to the entangled complexities in a Greek tragedy (Nussbaum 2001) and the characteristics of “double bind” and schizophrenia in a single individual as described by Bateson (1972). As in the double bind theory of schizophrenia: there were several minds in communication and contradictory injunctions that could not be satisfied with any single solution. It is like trying to
satisfy two or more moral frames of reference with incompatible moral maxims (see Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

In this case there was a primary injunction that all numeric goals should be reached; thus, to form a situated and fitting mind and bring about a corresponding set of actions to how the numeric goals are reached. A secondary injunction that all and therefore even contradictory goals should be reached regardless of the circumstances is incompatible with the primary injunction. A tertiary injunction that the collective mind must be formed through consensus by multiple individuals with contradictory goals. A quaternary injunction that the business decisions are made ad hoc by those not involved in the consensus decisions to form the collective mind is antithetical to the tertiary injunction. And finally, a quinary injunction that none of the contradictions could be talked about in the open and thus unentangled and resolved on a systemic level.

The apparent disorganization, relational disorientation, and relentless shifts in the collective mind was however spread out across multiple persons and in an innumerable amount of interaction setups at different occasions. There were also time lags between when contradictions and corresponding breakdowns and novel ad hoc formations in the collective mind occurred. Consequently, agreements and commands could at times be formed and followed without problems. The situation was in other words livable but hopeless (Watzlawick 1983). As the interviewees and later on I understood the situation, it could not be solved by anyone I interviewed according to the premises that were spelled out. This case is, I reckon, an example of an inadvertent organization design that engendered wellbeing degenerative relational coordination through the active breakdown and continuous instability of a collective mind, resulting in frequent relational disorientation. It is a complex and tragic real-life “hard case” (Nussbaum 2001).

There were multiple organization setups that contradicted each other, resulting in a perpetual relational knot. The ongoing breakdown of the collective mind did not allow for positional proficiency, relational affirmation or setup alignment nor a shared sense of relational balance due to conflicting goals. On the contrary, relational coordination gave rise to accusations of positional incompetence, relational invalidation and frequent setup misalignment. If there are contradictory goals and agreements, it could be said to be a problem of “direction” and “alignment” of the organization (Drath et al. 2008). In short, the organization was relationally coordinated to actively and frequently engender situations of collective mindlessness.

This case in my mind shows how disabling the absence and breakdown of a collective mind can be within an organization and its interrelated web of relations. The absence of a shared mind can be an active and systematic accomplishment due to the misaligned design of several organization setups and despite everyone’s best intentions (Schein 2006). The managers were in a situation where they could not merely do what they were told, because they were not commanded by a heedful mind and a concomitant course of action but by mindless numbers. They thus had to juggle the positions of Parent, Adult and Child in the organization whilst attempting, at times successfully and at other times unsuccessfully, to form and maintain some sensible collective mind *in medias res* (Shipp & Jansen 2011). For the managers, organizational mindlessness and the lack of a moral orientation to lean on were arguably wholly entwined. Due to the fact that a collective mind could not be formed or maintained, the organization and its design was often assessed to be serving some at the cost of others. It was thought to be immoral as to its purpose. The managers were in a constant moral predicament because the
collective mind was not properly collective and consequently did not represent the interests of the collective as the managers saw it.
17. Discussion

The presented model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings finalizes our answer to the first research question: **What is the character of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings?**

In the theoretical Parts I, II and IV the conceptual and paradigmatic character of the studied phenomenon has been outlined and extensively elaborated. In Parts III and V, the empirical character of the specific phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings has been described. In Part III a generic relational structure and relational dynamics were unearthed.

Here in Part V, these considerations were integrated with the theoretical discussions in prior Parts and situated within a local setting with the help of two concepts: a relational frame that is in wellbeing generative relational coordination enacted in concert against the backdrop and in alignment with the collective mind of the organization.

The model of interactional wellbeing shows the kinds of elements that are involved in enacting interactional wellbeing: rules of civil conduct and face, generic abilities to read and form interaction setups, competence to intelligently align one’s actions with others and the collective mind, and the relational moral competence of balancing interaction setups in order to achieve co-constituted relational balance.

17.1 Wellbeing, practical moral reasoning, and organizing overlap

With the presented model, originally stemming from practical moral reasoning (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) but in this study expanded and utilized in conjunction with interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, the difficulties of everyday organizing and especially situated practical reasoning about wellbeing gains clarity. Similar to some recent relationally attuned studies, this study finds interactional wellbeing to be infused with how “organizing” is performed (Dutton et al. 2006; Kahn 2019; Weick et al. 2005), and “coordination” accomplished (Okhuysen & Bechky 2009).

It is well-known that a single person can have problems in sensemaking and typifying particular situations in order to know one’s way about the situation (Goffman 1974; Weick 1993; 1995a). A person may also have problems in pinpointing, creating and drawing upon an appropriate moral warrant and thus reaching an amicable conclusion for action (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001; Shon 1984; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). Once this model is expanded to encompass the joint reasoning of several persons, it becomes clear that the persons are so to say of one mind on a matter, if the case is “punctuated” and framed in a similar fashion (Burke 1945; 1984; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Goffman 1974; 1981; Keeney 1983; Watzlawick et al. 1974), the particulars of the case are understood with similar meaning and importance, and
the utilized moral warrants for action are similar.\textsuperscript{104} In this way the actions are seen as moral when in alignment with the commonly shared understandings in the local community (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Oakeshott 1991a; Rorty 1989). These understandings are a two-way street, they influence the agent and the agent can influence the communal understandings that constitute relational balance (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Macmurray 1960; Mead 1934/2015; Spinoza et al. 1997).\textsuperscript{105} This study argues that the collective mind can be perceived as a key “backing” (Toulmin 1958/2003) in this locally and historically grounded reasoning process within organizations.

The level of complication in practical reasoning about interactional wellbeing is increased further by, for example, adding more persons or intertwined circumstances to the dialogical reasoning process. Persons may have distinctly different knowledge backgrounds that contribute to dissimilar readings of situations and the significance of particulars of the situation. Consequently, shared reasoning that alters and forms a mutual sense of relational balance can take time and effort. Nonetheless, relational frames, as any frame for that matter, are not set in stone (Goffman 1974; Holt & Cornelissen 2014). Moral reasoning changes with the times and the local vocabulary and employed arguments (Holt 2006; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Perceived from this perspective, a “collective mind” (Weick & Roberts 1993) and the facets of “direction, alignment, and commitment” (Drath et al. 2008) are fragile and precious accomplishments of coordination and organizing (see Okhuysen & Bechky 2009; Weick et al. 2005).

This study adds to this understanding the notion that positional proficiency, relational affirmation and setup alignment are equally precious and fragile accomplishments constitutive of wellbeing generative relational coordination. This study suggests that when these forms of relational coordination are present, then interactional wellbeing and collective organizing are happily married. As the cases demonstrate, the consequences can be encompassing and dire if relational coordination and the formation and maintenance of a collective mind is burdened by complex circumstances and systematically misaligned “formal elements” (Kovesi 1967). With the helpful contrast of such extreme and unfortunately tragic real-life cases, the presence and sharing of mind in everyday interactions becomes easier to discern as an integral quality of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

One important facet of the expounded way of reasoning and understanding mind and interactions cannot be highlighted enough, which underscores the “pluralism” that is involved due to the sheer volume of different situations, interactions and persons (Berlin 2013b; Nussbaum 2001). The moral warrants and the knowledge used to render situations as typical kinds of situations where familiar relational frames should be enacted, are most often in the background and can vary on a case (see also Grint 2005). A person can be of one mind in one conversation and situation, and of another mind in another. An obvious point of this is that people can and do change their minds and perhaps even without noticing that the moral warrants or “framing” for their reasoning has altered (Goffman 1974). They can also entertain several closely related frames at once (Goffman 1974).

The more perplexing point is that utilized background knowledge to render a situation intelligible in one situation can be incompatible with another case, as in the examples of

\textsuperscript{104} Here I deliberately use the term “similar” instead of “same.” As the previous case examples show, an exact understanding of a case and the used moral warrants are rather difficult to pinpoint from a case description. Even if several persons agree with a presented case description and the suggested actions based on the description, it does not seem prudent to infer that the understanding of the case and its moral conclusions are exactly the same.

\textsuperscript{105} Morality and prudence, which where philosophically separated during the Enlightenment era search for universal moral principles, become united in situated action (Oakeshott 1991a; Rorty 1989).
incompatible moral maxims or values (see Berlin 1997; 2013b; Nussbaum 2001). There can occur, what I would call, knowledge entanglements (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick et al 1974). As the cases show, persons and organizations can become entangled in several incompatible formal elements, in a *relational knot*, at which point the establishment of a fitting personal mind and also collective mind can be seriously burdened. It is equivalent to trying to satisfy several and yet incompatible moral maxims or trying to satisfy several framings of a situation all at once. There is reason to believe that such pluralistic frames are perhaps impossible to entertain simultaneously, but instead may function as impetus for the construction of novel frames and fuel local and personal intellectual accomplishments (e.g. Burke 1945; Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Rorty 1989). At times leading to performed excellence in action (Annas 2011; Nussbaum 2001).

There are two other facets to the presented and empirically grounded theory on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings that are worth discussing in more detail. These concern (1) the significance and role of the direct supervisor or line manager for employee wellbeing, and (2) the collective mind as the background for enacted interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

17.2 The manager as co-creator of interactional wellbeing in organizations

The five relational frames accentuate the significance of the line manager and immediate supervisor for an employee’s wellbeing within the organization. In my experience and supported by the empirical material in the present study, it is well-known in organizations and amongst organizational members and often either reiterated or insinuated in workplace wellbeing studies focused on practical interventions (Danna & Griffin 1999; Hackman & Oldham 1980; Shain & Kramer 2004), that the direct line manager has perhaps an insurmountable significance to an employee’s wellbeing. This study and especially the relational frames throw some light on the issue with a novel and conceivably helpful vocabulary.

The presented model on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings situates the collective mind as a seminal backing for practical moral reasoning in organizations. Two particular relational frames, the *informed tour guide* and the *resourceful caretaker* relational frames, show how the line manager is an instrumental medium between an employee and the collective mind of the organization. The relational frame of the *mindful agent* also suggests that employees can, are expected to, and in most cases manage to form their own sense of the collective mind and what is appropriate in each situation. Taken together, these relational frames suggest that it is especially between the employee and his line manager where the confrontation builds about what is moral and appropriate conduct and reasoning in the organization. This is where morally significant, wellbeing generative and degenerative “framing contests” (Kaplan 2008) take shape (see also Holt & Cornelissen 2014).

As some of the explicated cases testify, the differences can be found in the interpretation of the collective mind. If there is a significant rift between an employee and his supervisor, on the level of “orientation” (Burke 1954/1984) instead of a single substantive issue, it is likely that an employee is thrown into a relationally constituted situation where he is constantly riddled by situations of relational imbalance and an unfitting orientation to solve the systematic predicament. The possibility of “smart compromise” may become blocked (Holt 2006). The practice and theory of psychotherapy suggests that there are some well-known ways out of this predicament, which pertain to (1) aesthetic “self-creation” (Rorty 1989; see Macmurray 1960;
O’Hanlon Wilk 1987; Wilk 2013), (2) directly molding the surrounding relational matrix (Seikkula & Arnkil 2006; Watzlawick et al. 1974; Spinoso et al. 1997), or (3) engaging in substantive dialogue where the dialogue is allowed to form a shared orientation to involved parties (Bohm & Peat 1987; Isaacs 1993; Mead 1934/2015). These three avenues for relational transformation are also highlighted by the threefold structure of relationality and need not be reiterated here.

In this study it has been argued that interactional wellbeing can in part be seen as a relational moral competence, a set of skills that is anchored in a familiar “community of practice” (Wenger 1998). Because wellbeing can be experientially learned and even taught in a casuistic sense (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), and because the reasoning process is rooted in a shared collective mind as this study suggests, there is no reason why interactional wellbeing as well as interactional ill-being and concomitant collective mindlessness could not be a “collective capability” in organizations (Liljus et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002). The striking differences between the studied business units at Techcorp Finland give reason to believe that this is the case.

In enacting and enabling this collective capability, the role of executives and especially middle managers is seminal. As interpreters, information gatherers and disseminators, and decision-makers, the middle managers are constantly engaged in maintaining, aligning, forming and subordinating to the collective mind of the organization. They are indeed moral actors (Holt 2006). This study also suggests that the executives that have the deontic powers to mold the formal elements of the organization have their role to play as designers of interaction systems, which I mean in the sense of collections of recurring and thus “formal” interaction setups (McEvily et al. 2014). If the mind of the organization is not adequately designed, this mindlessness may trickle down to destabilize the interaction setups and consequently burden the co-creation of relational balance within the organization.

As argued in Part II, with an adequately generic wellbeing vocabulary (e.g. Deci et al. 2017; Maslow 1987; Seligman 2011) where agency and purpose are merged into the vocabulary that consists of a handful of “god-terms” (Burke 1945), almost any real-life case can be made sense of through a feat of “redescription” (Rorty 1989). However, that does not mean that those vocabularies and theories are able to provide sufficient serviceability to deal with the situations for the conscious moral agents who are enmeshed in them (see e.g. Klein 1999; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). The vocabulary, theory and supporting understandings presented in this study stem from interviewees’ accounts and have been theorized based on empirical material directly related to organizing and the relational coordination between a line manager and his employees. It is therefore reasonable to suggest, that the presented theory may have some added value in the form of novel serviceability in the realm of practice, specifically the relationship between the employee and the manager, and organizing for wellbeing more broadly.

**17.3 The collective mind as the proximal scene for enacted interactional wellbeing**

According to the main theoretical prototype of Parent, Adult and Child interaction, in interactions between conscious moral agents the relational position one has is dependent on the position of the other; the object of one mind is the mind of the other and vice versa (see Part IV). According to this view of mind, the relevant background for the understanding of mind in

\[\text{Footnote 106: There is, consequently, good reason to be critical – to carefully scrutinize the merits and deficits – about the tendency to use god-terms in theorizing about the human condition. See Goldstein (1939/2000) for a more extensive account against the tendency of theoretical reductionism concerning the human “organism.”}\]
interaction is other minds (see Weick & Roberts 1993; cf. scene in Burke 1945). Interestingly, although mind is difficult to define or conceptually encapsulate in a formal sense (Ryle 1949/2000), it seems to be very easy for persons to describe events and incidents of their and other’s minds in interaction.

For persons who are part of an organization other minds are very concrete, self-evident and real albeit intangible and perhaps unintelligent to talk about directly or in isolation as substantive entities. The subject of study in the interviews – implicitly or explicitly – is mind(s) and what is used to study mind(s), according to the tenets of history-making, is a mind (Collingwood 1946/2014; Oakeshott 1933/2015). One claim of this study is that it is possible to use a single generic conceptual backdrop for interactions in the organization domain, the collective mind. This conceptual move, which draws on especially Heidegger’s (1962/2008) conceptual innovations that the scene can emit qualities of mind, allows some measure of useful generality to the case descriptions (Weick 1999). This is despite the fact that each interaction and encounter can be seen as unique and as an example of “once-occurrent life” (Bakhtin 1993). This is the magic of language (Berlin 2013b; Collingwood 1946; Kovesi 1967), which is utilized everyday by conscious moral agents in order to get their bearings and to act intelligently in their surroundings (Burke 1984; Goffman 1974).

In the presented cases how one mindfully used, presented, and communicated one’s mind, and equivalently took other’s minds into consideration and conveyed and translated the collective mind forward to subordinates or colleagues, was recognized as being of considerable importance to relational coordination in the studied organization. It was not only a question of organizing, but how issues were presented, discussed and agreed had a bearing on people’s sense of interactional wellbeing in the organization (see Holt 2006). What people used to get their bearings, the theoretical model of interactional wellbeing suggests, was their sense of how well relational balance was accomplished through relational coordination and against the backdrop of the collective mind. It was affected by how they and others participated in forming, maintaining and aligning their actions with the collective mind. It was a question of attunement and coordination with others and with the collective mind of the organization. These sensibilities and the intelligibility of action was at play in each interaction (Goffman 1967; 1974; Oakeshott 1991b; Weick 1993). This is what the empirics and the model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings suggest.

At Techcorp Finland it was not only a question of ‘what’ and ‘for what’ or in other words the content of mind, but whose mind, when and where, what had been taken into consideration in its formation, was there mind to begin with, and did people put and were they allowed to put their own minds into it to fit the circumstances of their situation. It was an ongoing interplay of minds in establishing, maintaining and forming the collective mind and thus enacting a shared overarching “purpose” (Burke 1945). The skillful use and communication of mind was an outstanding theme especially in the accounts given by middle and upper management (see Holt 2006), who at times had to be able to play multiple positions, for example a Child with a micromanaging senior manager and Adult to a subordinate regarding the selfsame issue.

In some cases, when mind was not used as self-authority its lack was perceived as a sign of being unmotivated, as a lack of ownership or as unskillful communication, a kind of unintelligent action. Although described through the conceptual lens of motivation it seemed somewhat of an inaccurate conceptualization even for the interviewees. Some had identified the phenomenon but could not find fitting words for it or more exactly for the quality that they wanted to make explicit. That persons organize their own work and fit it together with the work of others
can be considered the hallmark of intelligent organized action (Weick & Roberts 1993). That people in other words put their minds into it. It was something that was expected of people at Techcorp Finland and when it was lacking in someone’s actions it was a source of disorganization through lack or breakdown of coordination (Weick 1993).

As far as intelligent action in an organization is concerned, the mindful use of one’s own mind is inextricable from the minds and actions of others. Collective organizing is a relational accomplishment. Reasonable and intelligent organizing requires the use of one’s personal mind and fitting it with the collective mind. When the formation of a collective mind was not accomplished then it broke down. There was an overt parting of minds. Discordant actions were countered with resentment and complaint by others. A manifold of minds and discordant actions was considered bad without much further thought or specification. I judged such actions to have eroded the collective mind of the organization. Collective intelligence became lacking and individuals began to stand out as unheedful and self-serving individuals. Relational coordination broke down in conjunction with the collective mind of the organization.

At times the collective mind was deliberately broken by upper management, to form new constellations of the collective (see Berlin 1997; Machiavelli 1513/1995). The deliberate and accidental making and breaking of coordinated action and the collective mind thus lies at the center of designed and enacted interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. This understanding alongside the presented theoretical model and the dense network of theoretical prototypes it draws upon, provide a sufficiently detailed answer to the first research question that concerns the character of interactional wellbeing.
PART VI: CLOSING

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”
T.S. Eliot (Extract from Little Gidding)

To argue for the merits and contribution of an account is most often a delicate affair. Such claims are always to some degree disputable. The history of ideas has taught us that at times the contribution of some authors may come to be understood in their proper background only after centuries have passed, without implying that this account is or has aimed to be of the sort. History nonetheless teaches us that the claims to merit and contribution are always made against some historical backdrop and with some sort of “criteria” in mind (Toulmin 1958/2003). It is not necessarily the right backdrop or the right criteria which the author proposes for the discussion about contribution nor is the contribution in actual fact confined to only those backgrounds. As Rorty (1989: 73) states, “anything can be made to look good or bad by being redescribed.” Herein lies the reason for the everlasting uncertainty of a contribution.

The intention of this account has not been to pinpoint definitive gaps in some specific literature or to continue on an ongoing or particular discussion within, for example, management theory. Nor has this account attempted to present or solve an acknowledged problem within those discussions (e.g. Alvesson & Kärreman 2007; Alvesson & Sandberg 2011). Rather, this account has modestly tried to portray a standalone study, to break away from some typical paths of thought in an argued and orderly fashion in order to ascertain understanding of a particular phenomenon, with what I have deemed to be an intellectually adequate outlook. The mode of inquiry in this study has been dual, that is, a scientific and philosophical exploration where both methods have been used to strengthen the overall point of view.

The kinds of distorting and often unargued metaphysical assertions we find in the history of science may very well be at play in our current era and doing much to inhibit progress in the social sciences (Bateson 1972; Elias 1998). In this sense, this account has been benevolently critical about the current state of the science (Boas 1928/1986; Toulmin 2003). This study has accordingly attempted to reach back to the phenomenon and bring it into reasonable focus and understand interactional wellbeing in a fitting background and thereby identify the phenomenon in its everyday form. This account has hopefully managed to change how we understand wellbeing and remind of its everyday and commonsensical character. In thinking about wellbeing, it is all too easily forgotten that it can be also experienced as something salient, enlivened and actioned into being instead of being limited to a set of abstract properties of human nature.
18. General discussion

This study changes the way we perceive wellbeing in organizations. This study does not use common lenses for perceiving wellbeing, for example, like a biological, social, or economic phenomenon. Instead a novel meta-framework is presented for understanding wellbeing, the “dramatistic pentad” (Burke 1945). This framework cuts the cloth of empirical experience according to an alternative “grammar” and coordinates – agent, agency, act, scene, and purpose (Burke 1945). The present study depicts the empirical phenomenon of interactional wellbeing as a co-constituted and relational phenomenon that is enacted by conscious moral agents in organizational settings. By drawing on the presented meta-framework and its venerable intellectual lineage, this study argues that interactional wellbeing in organizational settings concerns the making and breaking of relational balance in organizations. This study highlights the significance of the designed and enacted interaction setups and relational frames for the wellbeing of organizational members.

During the course of this study an interdisciplinary interactional and relational perspective has been integrated and developed for the use of wellbeing research in organizational settings. The outlined theoretical perspective was subsequently utilized to investigate the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings in two separate encounters with the empirical material. The two exploratory case studies describe a relational structure common to interactions between conscious moral agents, show a set of relational dynamics that give rise to wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination in organizational settings, and integrate these findings into an empirically grounded theoretical model that connects employed relational frames with achieved relational balance in encounters. In all, this study maps a path of thought that begins from paradigms of wellbeing and ends in a situated understanding of how interactional wellbeing is enacted and experienced in organizational settings.

The employed frame-dialogical research strategy was designed for a philosophically mature and perhaps even somewhat saturated field of research that does not offer many empirical studies, as is the case with the interdisciplinary research field of interactional and relational scholarship. This study is a first example of how this tentative research strategy can be used (cf. Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008). After introducing the research questions and area of research, the strategy is to disrobe the conceptually mature approach to a bare bones main theoretical prototype, which is then equipped just enough to enable an insightful first encounter with the empirical material. After the first encounter the results are refined and elaborated anew with an extensive theoretical review that expands and enables a conceptually more advanced and second encounter with the empirical material. The sought-after end result is an empirically grounded theory which has emerged as a result of a dialogical process between the unique empirical material rich in specificity and general relational ideas that fit the purpose of the study. The theoretical frame or circumference of the study was thus expanded and narrowed several times during the dialogical process. In this study a combination of grounded
theory and case study methodology was used in conjunction with the two empirical encounters (Charmaz 2006; Yin 1994). In this study a case describes two different sorts of events. An individual encounter with innumerable individual transactions and a handful of relational moves, or as the state of affairs in an organizational unit, which is herein understood as an actively achieved accomplishment through numerous interdependent and systematically recurring interactions. The presented model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings is based on both types of case descriptions. The cases stem from an in-depth study into a knowledge-intensive organization, Techcorp Finland.

As the employed research strategy suggests, this study comprises of several Parts, all of which can be said to provide novel theoretical contributions. In Part I, the notion of wellbeing paradigms, the employed interactional and relational perspective, and pertinent streams of contemporary wellbeing research were discussed. Part II focused on the metatheoretical method of theoretical serviceability analysis and Burke’s (1945) “dramatistic pentad,” which were used to suggest a family of wellbeing paradigms. Common conceptual tendencies in wellbeing research were discussed to show how a linguistic form can accrue generality and powers of “redescription” (Rorty 1989).

Part III described the first encounter with the empirical material, crafting a general vocabulary about interactional wellbeing in organizational settings that revolves around interaction setups and relational coordination. Part IV complemented and extended the theoretical review and integration in prior chapters by connecting the employed relational perspective to its philosophical heritage stemming from Counter-Enlightenment philosophers and to the topic of history-making. A grammar of management was described to show the intricate network of ideas surrounding the relationally constituted act. And at the end of Part IV interactional wellbeing was positioned within a neo-Aristotelian stream of research where wellbeing is conceived of as a balance between different coordinates of the dramatistic pentad.

In Part V and thus the second encounter with the empirical material, a concise theoretical synthesis was provided and then utilized to coax forth five empirically grounded relational frames. The relational frames figure in a more encompassing theoretical model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, which is a product and end-result of the employed research strategy. The relational frames depict interactional wellbeing in organizational settings as a phenomenon concerning the co-constituted achievement of relational balance, which requires situated practical moral reasoning that is practiced against the local backdrop of the “collective mind” of the organization (Weick & Roberts 1993). The rest of this general discussion is dedicated to examining the contributions of this study in more detail.

In Part I of this study, it was argued that wellbeing is always approached from some metatheoretical standpoint on what represents wellbeing, which also affects the theory and argumentation through its underlying “linguistic form” (Burke 1945). This study presents a novel take on “paradigms” within organization theory (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Morgan 1997), by viewing paradigms as composed of differing linguistic structures that provide alternative “orientations” to the field of research (Burke 1984; see also Kuhn 1962/2012; Fleck 1979; Rorty 1989). In this study it has been suggested that the linguistic form of a study can furthermore be taken apart into smaller constituent parts, expressed as sets of simple proto-ideas and their composite theoretical prototypes (cf. Cornelissen & Kafouros 2008).

A main theoretical prototype was described as a key conceptual launchpad onto which other proto-ideas and theoretical prototypes can be connected to build a more encompassing theory
Part VI: Closing

and overarching perspective. The initial choice of main theoretical prototype most likely directs the subsequent research (Burke 1945; Kuhn 1962/2012), which underscores its significance in empirically grounded theory-building. The employed research strategy and especially its use in empirical research provides a rare example of the use of a conceptually attuned approach and how such an approach can be used in practice for the benefit of theory-building (see Cornelissen 2005; Oswick et al. 2011).

A key claim of this study is that wellbeing research would benefit from metatheoretical analysis. This claim is followed by the suggestion that the bulk of wellbeing scholarship can be beneficently and benevolently divided into different “paradigms” of wellbeing research (Kuhn 1962/2012). Burke’s (1945) “dramatistic pentad” – consisting of agent, agency, act, scene, purpose and their connecting ratios – was suggested as an eye-opening meta-framework for delineating different paradigms of wellbeing studies, by drawing forth which coordinates and ratios of the pentad are accentuated and which are as a consequence most likely neglected in different studies and areas of wellbeing scholarship. Consequently, this study argues that the full resourcefulness of Burke’s theorizing has not come to light in the social sciences and especially in organization scholarship. The argument in Part I boils down to the theoretical observation, which is not confined to wellbeing or organization research, that different combinations of dramaticistic emphasis and exclusion engender mutually distinct linguistic forms and thus research paradigms (Burke 1945; see also Kuhn 1962/2012).

In Part II of this study the method of theoretical serviceability analysis was introduced. It designates the type of metatheoretical analysis that distinguishes between research paradigms by assessing their characteristic linguistic form with the help of the dramatistic pentad. The gist of theoretical serviceability analysis is that those theories that noticeably feature, for example, “agency” and “act” are most likely better equipped to penetrate and offer useful insights to questions that feature or concern the same terms, in comparison to theories that, for instance, principally focus on the “agent” and thus largely omit “agency” and “act” (Burke 1945; see also Rorty 1989). According to this view, different paradigms and concomitant linguistic forms are geared toward divergent theoretical interests and purposes and consequently offer different levels of serviceability depending on how well the linguistic form of the theory sits with a particular subject of interest.

It was argued that wellbeing scholarship has room for and would benefit from more explicitly recognized wellbeing paradigms. Thus, from the deliberate use and development of alternative linguistic forms and the unique conceptual toolboxes these complementary paradigms have to offer. In practical terms, there are most likely a gamut of important theoretical and practical questions about wellbeing in general and about wellbeing in organizations in particular that merit the development of appropriate conceptual tools to adequately answer those questions. In this study the notion of wellbeing paradigms and the method of theoretical serviceability analysis were developed for this purpose. Furthermore, it was shown how linguistic forms tend to utilize very subtle conceptual transformations that enable conceptual circularity, which closes a linguistic form into a self-sufficient system of terms that through concise theoretical redescriptions is able to theorize of an entire range of human experiences, even with an extremely limited selection of concepts.\(^{107}\)

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\(^{107}\) This may be one reason why both practitioners and academics alike can become infatuated and subsequently locked-in with a set of notions, and thus become a believer in the omnipotence of a single right vocabulary. Or, that one day all the different vocabularies will neatly merge into one single right perspective of the world.
I have argued that in present-day wellbeing scholarship there are two particularly prominent wellbeing paradigms, one that accentuates the individual agent (e.g. Diener 2000; Haybron 2008; Ryff 1989) and its Siamese twin which underscores agent-environment interactions (e.g. Bakker et al. 2008; Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Deci et al. 2017; Hobfoll 2002; Page & Vella-Brodick 2009). Both paradigms are arguably rooted in materialism and naturalism (see Burke 1945), and thus in the footsteps of Freud (see Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008) can be seen as courting the natural-scientific eminence of biology and medicine (e.g. Fredrickson 1998; 2013).

In addition to these “one-person” and “one-and-a-half” person paradigms on wellbeing (Seligman 2018), a relational or “two-person” paradigm has been slowly and inconspicuously emerging (e.g. Bateson 1972; Berne 1964/2010) in a vast and fragmented array of literature including psychotherapy (Seikkula & Arnkil 2006; Wachtel 2014), sociology (Elias 1998; Emirbayer 1997), and organization theory (Gergen 2009; Kahn et al. 2013; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012; Shotter 2016).

This study contributes to this inclusive and increasingly prominent paradigm of interactional and relational scholarship. This particular wellbeing paradigm arguably bears the hallmark of – first conceptualized by Counter-Enlightenment philosophers two centuries ago (Berlin 2013a) – bringing attention to the relationally constituted act within a relationally constituted scene of action. The philosophers from Romanticism have taught us, for example, that this is the landscape where the “self” is authored (Berlin 1996; 2000; 2001).

One contribution of this study is to have sown together an account from a variety of interdisciplinary sources with somewhat different takes on interactions and relationality. In this study the interactional and relational approach is integrated and employed for the specific purpose of investigating wellbeing as an interactional phenomenon in organizational settings. This theoretical integration is arguably unlike others of its kind and as such contributes to the interactional and relational perspective by bringing it novel scope and coherence, and hopefully by making this view better known and a more compelling frame of reference within wellbeing and organization research. In addition, by delineating different wellbeing paradigms this study argues that organization studies in general can approach and contribute to the study of wellbeing in organizations by relying on its disciplinary strengths of paradigmatic inclusivity, conceptual creativity, and interest in practical application. Wellbeing is a “conversation of mankind” (Oakeshott 1991b: 488) and as such belongs to all those willing to engage the subject matter with the empirical and conceptual tools at their disposal (see also Annas 2011; Nussbaum 2001).

18.1 Contributions to three streams of research

In the literature review in Part I, it was recognized that the topic of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings does not exist yet as an explicit topic or generally acknowledged area of scholarship within wellbeing research or within organization studies.¹⁰⁸ Three streams of research were nonetheless found to be particularly relevant for this study. Together they provide a theoretical backdrop for the present study onto which the scientific contributions of this account can be mirrored. The three research streams are: (1) the interactional and relational

¹⁰⁸ Organizational practitioners might be surprised how fringe wellbeing is in the organization studies literature (e.g. Hatch & Cunliffe 2006) and how few organization scholars and seminars are even interested in wellbeing. To my experience wellbeing and management of organizations are frequently discussed in organizations, but in my opinion organization studies literature does not reflect the same proximity and connection between the two topics.
approach stemming from cybernetics, sociology and psychotherapy (e.g. Bateson 1972; Gergen 2009; Goffman 1967; Seligman 2018; Watzlawick 1990); (2) studies within organization theory and especially Positive Organizational Scholarship that focus on relational and collective processes (e.g. Dutton et al. 2014; Kahn 1993; Kroth & Keeler 2009; Lilius et al. 2011); and (3) neo-Aristotelian studies that investigate “phronesis” or intelligent and moral action in the form of practical wisdom and prudent judgement in situated action and local circumstances (e.g. Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). Despite the fact that this study is designed to be a standalone investigation into the character and composition of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, this study can be seen as furthering these three streams of research.

18.1.1 Interactional and relational research

The interactional and relational approach and its mode of thought is advanced by utilizing and in part by reviving seminal insights from a vast and dispersed body of knowledge, including cybernetics (Bateson 1972; Watzlawick 1990), microsociology (Goffman 1967; 1974; 1981), Relational psychotherapy (Seligman 2018), and Transactional Analysis (Berne 1961/2016; 1964/2010) for the specific purpose of studying interactional wellbeing in organizational settings.

Berne’s (1961/2016; 1964/2010) Transactional Analysis of Parent, Adult and Child interactions was used as the main theoretical prototype onto which a plethora of Goffman’s concepts and insights were added. This study builds on their empirically grounded way of reasoning about interactions and extends the extant interactional and relational vocabulary by suggesting a host of novel and empirically grounded concepts like relational structure, relational dynamics and interaction setup.

Three empirically grounded forms of wellbeing generative “relational coordination” (Gergen 2009) were described – positional proficiency, relational affirmation, and setup alignment – as well as their mirror images that were shown to contribute to wellbeing degenerative relational coordination – positional incompetence, relational invalidation, and setup misalignment. This study suggests that, for example, instead of following the early Freudian tradition of looking within the agent for answers about wellbeing (e.g. Schafer 1976), one can and should also give attention to the interaction setup, the relational dynamics and relational coordination, especially so in organizational settings.109 The suggested forms of wellbeing generative and degenerative relational coordination add clarity to Gergen’s (2009) theoretical outlook on “strong relationality”, that “relational coordination” indeed lies at the heart of “relational being” in organizations.

This study also fills a theoretical void in the interdisciplinary interactional and relational literature by providing an explicit metatheoretical definition of wellbeing that is arguably consistent with the overarching interactional and relational perspective. Even though the relational approach is advocated and advanced, for instance, by scores of psychotherapists and similarly inclined theoreticians across disciplines, a positive definition of wellbeing, in the contemporary sense of the term, has to my knowledge remained implicit and undefined. The present study suggests that harmonic fit between the dramatistic coordinates of agent, agency, act, scene, and purpose, which we have in this study designated as relational balance especially in the agent-act-scene triad, can be taken as a metatheoretical definition of wellbeing that fits

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109 It should be noted that Freud did give attention to interactional phenomena through his concepts of transference and countertransference, but his theorizing was nonetheless dominated by intraindividual theorizing (e.g. Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Schafer 1976).
with a range of understandings within the interactional and relational perspective. Through an explicit definition of wellbeing that complements past metatheoretical definitions (e.g. Dodge et al. 2012) and with the idea of different wellbeing paradigms, wellbeing scholarship now has multiple new avenues for future research. For studies that seek to enrich future wellbeing research with novel conceptual tools, one could focus on any single dramatistic coordinate or ratio, or a combination of the coordinates and ratios and develop their unique vocabularies to further knowledge and practical know-how about “life-giving dynamics” and “the ways in which organizations and their members flourish and prosper” (Cameron & Caza 2004), especially in hurly-burly of modern-day knowledge work (Grant & Parker 2009).

The developed definition of wellbeing has the benefit of incorporating the systems language of equilibrium and disequilibrium familiar to wellbeing scholarship (Dodge et al. 2012), employed in relational organization scholarship (e.g. Kahn et al. 2013) and found clinically useful in psychotherapy (Seligman 2018; Siegel 2011; Watzlawick et al. 1967/2011; see also Rogers 1951/2003; 1961/2004). With the help of the dramatistic pentad this study brings the systems “meta-framework” (Seligman 2018) closer to real-life descriptions and everyday language use of conscious moral agents (e.g. Bruner 2004). In addition, the systems framework is united with a view that sensitizes to the vulnerabilities and wisdom in everyday life (Chia & Holt 2008; Nussbaum 2001).

Perceived through the lens of the dramatistic pentad, wellbeing is apprehended as a timely, local, relationally constituted and personal phenomenon that involves situated judgement and moral reasoning. Due to its relational character and especially because of the character of relational coordination, interactional wellbeing can most likely be improved through skill attainment and can, moreover, form a relationally enacted “collective capability” in organizations (Kahn et al. 2013; Lilius et al. 2011; Orlikowski 2002). The relational character of interactional wellbeing underscores the Aristotelian notion that wellbeing is not a person’s possession of which a person has total control over. Instead, it is a relational accomplishment and thus is both vulnerable to tragedies and also open to betterments outside of a person’s control or expectations (Nussbaum 2001). According to this view, interactional wellbeing is both personal (Annas 2011) and relational (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), which comes together in the balancing of the agent-act-scene triad.

In this study I have referred to the type of metatheory that does not erode a conscious moral agent’s personal authority and responsibility over their own wellbeing as a “phronetic” definition of wellbeing (Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). Phronetic knowledge about wellbeing builds principally on a type of knowledge that is perhaps best conveyed through a multitude of individual cases (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). Consequently, despite the utility of having a concise and explicit metatheoretical definition of wellbeing, and a model of interactional wellbeing, these concise and general descriptions do not empty the treasure chest of wellbeing, nor do they by themselves provide knowledge of how to act more prudently and gracefully within one’s inhabited world. For this reason, the described individual cases and their explicated relational structures and dynamics should be viewed as contributions of equal import to interactional and relational theorizing. The cases are similar to psychotherapeutic case descriptions that show how theoretical concepts manifest and can be used in practice (e.g. Freud 1995 ed. Gay; Seligman 2018).
18.1.2 Relational organization studies

In the care and compassion literatures that form a significant portion of recent relational theorizing within organization studies, there is a call for more detailed descriptions of relational processes and mechanisms within organizations (Dutton et al. 2014; Kroth & Keeler 2009). This study contributes to this stream of research in three ways: By reviving and bringing together Goffman’s (e.g. 1967; 1974; 1981) and Berne’s (1964/2010) interactional vocabularies and extending them to the organization domain, this study offers a new way of looking at well-being generative and degenerative relational processes in organizations. Instead of outlining a particular process or mechanism, this study provides an extensive and versatile vocabulary that includes novel concepts – like relational position, relational move, setup disharmony, and relational disorientation – directed at discerning the relational structure and relational dynamics of wellbeing generative and degenerative encounters. It is most likely possible to use this vocabulary and underlying understandings also for the benefit of compassion and care research.

Secondly, by charting five empirically grounded relational frames this study offers more detailed empirical descriptions about relational coordination and the interplay between especially subordinate, supervisor, and the “collective mind” of the organization (Weick & Roberts 1993; cf. Kroth & Keller 2009). The five relational frames are theoretically embedded in a more encompassing model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings, that builds on practical moral reasoning in local settings (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; see also Lawrence & Maitlis 2012).

The suggested model on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings opens up a new door for interactional and relational research. The model offers a host of new theoretical connections. It builds on a systematic and structural language of the microfoundations in interactions (Felin & Foss 2009; Felin et al. 2015), it combines the structural language with historical situatedness through understandings of civil conduct and the concept of face (Elias 1998; Goffman 1967), and it integrates these to a local scene of action through the concept of the “collective mind” of the organization (Weick & Roberts 1993). These building blocks come together in the making and breaking of a relational frame. The model argues that co-constituted interactions that generate or degenerate wellbeing can be assessed based on their form of relational coordination – to what extent a relational frame can be characterized through positional proficiency, relational affirmation and setup alignment. This evaluation gives rise to experienced relational balance or imbalance in organizational encounters. This model builds on a case-based model of moral reasoning (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), which is an extension of Toulmin’s (1958/2003) model of argumentation and builds on the Counter-Enlightenment legacy of “objective pluralism” (Berlin 2013a; 2013b). The presented model on interactional wellbeing in other words builds on a post-Enlightenment era legacy (Berlin 2013a; Toulmin 1990; 2003), which should be understood as a refinement and continuation of the Enlightenment project (Cassirer 1951/2009; Toulmin 2003; cf. Pinker 2011), where situatedness, timeliness, and the particulars embedded in the theory and especially in the descriptive cases that embody the theory, can be seen as theoretical virtues rather than vices.

Perceived against the backdrop of recent care and compassion research, the presented model affords a new avenue for relational organization research, one that advances the locally attuned “ethics of care” (Lawrence & Maitlis 2012) perspective and couples it with the Aristotelian heritage (Annas 2011) on practical moral judgment in organizations (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a; 2014b). It is all too common to suggest divergences and bifurcations to a stream of research,
resulting in added compartmentalization of knowledge (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010; Taleb 2013). This study shows how relational and qualitative studies can at times conjoin phenomena that have previously been thought of as separate (e.g. Davis 1971). Consequently, this study offers a point of theoretical convergence and integration (Glynn & Raffaelli 2010), which has in this study found to be relevant for wellbeing in organizations. In future relational organization studies, one could hope to see increased cross-pollination between explicitly wellbeing research, care and compassion research, and studies into phronesis and case-based moral reasoning in organizations. This study gives one account of how these academic subjects can be cut from the same cloth.

Thirdly, this study pinpoints the care and compassion literatures as part of an inclusive and yet single paradigm of wellbeing scholarship. Hitherto, the umbrella concepts within which one could position one’s wellbeing related research included Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000), Positive Organizational Scholarship (Cameron & Spreizer 2011), Positive Organizational Behavior (Luthans & Youssef 2007), or could be accomplished with labels like employee wellbeing (Page & Vella-Brodick 2009), work engagement (Bakker et al. 2008), and job satisfaction (Wright & Cropanzano 2001). Many articles and book chapters have been published about the differences and unique interests of these constructs and research communities (e.g. Biswas-Diener et al. 2009; Cameron & Caza 2004; Linley et al. 2010). This study enables a new way of looking at the entire array of wellbeing research, including those within psychology, philosophy, and organization theory.

Instead of looking at overt labels, the educational background of particular scholars, or entrenched fields of research, this study suggests that one can look and group studies according to their “linguistic form” (Burke 1945). Thus, according to their theoretical concerns and foci with the help of theoretical serviceability analysis. The suggestion is to look at the underlying and often implicit understandings that are furthered in a study. For example, within the compassion literature there is an acknowledged interest in how acts of compassion could transform organizations (Dutton et al. 2014). In Burke’s (1945) terms, this interest can be said to be especially concerned with the act-scene ratio, similar to care research (Kahn et al. 2013; Lawrence & Maitlis 2012: see also Felin & Foss 2009).

The linguistic form in these studies arguably characterize their own paradigm of wellbeing scholarship, which bears a “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 1953) to, but is nonetheless distinct from, the linguistic forms of those studies that hone in on the agent (e.g. Diener 2000; Ryan & Deci 2001; Ryff 1989) and the agent-scene ratio (e.g. Deci et al. 2017; Page & Vella-Brodick 2009). The suggested metatheoretical lens that builds on Burke’s (1945) groundbreaking work and which has been further refined in this study into the conceptual method of theoretical serviceability analysis, appreciates and respects the contributions and interests of each wellbeing paradigm.

This overall perspective suggests that wellbeing research in general would benefit from being perceived as an inclusive scholarly enterprise within which there is still a range of unexplored paradigms and hitherto untouched research questions. As Positive Organization Scholarship expanded the reach of wellbeing research by complementing Positive Psychology (Cameron & Spreitzer 2011), the employed metatheoretical framework suggests that there might still be many more undiscovered wellbeing paradigms worthy of exploration. In this sense this study hopes to follow the footsteps of Burrell and Morgan (1979), whose study enabled an initial intellectual emancipation in the scholarly community by drawing forth and acknowledging the merits of different research paradigms.
However, as Wittgenstein (1953; 2009) and the history of science has taught us (Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1962/1982; 1965/1977), all research questions are not necessarily “reasonable” (Toulmin 2003) even if they can be spelled out in plain English (see also Rorty 1989). By opening up wellbeing research for novel paradigms and new types of conceptual contributions, there is most likely also a need for more “reflexive” (Alvesson et al. 2008b; Cunliffe 2003) and philosophically minded studies (e.g. Alvesson & Kärreman 2007; Shotter 1993; 2015; Tsoukas 2000) that inform wellbeing scholars about fruitful and barren paths of thought, and especially about the differences between the two.

18.1.3 Performed phronesis

This study also contributes to the relational, processual, phenomenological and situated stream of research on practical judgement in organizations, i.e. to the study of “phronesis” (Shotter & Tsoukas 2014a). Hitherto there is a dearth of empirical studies into performed phronesis whereas theoretical discussions have proliferated (McKenna et al. 2013; Shotter & Tsoukas 2014b). This study suggests one avenue of research into performed phronesis, by reviving the theory and practice of “casuistry” or case-based moral reasoning (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The two millennia old practice of casuistry, which arguably builds on the legacy of Greek tragedies and dramas (Nussbaum 2001), suggests that practical moral reasoning has a performative and a dialogical facet to the locally anchored reasoning process (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

In terms of this study, the dialogical facet of phronesis is an engagement in shared reasoning about what represents relational balance in a particular situation and setting (see also Holt 2006). The performative facet is concerned with accomplishing co-constituted relational balance in the heat of the moment. The five explicated relational frames and the model on interactional wellbeing in organizational settings that builds on Jonsen & Toulmin (1988), show how both facets of phronesis contribute to relationally enacted wellbeing in organizations. Especially the setup planner relational frame shows how past, present and future interaction setups are taken into account in performing a deliberately designed interaction setup that conveys or even manages to mold the sense of relational balance between interactants.

In addition, casuistry has taught us that moral cases need “organizing frames” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) and thus a structural language of how to put the empirical cases together. The insights from “hard cases” indeed stem from burrowing down into their intricate and entwined structures, prompting reflection and practical wisdom (Nussbaum 2001). These structures tend to change with the times and the moral fiber of society more broadly (Elias 1998; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Moscovici 2008). This study has put together a metatheoretical lens and a vocabulary that can discern various components of relational structure and pinpoint relational moves that give rise to wellbeing generative and degenerative relational dynamics between interactants.

The developed vocabulary builds on Goffman’s (e.g. 1967; 1974; 1981) and Berne’s (e.g. 1964/2010) widely recognized and yet undertheorized works within sociology and psychotherapy. The presented concepts and the underlying way of reasoning about interactions equip practitioners of interactional wellbeing with novel tools of thought and practical insights about how to performatively and discursively improve interactions in organizations in order to achieve co-constituted relational balance. By having arranged a theoretical platform on which it is possible to discuss moral preferences, dissect cases, and to which it is possible to add observations and novel patterns of interactions and relational coordination, conscious moral
agents in organizations are hopefully better equipped to engender more flourishing in one another’s “copresence” (Goffman 1963a). It is my hope that through a practical vocabulary about relationally enacted wellbeing in organizations, this study furthers everyday “history-making” in organizations (Hosking 2011; Spinosa et al. 1997). To use an Aristotelian analogy, this study offers a way of thinking about wellbeing that allows one to steer more proficiently and thoughtfully in both steady and tumultuous waters of various interaction setups.

This study serves a detailed account of what has been suggested by, for example, Shotter & Tsoukas (2014b), that performed phronesis is concerned with wellbeing and living the good life (see also Annas 2011; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988; Nussbaum 2001). Drawing on Burke’s (1945) dramatistic pentad and theoretical serviceability analysis, this study pinpoints phronetic research in the same wellbeing paradigm as care and compassion research, in which the act-scene dialogue is of particular interest. They are in other words paradigmatically connected.

The literature on eudaimonic wellbeing and practical moral judgement is however unique in the sense that it is highly sensitive and conceptually open to the other coordinates and ratios of the dramatistic pentad (e.g. Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). Phronesis also resists conceptual reduction (Annas 2011; Nussbaum 2001). In terms of this study, phronesis thus resists narrowing of the theoretical circumference into any single coordinate or ratio of the pentad (Burke 1945). In explicating a grammar of management, it was for example shown through several examples that an “act” within an inhabited world is connected to all the other coordinates of the pentad (Burke 1945). These characteristics make the concept of phronesis highly useful in theoretical contexts, especially when lending insights from across wellbeing paradigms and taking them to the domain of lived experience, situated action and everyday life.

In this study, insights from casuistry and phronetic research were used to formulate relational balance as a harmonic balance between the coordinates of the dramatistic pentad and especially in the agent-act-scene triad. It was suggested that the intangible coordinates of “agency” and “purpose” are most often embedded in the interplay between the “big three” of agent, act and scene (Burke 1945). Hence the suggested centrality of the agent-act-scene triad for relational balance. The described conceptualization and metatheoretical definition of wellbeing offers a bridge between wellbeing and phronetic research.

Furthermore, the concept of relational frame provides one possible avenue for future empirical research into phronesis, as it provides a “linguistic form” (Burke 1945) and vocabulary for discussing relationally constituted acts within a local scene of action, without categorically dismissing any coordinates or ratios of the dramatistic pentad. Relational frames combine generalities in relational structure with situated particularities. Following Shotter and Tsoukas (2014b), a level of analysis that combines generalities and particularities was suggested to be a phronetic level of research, which is aligned with the dialogical practice and moral education of casuistry (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988).

The employed linguistic form, that combines generalities with particularities, builds on the works of Counter-Enlightenment philosophers (Berlin 2013a), and especially those scholars who have refined a mode of thought germane to scientific history and history-making (e.g. Collingwood 1946; Giddens 1984; Oakeshott 1999). The five relational frames, the empirical cases they stand on, and the model of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings contribute to phronetic knowledge about wellbeing in organizations (Chia & Holt 2008; Flyvbjerg 2006; Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). The point of phronetic knowledge can be understood as providing “probabiliorist” insights about the good life (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988), without
alluding to a false sense of certainty and predictability about the man-made and relational world (see Aristotle 2005; Nussbaum 2001).

18.2 Untimely theoretical contributions

In addition to the hitherto suggested contributions that were mirrored against three established streams of research, the present study affords some theoretical contributions that do not find a home as easily and are thus best explained on their own. These “untimely” (Nietzsche 1876/1999) contributions – which do not directly further a pressing discussion in the field of wellbeing and organization scholarship – pertain to the notions of: (1) serviceability, (2) history-making, and (3) the threefold structure of relationality. These three steppingstones can be seen as separate contributions, as they have in this study been developed somewhat independently from each other. In my mind these notions and how this study furthers them can be seen as part of the same overarching matrix of ideas.

18.2.1 Serviceability

In organization theory, which I regard as my theoretical alma mater, theories and studies are often assessed based on their originality, how interesting the case context or the empirical study is, and how well the study furthers a currently ongoing theoretical discussion in key publications (e.g. Davis 2015). There is no dearth of commentaries, suggestions and opinions on what makes a good study in this and other fields of scholarship. Despite all that has been said and done, and the fact that the works of, for example, Wittgenstein, Burke, Heidegger, Rorty, Berlin, and Toulmin are not entirely unfamiliar to organization theory, I feel that their take on language has yet to reach its full scope and potential in the social sciences in general and the organization sciences in particular. Towards this end, I have suggested that the notion of “serviceability” is taken seriously in future theory-building (Burke 1954/1984).

In most of wellbeing and organization scholarship theories and studies are typically assessed through the thought models of Modernity and thus through a representational lens of language, where language works as a medium between the world out there and the empirically founded picture in the mind (see e.g. Rorty 1979/2009; 1989; Toulmin 1990; 2003; Wittgenstein 1961/2001). This view of language is a legacy that builds on the works of Descartes (1637/2006) and Kant (1781/1993), and which has received apt criticism during the past century (e.g. Janik & Toulmin 1996; Rorty 1979/2009; Wittgenstein 1961/2001). In this study language is perceived in the Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian tradition, as a tool in a world of involvements (e.g. Heidegger 1962/2008; Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009).

As Rorty (1989) argues, a representational account can be assessed with words and criteria like truth and falsehood, whereas the tool account of language should perhaps primarily be judged with questions like, what can one do with it what one could not do before, is it an effective tool, and for what purposes can it be used efficiently? These latter questions concern the “serviceability” of the utilized linguistic form and vocabulary (Burke 1954/1984). Rorty (1989) astutely notes that even the purpose of a new vocabulary cannot necessarily be translated back into an old and familiar one and formulated with its concepts, which means that to grasp the serviceability of a particular mode of thought may require learning and using it, whilst taking note of the new kinds of purposes that are possibly opened up. The notion of serviceability and the kind of everyday “orientation” or “schema of serviceability” it provides perceives theory, language, and practice in the same shared world of experience (Burke 1984; see also Oakeshott...
1933/2015; Shotter 2016). This view of language epitomizes the common phrase often contributed to the organization studies pioneer Kurt Lewin, that there is nothing as practical as a good theory.

This study suggests that there is value in developing alternative and complementary – perhaps even incommensurable – linguistic forms and vocabularies in wellbeing and organization scholarship. There are a gamut of predicaments, circumstances, challenges, and situations that conscious moral agents find themselves in, and it has begun to become increasingly clear that a single, coherent and encompassing vocabulary by which all can be grasped and sorted is beyond the limits of possibility for a man-made language (Bateson 1979; Bateson & Bateson 1987; Rorty 1989). Nor is there anything inherently wrong with having and being able to utilize multiple vocabularies, even in the practice of science (Toulmin 1990; 2003).

In this study, it is suggested that not only are many different theories of wellbeing needed, most of which are most likely also of some practical utility, but there is indeed a deficit and consequent need for several types of linguistic forms in wellbeing research. This is especially true in wellbeing research that overlaps with the interests of organization studies. It is conceivable that the knowledge base of wellbeing cannot afford to omit any of the five coordinates of the dramatistic pentad or their connecting ratios in the pursuit of increased flourishing and the good life. My humble suggestion is, drawing on Toulmin and his kin, that there is no a priori reason to limit the vocabulary of science to any single linguistic foundation. This study is an argument for and an example of “objective pluralism” (Berlin 2013a; 2013b), especially in the social sciences and wellbeing research in particular. At least it is my hope that this study enables and emancipates some of its readers to tackle both everyday and vexing interactions with some novel and helpful tools of thought. This is the ultimate purpose of this study, and as I perceive it, that of social sciences as a whole.

According to this view on language use, theories and studies are in the business of refining “common sense” (Toulmin 2003; Tsoukas 1994) and in giving alternative tools by which to formulate, design, grasp and handle significant involvements. For example, in this study I have taken interactional wellbeing in organizational settings to be a significant involvement. Its tools of thought and vocabulary is worth refining for the purpose of the good life. Toulmin (1958/2003) and Rorty (1989) have argued that there is not, and cannot be, a set of objective and eternal criteria for how to assess the usefulness of a vocabulary. The criteria are “field-dependent” (Toulmin 1958/2003). My argument in this study has been that one criterion can be added to the list of what characterizes a scientific contribution in the literature and especially contemporary wellbeing scholarship. It is the criterion of serviceability.

If the serviceability of language is expanded or made more efficient, then a new tool has been introduced or and old one improved. These are theoretical contributions in their own right, even though they may not be placed in a neat box of furthering a labelled and narrowly confined theory. The issue of serviceability of a vocabulary expands over and above any particular theory, which I have in this study attempted to make plain by sequentially expanding and narrowing the theoretical circumference of this study. Theories are surrounded by supporting and aligned ways of thinking that cut the cloth of experience in a similar way. By furthering a theory, a more encompassing linguistic form is advocated and developed. As I have suggested herein, the scholar is morally responsible for which frames of reference he uses to solve his theoretical problems. It is my hope, that scholars develop frames that can also help untangle contemporary and real-life problems, instead of solving the invented problems in an esoteric
and highly compartmentalized area of scholarship (Berlin 1996; Rorty 1989; Shotter 1993; Taleb 2013). This is the gist behind the notion of serviceability.

In this study, drawing on primarily Burke, Toulmin and Rorty, I have adopted a holistic interpretation of what constitutes serviceability. As for example Feyerabend (1975/2010) has argued, a priori limits to science should be rejected. At times, especially with revolutionary studies, the theory and study can perhaps be assessed only afterwards and perhaps even according to its own language and field-dependent criteria. I draw on the same logic with the notion of serviceability. I do not think that an eternal and universal list of characteristics of what constitutes serviceability can be outlined. Serviceability is connected to the ongoing and enlivened “forms of life” (Wittgenstein 1953/2009). Instead, my suggestion is to use the tools of thought in history-making to assess the utility and truthfulness of the account, that is, by re-enacting, re-imagining, and relating to the world of experience that is depicted. As said in the Preface, the essence of truth lies in how it is used and therein lies its helpful character (Heidegger 2005). This does not mean that more could not be said about serviceability, but this is as far as it can be taken in this account.

18.2.2 History-making

In organization theory there are some commonly used paradigm labels for how to situate one’s perspective and study (e.g. Burrell & Morgan 1979; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Tsoukas & Knudsen 2005). Typically, one uses a linguistic form that emulates and advances the assumptions of Modernity and its proclivity toward certain and universal knowledge (Burrell & Morgan 1979; Chia & Holt 2008; Cunliffe 2008; Gioia & Pitre 1990). In the present-day general climate of opinion, if one is not advancing a Realist outlook, then one is perhaps seen as muddying the waters with, for example, social constructivist (e.g. Berger & Luckmann 1966; Gergen 1973) or postmodernist theorizing (e.g. Chia 1995). Or proponents of the latter two are directly seen as opposed to that of Modernity and the world ‘out there’ (e.g. Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; Rorty 1989). Against this polarized backdrop, I have found the writings of, for example, Berlin (e.g. 2013a; 2013b), Toulmin (1990; 2003), Oakeshott (e.g. 1991a; 1991b), and Collingwood (1945; 1946) to be eye-opening, reassuring and insightful. To the type of thinking that contrasts and antagonizes subjectivism with objectivism, rationality with irrationality, realism with relativism, the notion of history-making may give some pause for thought if such a Cartesian vocabulary is truly helpful in the social sciences.

In the present study I have traced the intellectual lineage of social constructivist and postmodern thought, with the help of especially Berlin (1996; 1997; 2000; 2001; 2013a; 2013b), to the Counter-Enlightenment philosophers and some movers and shakers from Romanticism. Against this polarized backdrop, I have found the writings of, for example, Berlin (e.g. 2013a; 2013b), Toulmin (1990; 2003), Oakeshott (e.g. 1991a; 1991b), and Collingwood (1945; 1946) to be eye-opening, reassuring and insightful. To the type of thinking that contrasts and antagonizes subjectivism with objectivism, rationality with irrationality, realism with relativism, the notion of history-making may give some pause for thought if such a Cartesian vocabulary is truly helpful in the social sciences.

We are currently in the turbulent wake of two influential master-vocabularies that are competing for the minds of scholars and practitioners alike. Minds are being torn between the “truth is made” and the “truth is found out there” modes of thought (Berlin 1996; 1997; Rorty

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110 Rorty (1989) uses the labels of German idealism and Romanticism. Despite the difference in labels, I think we are in agreement about the genealogy of these ideas.
1989; Toulmin 1990), i.e. between the tenets of history and natural science (Berlin 2013a; 2013b; see also Weick 1999). The challenge presented to us and especially to organization scholars by Toulmin (1990; 2003), Rorty (1989) and others, is to find novel vocabularies that unearth new paths of thought (Toulmin 1990), disclose and resolve significant and practically relevant disharmonies (Berlin 1996; Kuhn 1962/2012; Spinosa et al. 1997), pose new types of questions, and induce new types of answers against the backdrop of these two master-vocabularies.

In this study I have presented the notion of “history-making” (e.g. Hosking 2011) as one possible mode of thought that seeks some measure of clarity and harmony in the turbulent waters of the two master-vocabularies. The study of history-making is one way of trying to combine the Nietzschean hero of the self-authoring poet with the Enlightenment era heroic explorer who finds and delivers findings for the rest of the civilized world to see (Rorty 1989). History-making, as I have begun to outline in this study, tries to walk the tightrope between the Scylla of history and the Charybdis of Enlightenment era science. This tension can be seen in the method sections of this study, and especially in Appendix C where linguistic creation and empirical discovery are discussed hand in hand.

History-making has herein been portrayed as the study of mind (Collingwood 1946; Oakeshott 1991b) and situated actions of conscious moral agents through theorizing that combines both particularities and generalities (Berlin 1996; 2013b). It utilizes the “mode of the personal” (Macmurray 1960), which requires “imaginative insight” (Berlin 1996) and is reflected upon the totality of the researcher’s experience as its chief way of reasoning (Oakeshott 1991b; Toulmin 2003), which is neither inductive nor deductive in character (Berlin 2013a). It is an outlook that treats human beings both as creatures and creators, ancestors and descendants, spectators and authors, of past, current and future history. It is unlikely that there would be one single vocabulary that manages to capture the totality of history-making for once and for all. Giddens (1984) has, for example, presented one way of thinking about the matter through his duality of structure. Berger and Luckmann (1966) originally presented their view of social constructionism as an extension of past historical scholarship, that is, as concerned with similar issues. Gergen (1973) argued that social psychology is the study of history. History-making may already have several established vocabularies at its use.

History-making in the organizational realm can however be perceived as its own kind of beast, one that merits its own vocabulary or perhaps even multiple vocabularies. Weick (1999) finds the trade-offs in theory-building as those between the strengths and weaknesses of history and science. In this study I have presented an attempt to outline and develop a way of thinking that views wellbeing in organizational settings as a co-constituted achievement that can be enacted, designed, managed and intelligently acted upon even in unpredictable settings and vexing circumstances. This linguistic form and take on history-making in organizational settings has been developed “from where we are, at the time we are there” (Toulmin 1990: 179).

To provide a new set of concepts, a previously unfamiliar way of thinking, and a new way of connecting everyday experiences, hopefully brings about added agency and intellectual emancipation through its serviceability (see Morgan 1980). In the case of this study, probably by presenting novel tools of thought that allow one to improve the quality of one’s own interactions with other conscious moral agents as well as the interactions in one’s “community of practice” (Wenger 1998). As I understand it, self-understanding as well as practical, moral and societal improvement is what the study of history-making is for (see Berlin 1996; Rorty 1989; Toulmin 2003; von Wright 1993). Thus, history-making as an intellectual outlook is a bearer
of some of the optimism, pursuit of edification, and change-making climate of opinion that arose and became common sense just before and during the revolutionary and historically unprecedented era of Enlightenment (see Cassirer 1951/2009; Morris 2011; Scott 2019; Wootton 2015).

In recent years several different “turns” like the discursive turn, the practice turn, the historical turn, and the material turn have been suggested in organization studies. With a vista that sees at least two centuries back in the history of ideas (Berlin 1997; 2000; 2013a; 2013b), these different turns seem much more related and closer to each other than one might imagine, based on the extant literature. Are these different turns finding their own individual paths in the crossfire of the two master-vocabularies, or are they adding fuel to the blaze?

The perspective of history-making poses the question of what kind of serviceability is advanced with these developing vocabularies, how is one today better equipped to make future history with the help of one or more of these vocabularies? Thus, the issues of serviceability and history-making come together. The development of novel vocabularies may be a poetic achievement, but to be also partly science, some form of added serviceability in everyday affairs is probably involved (Berlin 1996). This landscape and issue I have discussed to the extent that is prudent given the scope of this study. I must leave it for future studies to discuss in more detail, to examine the relevant differences and similarities between the turns, and if history-making might provide some perspective for how these individual turns may come together as a family.

18.2.3 The threefold structure of relationality

The pertinent and contrastive backdrop for relational theorizing is often found in Cartesian theorizing, where an enclosed and fallible subject was separated from the objective and divine world out there (e.g. Bateson 1972; Shotter 2015). This mental image and vocabulary took hold of the public imagination for the following centuries (Berlin 1996). It took philosophers several generations to gradually bring the subject and the object first closer to each other and finally together. Around the turn of the 20th century, several philosophers arguably managed the feat of breaking the barrier between the mind and the world out there (e.g. Dewey 1958; Heidegger 1962/2008; James 1912/2003).

This feat was accomplished with integrative notions like mind, consciousness, and experience (e.g. Ryle 1949/2000; Oakeshott 1933/2015; 1991a; 1991b). How these concepts were understood changed as a result. In breaking the dualism, this study suggests that there might be a more encompassing linguistic pattern that reaches across known philosophical schools of thought including idealism (Oakeshott 1933/2015), pragmatism (Mead 1934/2015) and phenomenology (Heidegger 1962/2008). The Cartesian dualism was broken by several philosophers with a threefold set of concepts, which I have in this study brought together and referred to as the threefold structure of relationality.

My suggestion is that this conceptual development may be seen as an example of how one vocabulary or linguistic coordinate system is gradually changed and replaced with another, as talked about by Kuhn (1962/2012), Fleck (1979), Rorty (1989), and the history of science more broadly (Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1962/1982; 1965/1977). In Descartes’s depiction of the human subject, the subject was assigned the role of passive and fallible spectator to the marvels of the divine world out there (Berlin 2013b; Elias 1998; Rorty 1989). Kant turned Descartes on his head, human reason became the divine and the empirical world veiled by uncertainty (Rorty 1989). Compared to the dualism of Descartes, the threefold has a different
linguistic structure. One can act upon the world (e.g. ready-to-hand), the world can act upon
the agent (present-to-hand), or the agent can be in concert with other agents to form a joint
consciousness of action and understanding (Lewin 1948; Macmurray 1960; Spinosa et al. 1997;
Weick & Roberts 1993). These three different modes of thought and experience can be found
especially at the root of theorizing about man-made action and the act-scene ratio (e.g. Freud

In this study I have used a simple form of the threefold structure of relationality, the Parent,
Adult, Child transactional framework by Berne (1964/2010), enriched it with Goffman’s astute
interactional vocabulary, and expanded its use with the help of the linguistic flexibility that the
other threefolds afford. I originally used the threefold to enable a relational and thus also non-
dual and “territory-as-mapped” epistemology (Wilk 1999; 2010a; 2013; see also Bateson 1972)
by which to study interactional wellbeing in organizational settings. My intuition is that this
uncovered threefold may be more useful than how, and for what purpose, I have used it here.
It is well known that Cartesian dualism still thrives in much of Western thought. The preva-
lence of the Cartesian language may not be of consequence in some areas, but in other domains
like in psychotherapy and organization scholarship where there is a constant exploration for
new and useful tools of thought, the threefold may have much to offer to future scholarship
and practitioners alike.

It is also true that since the turn of the 20th century a variety of alternative linguistic coordi-
nate systems have been suggested (e.g. Oakeshott 1933/2015; Heidegger 2011). In his later
writings Heidegger (2011: 242 ff), for example, experimented with a “fourfold” of concepts that
consisted of the intertwined notions of “earth, sky, mortals and divinities.” To grasp the signif-
icance of these coordinates, typical of Heidegger, requires throwing oneself to the mercy of the
vocabulary and its way of thinking. Only from within a particular vocabulary and its way of
thinking can the key concepts of the vocabulary be understood (Kuhn 1962/2012; Rorty 1989).
In a similar vein, Oakeshott (1933/2015) has suggested three alternative modes of thought:
history, science, and practice. There is probably no dearth of alternative coordinate systems
and attempts at novel vocabularies in the history of ideas and especially since the linguistic
emancipation that occurred at the turn of the 20th century (Janik & Toulmin 1996; Rorty 1989).
Against this backdrop, my suggestion is that the threefold structure of relationality  may be
able to offer novel serviceability in a host of subjects matters, especially in those that concern
the dynamics between the “agent”, “act” and “scene” (Burke 1945). I perceive these dynamics
at the heart of social sciences and at the cross-section between wellbeing and organization
studies. This path of thought suggests that it may not be a coincidence that path-breaking re-
search in the past century (e.g. Giddens 1984) in the social sciences has deliberately steered
away from dualistic language and sought available linguistic resources to do so, and found the
threefold structure of relationality from for instance Freud, Mead, Lewin, or Heidegger of some
use.

Rorty (1989), for example, praises Freud for his innovative vocabulary that manages to strike
a balance between the scientific animal with urges and drives (Id) and the historically situated
and socially governed citizen (Super-Ego), whilst giving prominence to a unique person’s own
history, social settings and development as a person (Ego). As others have argued, Freud’s most
enduring contribution was his theoretical integration between several perspectives in the in-
vention of a groundbreaking and wide-ranging vocabulary (Ellenberger 1971; Makari 2008).
If one does not feel comfortable with contributing this innovative path of thought – one that
opened the door to the practice of psychotherapy and subsequently to, for instance,
organizational change management (e.g. Schein 1992; 1999) – to the merits of the threefold structure of relationality, then, what one can at least gather is that broad-ranging binaries, dualities and opposites are most likely old and already well-trodden patterns of thought in our current day and age (Berlin 2013a; 2013b; Rorty 1989; Toulmin 1990; 2003). Perceived against the history of ideas and given the increasingly complicated and nested character of present-day social institutions (Searle 1995; 2009) and the intensive and challenging everyday hurly-burly of knowledge work, what one can at least surmise is that helpful, less immature, and practically relevant conceptual discoveries likely lie elsewhere (Berlin 2013b; Rorty 1989; Saa-rinen 2013).

18.3 Practical implications

This account had as one of its underlying premises that it should be practically useful, which is not unfamiliar to a neo-Aristotelian outlook (see Preface). In this account I have endeavored to contribute to the edification of contemporary craftsmen, -women and persons of modern-day organizations by bringing important phenomena concerning everyday life into the limelight, from an action and context oriented perspective. This study has not aspired to give an authoritative account of wellbeing (Rorty 1989), but instead, to provide conscious moral agents and reflective practitioners with improved means to “author” their own wellbeing (Cunliffe 2001; Shotter 1993), both personally and in cooperation with one another. To what extent that has been accomplished is of course left to other conscious moral agents to determine.

This account has not tried to show how organizations can be led more prosperously or productively nor how they can be managed more humanely according to some a priori criteria (see Ghoshal 2005; Morgan 1980). This account has merely attempted to describe the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing in organizational settings in its current time and place and using and developing further what I regard as the best possible vocabulary at my disposal to do so; one that fitted the many purposes of this study. This does not mean that the explicated theory on interactional wellbeing is the “final vocabulary” on the issue (Rorty 1989). All vocabularies have their “selections”, “reductions” and “mergers” (Burke 1945). My hope is that the employed and developed vocabulary is not only helpful despite these inevitable characteristics of a linguistic form, but it is efficient and helpful because of them (Berlin 1996; Burke 1984; Toulmin 1958/2003).

How the mustered phronetic knowledge – the type that deals with locally enacted human possibilities and probabilities instead of universal and eternal certainties and absolutes – is applied is largely left to the reflective practitioners and conscious moral agents engulfed in the ever-changing scenery and practice of history-making. This study nonetheless suggests that organizational members interested in improving wellbeing in organizations should, for example, (1) pay increasing attention to the design and enactment of interaction setups; (2) engage in added dialogue and joint reasoning in situations where setup alignment, relational affirmation or positional proficiency are not readily forthcoming; and (3) pay more heed to recurring relational frames, especially between managers and their employees, concerning when, where, how, and with whom the collective mind and ensuing relational coordination is formed, altered and also violated. To my understanding these alleyways have not previously been suggested for reflective practitioners to explore in conjunction with the improvement of wellbeing in organizations.
On a final note, when an author releases a linguistic form and theory to the world, he ceases to own it as it no longer is only his own (Rorty 1989). It tends to become a shared view and set of understandings. As a humble humanist (see Berger 1963; von Wright 1993) who advocates a liberal education (see Oakeshott 2001; Rorty 1989; see also Ghoshal 2005; Kant 1784/2009) my hope is that those who find themselves using the insights from this study employ a historically mature (Berlin 1996; 2013b) and “reasonable” moral compass to guide their actions (Toulmin 2003).
References


References


References


References


References


References


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview protocol A

Interview format: Semi-structured interviews.

English translations:
1. Could you tell me about yourself, what unit you belong in, and about your work?
2. Can you tell me about the key challenges in your work?
3. What are the main components that affect the process and quality of your workday?
4. Who do you think are the persons who have the most influence on the quality of your workday, and how do these relationships affect you and your work?
5. How would you describe Techcorp as a company and as a place of employment?
6. How would you say you notice that Techcorp is an American and international company?
7. What kinds of big changes have occurred here in the past couple of years, have they been successful changes or how have they developed?
8. How do you generally solve problems in this company, and how well do you think they work?
9. What do you think should be developed in this company and why?
10. How would you describe communication inside the company, how does it usually work and what do you think about it?
11. To what group do you feel you in the first-hand belong to? Techcorp, your unit, something else? How do you notice it?
12. Can you tell me about your unit, about the daily life in your unit?
13. If I were a new employee in your unit, what do you think I should know about working at the unit and at Techcorp in general? What are the do’s and don’ts?
14. From where, who and how do you get the information you need to organize your work? What kinds of problems have occurred in this process?
15. What kinds of problems usually occur in your unit and how do you usually go about to resolve them? Are there problems that are not resolved?
16. Can you think of anything important or relevant that we have not covered or what you would like to add?
17. With whom do you think I should talk to if I wanted to know more about...?
Original Finnish questions:

1. Voisitko kertoa hieman itsestäsi, mihin yksikköön kuulut ja työtehtävistäsi?
2. Voitko kertoa työsi keskeisimmistä haasteista?
3. Mitkä ovat keskeisimmät tekijät, jotka vaikuttavat työpäiväsi kulkuun ja laatuun?
4. Keillä ihmisillä on mielestäsi suurin vaikutus työpäiväsi kulkuun ja millä tavalla nämä suhteet vaikuttavat sinuun tai työhösi?
5. Voisitko kuvailla minkäläisen Techcorp on yrityksenä ja työpaikkana?
6. Mitä se mielestäsi näkyy, että Techcorp on amerikkalainen tai kansainvälinen yritys?
7. Minkäläisia suuria muutoksia tällä on tapahtunut viimeisten vuosien aikana ja miten niissä on onnistuttu tai miten ne ovat menneet?
8. Miten tässä yrityksessä ratkotaan ongelmia ja ovatko nämä tavat mielestäsi toimivia?
   – kerro esimerkki?
9. Mitä tässä yrityksessä pitäisi mielestäsi kehittää? Miksi?
10. Miten kuvaileisit yrityksen sisällä tapahtuvaa kommunikaatiota ja viestintää; miten se tyyplissesti tapahtuu ja mitä olet siitä mieltä?
11. Mihin porukkaan koet ensisijaisesti kuuluvasi? Techcorp, yksikkösi tai jokin muu?
   Miten se näkyy arjessa?
12. Voisitko kertoa työyksiköstäsi, minkäläista elämää on yksikössäsi?
13. Jos olisin uusi työntekijä yksikössäsi, mitä minun pitäisi sinun mielestäsi tietää työnsteosta Techcorppissa ja yksikössäsi? Mitä kannattaa (saa) ja ei kannata (ei saa) tehdä?
14. Mistä, keneltä ja miten te saatte tarvittavan informaation voidakseenenne organisoida työne? Minkäläisia ongelmia tässä prosessissa on esiintynyt?
15. Minkäläisia ongelmia yksikössäsi esiintyy ja miten niitä käsitellään? Ja onko ongelmia mitä ei käsitellä?
16. Tuleeko sinulle vielä mieleen jotakin tärkeää tai olennaista mitä emme ole käsitelleet tai mitä haluaisit lisätä?
17. Kenen kanssa minun kannattaisi puhua, jos haluaisin tietää enemmän puhumistamme asioista viitaten erityisesti ...?
Appendix B: Updated and supplementary interview protocol B

English translations:
1. How would you describe how your wellbeing has developed in the course of your career and as of late?
2. How would you describe your relationship to the workload and the support you receive?
3. I have lately heard comments that things here have developed towards the worse. Can you tell me what you think is going on?
4. How do you perceive your own future in this company?
5. Can you tell me about the kinds of relationships you have formed here within the company?
6. Are there relationships that you experience as a burden, ones that you try to avoid thinking about or avoid altogether?
7. How would you describe your relationship to your line manager/supervisor?
8. Do you think you can discuss the challenges in your work?
9. Are there subjects you generally try to avoid discussing or bringing out?
10. Can you describe to me how goals are set and pursued here in general?
11. Are there subject matters that you find it difficult or impossible to get information about?
12. How do you experience how you can influence your own work and work practices in this company/your unit?
13. How do you experience the wants and expectations placed on you?
14. What do you think about how your unit is lead? Why?
15. Do you find marked differences between how the different units are led, or in their work cultures?
16. The fact that the executives of this company are in the US or American, how do you think that affects how work is being done here?
17. How do you feel the matrix organization affects how work is being done?
18. The support functions here, like HR, how do you think they have developed the last couple of years?
19. How would you describe your relationship to HR?
20. How would you say that HR or certain people are generally perceived? Why?
21. How people relate to HR, has it changed recently and in that case how?
Original Finnish questions:
1. Miten sanoisit, että töissä kokemasi hyvinvointi on kehittynyt urasi aikana? Entä viime aikoina?
2. Miten kommentoisit suhdettasi kiireeseen, työn määrään ja saamaasi tukeen? (Minkäläisä tukea kaipaisit)
3. Olen kuullut kommentteja, että viime aikoina asiat täällä ovat kehittyneet huonompaan suuntaan. Voitko kertoa mistä asioista mielestäsi on kyse?
4. Miten näet oman tulevaisuutesi tässä yrityksessä?
5. Voisitko kertoa minkälaisia ihmissuhteita olet muodostanut täällä?
6. Onko suhteita, jotka koet rasittavina, joita koetat olla pohtimatta tai joita koetät välttää?
7. Miten kuvailisit suhdettasi esimieheesi?
8. Koetko, että voit keskustella työsi haasteista?
9. Onko asioita mitä yleisesti vältät tuomasta esille töissä?
10. Voitko kuvaila miten täällä mielestäsi asetetaan tavoitteita ja miten niihin pyritään pääsemään?
11. Onko asioita mistä on vaikea tai mahdotonta saada tietoa?
12. Millä tavalla koet omat mahdollisuutesi vaikuttaa esim. työsi sisältöön ja toimintata-polhisi tässä yrityksessä/osastollasi?
13. Miten koet sinun kohdistuvat vaatimukset ja odotukset?
14. Miten koet, että osastoasi johdetaan? Miksi?
15. Onko mielestäsi selviä eroja siinä, miten eri osastoja tai bisneksiä johdetaan, tai niiden kulttuureissa?
16. Se, että monet tämän yrityksen johtoportaasta ovat Amerikassa ja amerikkalaisia, miten koet sen vaikuttavan siihen, miten täällä toimitaan?
17. Miten matruisiorganisaatio mielestäsi vaikuttaa toimintaa?
18. Miten täällä olevat tukifunktiot, kuten HR, ovat mielestäsi viime vuosina kehittyneet ja mihin suuntaan? Miten olet asian tulkinnut?
19. Miten kuvailisit suhtautumistasi HRään?
20. Miten koet, että HR tai tietyt HR -ihmiset yleisesti miellettään? Miksi?
21. Onko se, miten ihmiset toimii HRään kanssa muuttunut viime aikoina?
Appendix C: Three short essays on method

**The use of background knowledge in qualitative research**

This is my account of the proper warrants and use of background knowledge in this study. In moving from a biographical account of how this research was conducted to more straightforward justifications, it can be expected that the style of the argument also alters in form (Toulmin 1958/2003). I will put some issues in more general terms with the intention of arguing that it is more generally reasonable to do as I have done and therefore the reasoning and justifications herein is not confined to this study alone. My point is that the idiosyncrasies and the empirical material constituting this study are not the only warrants for how I have reasoned and conducted the research. On the contrary, I have come to some understandings that I consider more generally reasonable and as such merit a more general tone.

In doing empirical research, the background to how one judges what is true and real is arguably the totality of the researcher’s experience (Collingwood 1946/2014; Toulmin 1958/2003). Especially when ambiguous examples, contradictory statements and descriptions, insufficient and partial evidence, insinuations, euphemisms, silence and diverging choices of words are put together to form a single encompassing understanding, it is rather commonsensical that one uses one’s own judgement and past experience to make sense of it all (Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1958/2003). One follows the evidence to “what the evidence obliges one to believe” (Oakeshott 1999), without forgetting that the researcher’s own totality of experience is what is used to bring coherence to the investigation (Collingwood 1946/2014). Language and therefore also all descriptions are underdetermined, which means that the description is complemented with some information not actually there in the description (Searle 2009; Toulmin 1958/2003; Wittgenstein 1953).

The empirical material in a qualitative inquiry hopefully brings forth novel disharmonies and revelatory insights. Perhaps something that elicits an alteration in one’s prior understandings and common sense (Davis 1971; Moscovici 2008). As I see it, these insights are organized by the researcher into a descriptive account. It should be an easily graspable and sufficiently detailed understanding of the new and more coherent or serviceable rendition of reality which one inhabits as a consequence of the investigation (Berlin 1996; 2013b; Heidegger 2005). It has novel “serviceability” in comparison to other ways of putting experiences together or for other purposes that the ones that are usually entertained (Burke 1954/1984). Unique experiences are ordered in and through the investigation in order to form an improved or more serviceable language to a phenomenon, from a “withinness” point of view (Shotter 2016; see also Toulmin 1990). As I understand it, this is what empirical investigations implicitly argue in forming a new improved “territory-as-mapped” (Wilk 1999; 2010a; 2013) of a phenomenon (see also Bateson & Bateson 1987; James 1912/2003; Kuhn 1962/2012; Oakeshott 1933/2015).

In qualitative research the current state of knowledge is foremostly taken as ground, which is subsequently modified with the investigation. A common ground is arguably that of everyday common sense within an inhabited world (Davis 1971; Moscovici 2008; Oakeshott 1962/1991b; Toulmin 2003; Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009). To my understanding no qualitative inquiry aims to say that which everybody already ‘knows’ even though no one may have stated it in a scientific publication. Common sense can be understood as being grounded in an understanding of the world one inhabits (Kuhn 1962/2012; Spinosa et al. 1997). As I have come to understand how at least qualitative research is conducted, the shared and co-inhabited world is the grand scenery within which an understanding of any particular experience is formed (Kuhn 1962; Fleck 1979; Toulmin 1990; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962/1999; 1965/1977). In this sense,
an empirical investigation that makes a substantive contribution has the quality of altering the scenery and thus the world one inhabits (Davis 1971; Dewey 1958; Heidegger 2005; 1962/2008; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Spinosa et al 1997).

Although it is perhaps chiefly to the overall common sense of the times science contributes to (Moscivici 2008; Toulmin 2003), the researcher is nonetheless confined to his own totality of experience and inherited linguistic vocabulary. Language does however provide a common ground to how experience is by far and large organized (Dewey 1958; 2011; Fleck 1979; Kuhn 1962/2012; Moscovici 2008; Toulmin 1990; 2003; Wittgenstein 1953). Consequently, a linguistic contribution that from within the ongoing civilization improves the commonsensical use of language can be considered to provide an improved or more serviceable grasp of a small piece of reality within a particular domain and within the totality of experience (Oakeshott 1933/2015; Toulmin 1958/2003). In this sense all conceptual contributions or “redescriptions” (Rorty 1989) are not necessarily contributions to understanding, especially if they do not re-organize experience and alter language use and corresponding actions (Burke 1945). That is, they do not provide novel serviceability in lived life, which stands as the gold standard is evaluating the contribution of novel vocabularies (Berlin 1996).

Put differently, conceptual contributions are conceivably contributions only if they are used by others than the contributor; they are used by others because they are useful in the new altered world of experience. Continuing on this path of thought, what a researcher thereby most likely does in a qualitative inquiry is to organize, often a small domain of experience, into an improved understanding of the inhabited world. With the use of words in a coherent and recognizable description the researcher is arguably reconciling disparities, focusing attention, and organizing experience to show a novel world of experience, which the researcher often implicitly understands to be an improved understanding as to its serviceability. The qualitative description aims to alter the way we think, most often about a phenomenon that is already of interest (Alvesson & Sandberg 2011; Corley & Gioia 2011).

The history of philosophy and of science teaches us that there have been various tenets and customs to how reality and other modes of experience should be described (Berlin 2013a; Boas 1928/1986; Burtt 1932/2003; Elias 1998; Toulmin & Goodfield 1962; 1977). Traditionally, and stemming from Enlightenment philosophers, it is presumed that there is one reality that fits neatly with all other descriptions of reality; there is one correct and true description of what actually occurred (Berlin 2013a; 2013b). Consequently, if one is right and a second person contradicts the first, the second thereby cannot be correct (Berlin 1997; Toulmin 2003). This kind of reasoning has survived in how scientific descriptions should be formed, despite the fact that lived life can be riddled with contradictions, there can be multiple interpretations of realities, and people can live and prosper within such a world (Berlin 1997; Burke 1984; Harari 2011; Oakeshott 1991a; Toulmin 1990). This realization leads to the conclusion that there are few if any grand tenets to what kinds of metatheoretical convictions – absolute, timeless and universal postulations of proper description and theory – should be entertained (Feyerabend 1975/2010; Kuhn 1962/2012; Toulmin 1990). How the enlivened world of experience is improved, is difficult if not impossible to pre-describe with any precision in beforehand (Rorty 1989), especially on the level of de-worded, universal and eternal principles. What is improved and how and for what purpose is in continuous motion.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ This is also the reason to why past works of scholarship can be rediscovered at later dates, for which there is apt evidence for in the history of science.
In reporting a qualitative inquiry, the researcher is, then, making several implicit and practical assertions. By way of the inquiry, the researcher has come to a novel understanding of the world. The final report in the form of a study is an attempt to describe that new world and the experiences it is formed upon and also the path to it so that a reader can come to the same understandings of the world as the researcher. That is to say, the reader is to recognize the world the researcher is showing in the reader’s own totality of experience. The study merely prompts one to notice what one has not necessarily noticed before. If the reader cannot recognize the world in question, the description is probably experienced as nonsensical, unavailable, unbelievable, unconvincing, or the like. It does not fit the readers totality of experience. In this sense, the description is an attempt at a fusion of worlds, in which the old world of experience is at best renewed and improved by the organization of experience and concomitant understanding within the study.

In discussing and interviewing persons, this same method is most likely at play between the researcher and the interviewees. It is a “fusion of horizons” (Gadamer 1997) through “the mode of the personal” (Macmurray 1960; see also Berlin 1997; 2013a; 2013b). The researcher of course does not surrender judgement and uncritically believe everything what is said (Collingwood 1946/2014; Oakeshott 1999), but there is an honest attempt to understand and engage the worlds of the interviewees. Those engagements are indubitably and often transparently supplemented and understood through the totality of experience of the researcher and the shared language (Burke 1984; Moscovici 2008). That is, the researcher implicitly understands the scene of the utterances and shares the understanding with the interviewees merely by understanding their communication. It is through those engagements and later in reconciling and stabilizing one’s own understanding into a harmonized and renewed world how the inquiry takes its final shape. It can be seen as an exploration of other minds in trying to improve on one’s own mind about the world. The improved understandings and a path to them is reported, although the understandings regarding what was improved is left mostly implicit and presumed to be prior common sense to the reader as it was to the researcher. This is how I understand also this particular study.

The analysis and creation of form through language

When one says that one studies a phenomenon instead of an isolated incident, it is understandable to ponder about the “warrants” and even possible “backings” to such a claim (Toulmin 1958/2003). I believe that a generic warrant is recognizability, which is hopefully backed by the experiences of the reader as they are by the author’s totality of experience (Burke 1945). The description of the phenomenon is recognized as a familiar and recurring going-on in the world.

The most important concept in delineating a phenomenon, a going-on, from all other phenomena is to be rigorous about what is “same” or “identical” (Mead 1934; Kovesi 1967; Wittgenstein 2009) and how it comes together with particularities in an “assembly” (Wilk 2010a; see also Kelly 1963). It is to argue that one situation is analogous to another (Burke 1954/1984). Put differently, it is the process of how multiple descriptions inform to formulate a “paradigm case” (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988) or “organizing frame” (Facunnier & Turner 2002), which then can be used to reason about the particulars in each specific case. To postulate that there is a phenomenon or frequently occurring similarities in experience requires multiple instances of its recurrence which are never completely identical but have the same or very similar formal characteristics. To be clear about this matter it may be illuminating to take an everyday and
famous example from moral philosophy namely that of murder (see e.g. Kovesi 1967; Robin Letvin 1998).

It is probably clear to most that there are innumerable particular ways to murder a person and with new devices, technologies, chemicals, medicine and the like, the amount will most likely increase with the development of human civilization and its morally questionable and yet indubitable ingenuity in taking human life. There is however little doubt about there being such a phenomenon as murder, which is an intentional act with material consequences of ending a life. The purposive act is the formal characteristic of the phenomenon murder without which it would be only the material phenomenon death. The two are however part of the same assembly, the phenomenon of murder. What makes the phenomenon of murder institutionalized is that it is perceived similarly and with similar moral condemnation more or less regardless of the individual who perceives or comprehends the act as an act of murder. With the help of the word the act is perceived even though each and every recurrence may contain a plethora of particularities. The material characteristics of death at our current day and age makes the phenomenon of murder irreversible and unquestionable, but the phenomenon of murder requires an additional understanding of human action as a particular sort of action. Despite all other details in each and every particular case of murder the phenomenon is nonetheless in all likelihood easily graspable and a self-evident phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that is made into being by the deliberate acts of morally responsible agents.

When the material characteristics of an assembled phenomenon decrease and one is left with foremost or totally formal elements of the act then the phenomenon is, in my mind and in our current day and age, often falsely thought of being subjective or relative. It is still equally relational and intentional as is murder. Cartesian dualism does not suddenly strike an impenetrable divide between a mental state and act where the former would be subjective and the latter objective. Analytically and in daily life there is no difference. An act is an act is an act. The act is recognized as a particular instance of a more general kind. The formal elements of the act of murder define the phenomenon murder. It is the sine qua non of murder. Otherwise it would only be death or some other act or event. Similarly, other phenomena can also be described through their form; how they are recognized.112 The form is understood by understanding mind in action (Bateson 1972; 1979; Bateson & Bateson 1987; Ryle 1949/2000). To be able to pick out such elements from the acts of others and to formulate an alternative response to them is what language in its most rudimentary form is (Mead 1934/2015). It is an instrument for organizing and communicating experience and thus serves future actions (Burke 1945; Kuhn 1962/2012; Oakeshott 1933/2015; Heidegger 2011).

To describe a phenomenon is an act of naming (Winch 1958/2007). To name something is to give either overt or implicit rules to when something can be called such-and-such in a particular language-game. That is, a rule to the use of a word. All words are part of the public domain and thus their use follow shared and often established rules even though they are seldom explicit or stable (Kovesi 1967; Winch 1958/2007; Wittgenstein 1953/2009; 2009). For example, the rules to the use of the word murder are likely rather commonsensical, although one can encounter the word in contexts like “meat is murder” or “you are murdering the planet”, which are more poetic uses of the word rather than its commonsense use. These exceptions or alternative language-games need not concern us here. Given that the totality of experience is infinitely richer than any finite vocabulary about it, people use stories, metaphors, examples,
different combinations of words in their linguistic arsenal to express a phenomenon which is not yet aptly discerned in their vocabulary (Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Words are used to pick out characteristics they want to highlight and often only roughly fits the actual case with only a handful of characteristics that “warrant” the use of the word (Toulmin 1958/2003).

To describe a phenomenon is to be clear about the “recognitors” (Kavesi 1967) which make the phenomenon recognizable as the phenomenon it is. In every “assembly” (Wilk 2010a) there are common recognitors that make it understandable (cf. Fauconnier & Turner 2002; Lakoff & Johnson 1980). In conjunction with a phenomenon a name is not merely a word, but it points to something beyond words and thus to something in the totality of experience. When recognitors are perceived and used to order experience – the two go hand in hand – the use of a particular assembly for the recognition is not only warranted but commonsensical. The name or word picks out and makes the phenomenon discernible, albeit it might be more creative than a straightforward reproduction (Cornelissen 2005). The successful application of the rule of how to use the word is based on how it enables one to grasp the recognitors of the phenomenon. The rule, which is most often implicit in its use, is what makes an infinite number of particular instances and all their infinite details into easily graspable forms of the same kind. The recognitors are what is sought after in the naming of a phenomenon because they allow the analytical inference of “same” or “identical” (Kovesi 1967). The recognitors are what allow persons to see the phenomenon instead of it being part of the undiscerned background of everyday life. Put differently, the recognitors are the relevant and distinguishing details that make the phenomenon into the phenomenon it is. Adding or subtracting details does not alter the phenomenon because adding or subtracting irrelevant details does not alter the understanding of its form. No coding scheme can make the argument that the recognitors and the phenomenon is there in the description. In fact, no argument can make that argument. That, as said, must be left to others to decide if the words and their use enable them to see “it.” Once all is said and done if someone says murder and all that is perceived is death then the case closes itself. The same applies to any phenomenon and thus also to the phenomenon of interactional wellbeing. A phenomenon cannot be argued into existence, it must be shown (Heidegger 1927/2008; Wittgenstein 2009).

To put the matter somewhat differently, I posit that there can be a recognizable phenomenon among an infinite variety of descriptions through a finite set of recognitors that allow for this inference. How the recognitors and consequently experience is organized and assembled can vary endlessly due to the resourcefulness of man-made language (Burke 1945; 1984). This fact gives rise to various “modes of experience” (Oakeshott 1933/2015), which also highlights the creativity in language use (e.g. Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Nevertheless, at the root is always experience within an ongoing world (Dewey 1958; James 1912/2003). Once a set of recognitors is recognized in a particular way and thus picking out and organizing experience in one way instead of all other possible ways, the phenomenon becomes very real as it coheres with one’s experience. It becomes reality because reality is organized with its use. It is for example difficult to argue that murder has not taken place when one recognizes the act as murder.

In more general terms this in effect means that a variety of language-games – shifts in or adding of context or particular wordings for those not familiar with the concept – can be played on each and every description without it losing its substantive form. When there is a meaningful alteration in form, there is probably a change in or dissolution of the recognitor(s) in the assembly. This is one way to bring them out. To play this sort of language-games upon
descriptions teases forth relevant and irrelevant doubts through the manifold possibilities of what is meant by a word and is significant in the assembly. This path of thought sensitizes to and recognizes the fact that no interviewee chooses their use of language with the scrutiny of a philosopher, but what is sufficient and good enough of a formulation to enable understanding in a commonsense fashion. How this commonsense understanding is formed, what that form is, and what it is based upon in experience – in discussing wellbeing – is precisely what is of interest in this account.

In using labels, codes, headings or words to organize quotes and descriptions one is in fact in the process of creating a novel assembly. In organizing quotes, examples and other descriptive items under a single label, similarities are highlighted and particularities in turn give a sense of the scope of the assembly. Such assemblies can be nested and ordered to give leeway to even larger assemblies in the form of encompassing phenomena and descriptions (Bateson 1972). This is what I understand is done in creating a condensed description of a thick phenomenon. One is not only disassembling or redescribing the understandings of others, but also integrating, condensing and harmonizing them through the creation of new assemblies. With the help of the understandings provided by interviewees the researcher is re-organizing experience, giving words to particular assemblies of experience in order to improve their organization and thus understanding of the phenomenon.

The analysis of moral notions and situations
The formal elements of interactional wellbeing are of particular interest in this account. It would be a reasonable question to ask how the researcher knows he is studying wellbeing instead of some other phenomenon? Interactions are easy to observe, but wellbeing is something different, more abstract. The straightforward answer is that I have focused upon what informants have described as pertinent to their wellbeing in their dealings within the company. This is however only part of the story. In listening to the descriptions of relevant events, in my mind, it was mere commonsense to posit that the descriptions were about wellbeing. The descriptions often had a morality embedded in the description which implicitly gave it a certain quality of being morally good or bad or “ought and ought-not, with attendant vocabulary of praiseworthy and blameworthy” (Burke 1984: 21). This is the last special topic I would like to discuss in more general terms in conjunction with the empirical study of interactional wellbeing.

Interational wellbeing is arguably a moral notion equivalent to good, bad, vicious etc., the qualifier “interactional” does not remove its implicit morality from the concept of wellbeing, it merely denotes an overt quality of this particular language-game. When persons describe instances or situations that occurred with other people it is always implicit if the course of events was good or bad (Burke 1984; Kovesi 1967). Here I am using the terms “good” and “bad” in a very generic and broad sense. When a person says that another person did A or B and it had an effect on them in some way, they are making moral evaluations of what the person did. The morality is implicit in the description. If for example a person says that his boss ridiculed him in front of other people, it is both a description of an event and a moral evaluation of the event (Kovesi 1967). If I as a scholar would not understand that the description includes a self-evident moral evaluation, then I would not and could not understand the person who uttered the description in the way the person meant for it to be understood. There is no such thing as a “pure description” devoid of morality when it comes to describing persons in relation (Burke 1984; Oakeshott 1991a). Such a description would be literally mindless or insensible and insignificant and as such an unrecognizable description of a moral agent.
If one were to ask why ridiculing is immoral, explanations as “it made be feel bad” and the like might be acquired. In this way the bedrock of wellbeing might be traced and reasoned to be in the emotions as so many scholars have done. With moral notions something is described as moral or immoral or good or bad because they are self-evidently immoral, moral, good or bad. Only the weather and the like are amoral. They just know it, meaning it is grounded in their consciousness and understanding of the world they inhabit and not only in their consciousness of their feelings (James 1912/2003). It is because it is understood and recognized directly as what it is taken to be.

The problem with tracing moral judgements or events to feelings is that one assumes that without the feeling the judgement loses its muster. Perhaps most would say that ridiculing a person in front of others is bad even if the event did not make them feel bad. One could say that persons who are treated immorally have the right to feel bad and be angry because of the treatment but do not have to feel bad for the action to be described as immoral. To have the right to feel bad is to recognize the event as something without having the feeling as principal guide for the judgement. In this way an emotion is not a straightforward or necessary recognitor in interactional wellbeing. As described earlier, emotions can be perceived as arising from an understanding or immediate sense of knowing the situation they are in (Goldie 2009) but does not have to be a necessary recognitor to form moral understandings of the events that have taken shape.

To take this point further, if a person says he felt an emotion such as ‘anger’ in response to an understanding of a situation, is this a pure recollection of sense data in conjunction with an event or also, perhaps even foremost, a show of his understanding of when and how to use the word anger and most likely also conduct oneself accordingly? Can a person understand a situation as the kind in which he should or could rightfully and in a commonsense manner feel anger? As already discussed in relation to civil conduct, a sensible answer in my mind is a solid “Yes.” There are interpersonal rules to appropriate expressions according to the situation. These rules are moreover communicated not only by experiences of particular instances but also in language as to how and when a word is appropriately used. The point is that the descriptions given by interviewees is not descriptions as such of what for instance happened but has an embedded ‘psychology’ of moral conduct within them. That is to say, language is not merely used to describe an innate ‘psychology’ but there can be a ‘surface psychology’ of moral conduct within language (Burke 1954/1984). How the totality of experience is organized also includes how morality is organized. Once an act is recognized as something that recognition is the ‘surface psychology’ that explains it. To be more precise, the ‘psychology’ is on the surface and is so obvious that it is most often bypassed without a second thought. It is what makes everyday judgement and its language understandable (Burke 1954/1984). Language can express interpersonal rules for appropriate and inappropriate conduct in conjunction with particular understandings. This overall understanding of language has been elucidated by Wittgenstein (1953/2009; 2009) and others (Burke 1984; Oakeshott 1991a; 1991b) and for our purposes here need not be explored in further detail. What is required is the acknowledgement that it is a reasonable presupposition.

Thus far we have discussed the analysis of single acts with an embedded moral judgement in the description of the acts. In such cases there are only two formal elements or recognitors. In the above-mentioned example of ridicule, the act (first element) has been done by a single person upon another (the relationship is the second element). Now consider the concept “brawl.” It requires added formal elements: physical violence and mutual engagement in violence.
Without the mutual engagement it would most likely be considered “abuse” or “assault.” What makes brawl an easy phenomenon to spot is that it takes place at a single location at a specific moment in time, although the formal elements are shared between two persons. A single person cannot have a brawl by himself. This is a linguistic convention. Now consider the possibility of there being even more formal elements and persons to a phenomenon which are not necessarily connected by a single location or time.

The experience of stress might be an apt example if it is understood not as a sensation but as a recognition of a situation that arises out of multiple instances and formal elements. If a person is asked about stress, as often occurred in this study, one may well give a description of a situation. The following example is paraphrased from a real account given in one of the interviews in this study:

“I have two young children at home and a wife who of course needs and wants me there but the project deadline is nearing and we just noticed that there’s an unknown problem with the product. I already work late into the evenings and now I don’t know how long the problem will take or how big it is. Of course I’m stressed.”

In this description there are formal elements of multiple persons although all are not even mentioned (whom the project is made for and by whose orders, what happens if the deadline is not met), contradictory desires regarding time and location and inability to solve the situation due to lack of knowledge about the problem. There are multiple solutions to these kinds of situations which to my experience most managers know very well by heart. All include dissolution of at least one formal element from the stressful situation. More resources can be appointed, the spouse may be very understanding and support longer days for the time being, the deadline can be extended, the problem can turn out to be very simple etc. It is the unique combination of formal elements that need to be dealt with as it is all the combined elements that make the situation into what it is.

Now consider the possibility of a person being in an unbearable situation which cannot be solved (see Watzlawick 1983; 1990). The person recognizes the hopelessness of the situation because there seems to be no way out, no action can improve the situation, but the formal elements of the situation and how they are connected to form an impossible situation are nonetheless unrecognized by that person. In such a case no intelligent action is possible. There is not necessarily a word for the situation, it is not generally recognized that such situations can exist, but the person can nonetheless be able to with so many words pinpoint all the elements if asked why nothing can be done. In these kinds of cases, which can for now be taken as a theoretical possibility (Watzlawick et al. 1967; Watzlawick et al. 1974), there can be numerous formal elements and their connections can be opaque. These are not necessarily complex situations, but merely complicated by the sheer amount of necessary formal elements which in unison give the situation its unique and yet recognizable form as an impossible situation. These unique combinations of formal elements are not necessarily familiar and recognizable to most which make them difficult to show. What is done in these cases is to show how these complicated situations can arise out of very familiar circumstances or a familiar set of formal elements. This should enable the reader to assess the possibility of there being such phenomena.

In this way the analysis of interactional wellbeing is about the formal elements to situations and actions which give the situation and action its understandability as the kind of situation and action it is understood to be. In this sense, interactional wellbeing is not a single
phenomenon such as “brawl” but to use an analogy, an interactional “arithmetic” to understanding interactions between moral agents. Interactional wellbeing is an assembly of several formal elements. The assembly can be recognized once experience is ordered to recognize the phenomenon. The phenomenon of interactional wellbeing is open-ended because so is understanding and the formation of assemblies. There can be a family resemblance between situations and actions where one has for instance three formal elements and another has perhaps the same three and one or several more. They are thus the same but different. What is nonetheless the same in both cases is how they are at all understood, they are understood through their assembled and recognized form. There is in both cases a similar ‘surface understanding’ of what makes the interactions and situations understandable. The phenomenon of interactional wellbeing is, I submit, in part what I, you and the interviewees use to understand and describe – and also thus engage intelligently in – interactions and in the daily dealings of our everyday lives.

Wellbeing undoubtedly has material characteristics associated with the body, brain, hormones, cells, and so forth. In this study these are not of concern.\footnote{As discussed earlier, I do not believe that the formal elements can be deduced or any way derived from material characteristics. The formal elements are constituted in a way of life. They are firmly within the realm of the ‘artificial’ and re-organizable experience.} Similar to the example of murder I am not interested in the material characteristics of death but the formal elements which make murder into murder and not merely death. In interactional wellbeing something is understood as good or bad and the formal elements upon which these understandings are formed is the principal concern of the second encounter with the empirical material. I do not believe that any non-material act or intervention either good or bad can be understood without understanding the formal elements of the act or intervention.

To reiterate an issue that has already been discussed in the grammar of management: morality, action and understanding are wholly entwined in morally responsible agents. There is not a separate implicit theory of good or bad which is placed upon action as an interpretive device located somewhere in the inner layers of subjectivity. All actions are actions because they are based on understandings. All actions are moral actions as to what is done and what for. In understanding an action, it is evaluated as some sort of moral action in understanding the action as an action conducted by a moral agent. Morality is not an add-on or condiment added to descriptions, it is in the description. For example, to say that person A ridiculed person B and \textit{then} to morally evaluate it as a good deed does not make sense. The same is true of murder. One would say that the description is incoherent because the moral notions embedded in the description of ‘ridicule’ and ‘murder’ do not fit the mold of a good deed. When person A does a direct or indirect deed upon or affecting person B it is understood as something akin to good or bad by person B. This is inherent in person B’s understanding and description of the deed. The form of this understanding is what the second encounter with the empirical material is inquiring into through the descriptions from interviewees.
This study changes the way we perceive wellbeing in organizations. This study does not use common lenses for perceiving wellbeing, for example, like a biological, social, or economic phenomenon. Instead a novel meta-framework is presented for understanding wellbeing, the "dramatistic pentad." Kenneth Burke’s framework cuts the cloth of empirical experience according to an alternative "grammar" and coordinates – agent, agency, act, scene, and purpose. The present study depicts the empirical phenomenon of interactional wellbeing as a co-constituted and relational phenomenon that is enacted by conscious moral agents in organizational settings. By drawing on the presented meta-framework and its venerable intellectual lineage, this study argues that interactional wellbeing in organizational settings concerns the making and breaking of relational balance in organizations. This study highlights the significance of the designed and enacted interaction setups and relational frames for the wellbeing of organizational members.