

## Saying, doing and making: teaching CMM theory

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"A whole lot of philosophy condensed in a drop of grammar"

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953/1991, p. 222).

"Concepts lead us to make investigations; are the expression of our interest, and direct our interest".

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953/1991, § 570).

"The concept of a living being has the same indeterminacy as that of language."

Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1976, no.326

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### ABSTRACT

The paper introduces the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) theory in a way that is intended to be relevant especially for those engaged in the teaching and presenting of CMM theory to others. It introduces the main ideas of the CMM theory and gives examples of how the different aspects of the CMM theory can be taught, exemplified and used.

### Introduction

This paper presents some *points of view*, (Wittgenstein, 1977/1998) of one of the more advanced and sophisticated theories of communication, the Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory – in short, CMM theory. Although this paper has its focus on the teaching of CMM theory it can be read as an introduction to the CMM theory as well.

CMM ideas are connected to Gregory Bateson's (1979) concept of context and the CMM theoretical "toolkit" can be understood as some relevant context markers, perspectives, angles or stories that can be useful in actual situations to understand "what goes on". The concept of context is a *psychological* (or perhaps even a philosophical) and an epistemological concept, and therefore it is never fixed. There is always another story that can be told. Gregory Bateson is famous for starting any answer to a question he was given, by the following words: "This reminds me of a story." CMM theory can therefore be understood in the narrative tradition although it "was born" long before it was fashionable to be "narrative".

One of the two "fathers" of the CMM theory, Prof. Vernon Cronen, gave this definition of what CMM theory is all about when he was asked to give a short definition of the theory:



"Describe CMM in two lines? Well, how about these 4 long sentences:

1. CMM is a practical theory in the pragmatist-systemic tradition.
2. It holds that the coherence of action, and the ability to produce coherence are created inside the process of communication, and that the coherence created is *moral* in nature.
3. CMM offers heuristic models to guide inquiry and intervention into the situated, conjoint construction of meaningful action.
4. Its heuristic models encompass temporality, behaviour, reflexivity, positioning, storying, emotion, reflection and aesthetics in addition to a commitment to the later Wittgensteinian idea that "meaning is use".

(Vernon Cronen, 2002).

These "4 long sentences" focus on "meaning is use". It is a question about how we *practise* the meaning, the ideas. We won't fully understand the ideas until we have tried them out – used them in practice. The social construction of meaning produced is not neutral, but moral. The meaning has implications for the way we tell stories about ourselves and others, stories about what we can and cannot do and about what we ought to do or ought not to do. Therefore, in relation to meaning, there is always the more fundamental category of identity: Who am I in this? What is my position, rights and obligations? We are not just making meaning; we are creating identity.

### How to respond?

Not long time ago, a participant in a one year training course for managers said that she was the new manager for a group of high-school teachers and had recently presented some new administrative procedures for calculating the number of hours the teachers had to work to fulfil their duties – procedures decided by the county, not by her. She was confronted with a question from one of the teachers that surprised her, and she did not really know what or how to answer this question: "What is your own personal attitude in regard to these new procedures?" In the training course she explained that she both wanted to be loyal to the new procedures and that she actually saw them as an improvement compared with the more bureaucratic procedures that the teachers had followed until now. But at the same time she did not want to have the teachers against her from the very beginning, and she also said that she did not want them to see her as "a very tough lady being in opposition to them."

How can we understand (and this means: how can we talk about) the above mentioned example?

It is a central point in cultural psychology that people have *intentions and intentional states* and not internal mechanisms and states (Bruner, 1996). This is a radically different point of view to that of more structurally oriented psychology. If we follow the line of thought that people have intentional states and not internal states (hidden mechanisms, surface and depth, etc), the question raised above from the teacher to the new manager can be talked about (understood) in many different ways.

At this particular moment, how the question could be *doing*, when he/she is in this perspective? What could be understood as:

These are some of the possibilities to be understood as:

- an invitation to make the situation
- an indirect criticism
- the starting point for a new perspective
- if the person is a teacher, a message to speculate about

After the above mentioned, about how the situation could be understood. Some possibilities could be:

- is it proper procedure
- do they want to
- are they / is he
- are they / is he
- is it a nice answer
- answering the

Again the pairs would find themselves

- I wonder if you understand it
- Is it a question
- I am already
- I wonder if you are about it.
- Your question is instead of fixed

The manager who got from being a wife hadn't been allowed

CMM theory is a – especially when you Wittgenstein writes as the functions of



At this particular training course my co-teacher and I asked the group to talk in pairs about how the question could be understood. The question to the group was: "What can the teacher be doing, when he/she is asking the question to the new manager – seen from the teachers own perspective? What could his/her intentions be?"

These are some of the ideas that came up from the group who suggested that the question could be understood as:

- an invitation and as a help to the new manager to explain her own thoughts on the issue to make the situation more informal
- an indirect critique of the new plans
- the starting point of an argument, of a discussion,
- if the person was trying to find out whether the new manager was against or for the teachers,
- a message to (some of) the other persons in the room (about many issues we only can speculate about).

After the above mentioned ideas were presented the group was again invited to talk in pairs about how the situation and the question could be heard from the new manager's perspective. Some possibilities suggested were:

- is it proper professional "behaviour" if I talk about my private opinion?
- do they want to create a trap for me?
- are they / is he testing me by raising the question?
- are they / is he complaining?
- is it a nice and straight forward invitation to me, and I would insult him / them by not answering the question in a straight forward manner?

Again the pairs were asked to come up with ideas to how they would respond if they as a manager would find themselves in a similar situation. Many interesting possibilities were introduced:

- I wonder if you could say a little bit more about your question to give me a chance to understand it more fully.
- Is it a question or is it a point of view in disguise?
- I am already married.
- I wonder if I can come back to this question next time we meet? I have to think more about it.
- Your question stresses what I am really interested in: more personal points of view in stead of fixed political statements.

The manager who had presented the anecdote was very pleased with all the new ideas she had got from being a witness to this process where the other course participants were involved. She hadn't been allowed to say anything during the process until the end of it.

CMM theory is a kind of multi-tool (like a "Swiss army knife") that is useful in any situation – especially when you are practicing in a teaching context. "Think of the tools in a tool box," Wittgenstein writes about language (1953/91, § 11), "The functions of words as tools are as diverse as the functions of these objects [the tools in the tool-box, AH]." If words have functions, then



we are *doing* something each time we are *using* a word in our communication and coordination with others. We have intentions, values, principles and commitments when we say something that we are more or less aware of. Often we just say something to keep the conversation going. At other times we say something in a very conscious way that we might have spent hours and days thinking about how to say.

CMM theory is concerned with the enormous complexity between the micro-social processes and the cultural totality and aspects in which the micro-social daily life events and processes takes place. It is concerned with how we can coordinate and establish meaning (and identity) with each other in a way that we can go on in practice together with or go away from each other.

CMM theory can be a bit complicated to teach and to present to others. As Wittgenstein writes "Not only rules, but also examples are needed for establishing a practice. Our rules leave loop-holes open, and the practice has to speak for itself" (1969/1995, no. 139).

Let us therefore look at each of "the five building blocks" of CMM theory, namely speech acts, episodes, relationships, self and culture.

### Speech acts

It is my experience that it can be difficult for students to get a sense of what a speech act is, especially if you speak language other than English. Pearce (1994) defines speech acts very clearly, "Speech acts are actions that you perform by speaking. They include compliments, insults, promises, threats, assertions, and questions." (p. 104). I will stress the point that "speech acts are *actions*." You do something to the other person(s) when you say something. An utterance is not innocent. But never the less students seem to have difficulties grasping what the concept of speech acts means in practice.

I often invite students to think of a conversation in which they felt a bit awkward and perhaps got stuck. It can be an example of one sentence that you don't understand – that you don't know how to continue in relation to this sentence. For instance, the sentence "Can you give me the phone number to the psychiatric hospital?" can be many actions or, to use Wittgenstein's notion, can be a part of many different language games. Is it a threat? ("I am leaving you."). Is it a promise? ("OK, I'll go back to the ward."). Is it a test? ("Do you know about phone numbers?"). Is it a request for help? ("I am calling my colleagues to give them some information").

Wittgenstein says that there are an infinite number of language games:

"There are *countless* kinds... Here the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.

Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:

Giving orders, and obeying them-

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements-

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)-

Reporting an event-

Speculating about an event-

Forming and testing a hypothesis-

.... Asking, thanking

It seems to me that we have difficulties to see the idea that we are not just saying. A sentence put forward is something – except perhaps when we are arriving.

In the teaching process, for example of what you might call exemplify speech acts, we can be called lecturing. And "one of you might say something like an expression "do an impression" stresses the point that we are actually *doing* something.

When we worked together to find out how many perspectives there are.

Pearce (1994) writes that then it is clear that we are not others" (p. 149). This is and that we, as sophists, are others. I do hope it is open up possibilities – whatever that is – (84ff.) could be a perspective not prefer.

It is with episodes as with you. You (normally) don't see the sense. An episode is not an episode but you could also see an episode – you are aware of yourself about this episode, yourself a cup of coffee might make a phone episode").



.... Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.” (1953, § 23)

It seems to me that speech acts are so fundamental in our practical oral communication that we have difficulties to grasp the, in one way obvious and in another way very counter intuitive, idea that we are not just saying something, but the we at the same time are *doing* something. A sentence put forward in a lecture room with no students has no meaning. You are not doing anything – except perhaps making a fool out of yourself or, perhaps exercising before the students are arriving.

In the teaching process it is crucial always to include examples and, if possible, to be a living example of what you are talking about. When I am in the mood and “hit a lucky punch”, I exemplify speech acts while I am talking, saying something like: “What I am doing now can be called lecturing, explaining, imposing, teaching, irritating, humiliating, respectful” acts. And “one of you might say: ‘Isn’t this too abstract?’ and I could do or perform an insult by saying something like: ‘Yes, especially for those of you who aren’t smart enough’.” Perhaps the expression “do an insult” is not exactly the most correct and fluent English you have read, but it stresses the point that when we are saying something we are not just saying and talking, we are actually *doing* something.

When we worked with the example from the new manager above we were actually trying to find out how many actions the person asking the question could be doing, seen from different perspectives.

Pearce (1994) writes that “if power is defined as your ability to perform certain speech acts, then it is clear that none of us have absolute power, but that some of us have more power than others” (p. 149). This underlines the ethical point that power exists in every micro-social process and that we, as sophisticated communicators, can use and mis-use this power when we speak with others. I do hope it is clear that my stance in this question is to say that we have an obligation to open up possibilities for others to make their own choices, to find their own voice and pathway – whatever that is – in the stream of complexity. Otherwise a *gamemaster* (Pearce, 1994, p. 84ff.) could be a person who strategically seduced others to find themselves in places they did not prefer.

### Episodes

It is with episodes as with speech acts: What is an episode, really? Has anyone *seen* an episode? You (normally) don’t say: “I have lost my episode, has anyone found it?” It just wouldn’t make sense. An episode is a situation that usually is created by at least two persons in conversation, but you could also regard the situation in which you are sitting and reading this text as “a reading episode” – you are as a reader in a kind of conversation with this text and in conversation with yourself about this text. You can decide to stop reading and go out in your kitchen and make yourself a cup of coffee (a “making coffee episode”); while you wait for the water to boil you might make a phone call to your dentist and make an appointment (an “appointment making episode”).



An episode is not a thing, it is the name you give to an exchange of speech acts in which a relationship occurs. It might be your relationship with your computer while reading or writing. It might be your relationship with your dog ("play" or "training" or both at the same time). An episode is what you happen to be a part of with other persons when you are exchanging speech acts. In normal daily life you smoothly go from one episode to another without much difficulty. Gregory Bateson studied young cats while they were playing – an episode of play. Suddenly one of the kittens would scream and run away: What had happened was, according to Bateson, that for one of the kittens, the one who ran away, the play-episode was no longer a "play-episode". Suddenly one little bite in the ear had become too hard, and it was no longer play; the episode has shifted to a more serious and perhaps dangerous 'biting-episode'. If the cats could name it they might have called it an attacking episode.

"Life can be thought of as a waterfall of moments," my wife Anette said the other day. She did that in what might be called 'an exchange of poetic ideas-episode'. "Episodes are made by a process called *punctuation*, in which conversants impose a set of distinctions on the ongoing stream of events" (Pearce, 1994, p. 154). I prefer to use my wife's term "moments" instead of "event" because you might already have given a name to an event whereas it is practically impossible to name all the moments, all the inputs, all the bits that occur around you. When you practice punctuation you deliberately give a name to a certain episode to practice the skill of using different names, to make different punctuations to name "what is going on here". Both a daily life problem and "a philosophical problem has the form: 'I don't know my way about'" (Wittgenstein, 1953, no.123). Giving a name to the situation, to the episode, might give you a hint of how to act and what to do and what to say in the specific situation. Giving a name to whatever is going on, to whatever is happening right in front of you and perhaps inside you is introducing a language-game in which you might know which rules to follow to act "properly". "When the language-games change, then there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the meanings of words change" (Wittgenstein, 1969, § 65). You make meaning by imposing a well known language game to whatever happens to you in this moment – or afterwards, or you create a new meaning, a new concept of what might be going on in the situation. You come home and find your spouse very upset – either shouting or saying nothing; the bodily expressions (the analogic communication/language) tell you something; but you just don't know exactly which words you should use to describe and understand this episode; you don't know which story and plot the communication is a part of. You might ask: "What's the matter?" Or: "Hey, what's wrong? What has happened?" Or you might say: "What the hell is the matter with you? Each day I come home something is wrong. You should see a psychiatrist!". This speech act might be the start of what could be called a "reproaching", "criticizing" or a "humiliating" episode. What an episode is depends on what the participants (or observers to it) define the episode to be. The naming process is essential, it creates identity, constraints and possibilities. The naming process is the start of a story about what is going on. This might be a story about: teasing, solidarity, friendliness, criticizing, a fight or the start of a romance.

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In the example in the beginning of this paper, the task was to find out which episode was created through not just the question, but through the response. It is always the answer (the 2nd statement) and even more important, the answer to the answer (the 3rd statement) that establishes the episode.

There is an enormous richness in any given conversation and there are always many possibilities you might have as a participant in a conversation depending on how you name the actual waterfall of moments. Each participant in a given conversation might have his or her "working definition" (Pearce, 1994) of a situation, of an episode, and as long as it moves the participants within that working definition of the episode, meaningful coordination takes place between those involved. A skilled practitioner (a leader, a consultant or a teacher) can change an inhibitory episode in which the other or oneself feels stuck to an episode in which new possibilities for action and understanding takes place. This would be an act of game mastery. This is why you can think of communication and speech acting as "life as an art", the art of creating possibilities for action, for how to go on (Wittgenstein, 1953).

### Relationships

Focusing on relationships as the primary unit is not trivial. In the Western tradition we have been preoccupied by ourselves as individuals only for about four or five hundred years, with our own feelings, thoughts and well being, and it seems easy to forget that we all belong to others, to some one. One of the ideas often presented in modern existentialist literature is that "you *are* basically alone". There is a nice little paradox or rather a twist here. You can only speak about being alone in the context of being with others, in the context of relationships.

Gregory Bateson (1979) was in modern times (the last century) one of the first to focus on relationships – and differences. You can only speak about a relationship if you speak about at least two different entities: the relation is a difference. The relationship is something between at least two persons (or other entities). The relationship is nothing in itself. The relationship is something that exists between us, something that connects us and separates us at the same time. Bateson (1979) said that those who understood him the best were former Marxists and former Catholics because they were used to think in systems, in patterns, in relationships.

If you think about the example again from the beginning of this text, you can explore some of the words and the broader meaning related to these words if you should characterise the relationships involved: The relationship between the new manager and the person asking the question? The relationship between this person and the other teachers in the room? The relationships between particular groups of teachers? The relationship the person who asks the question has had to the former manager? The relationship his wife might have to her boss? The new managers relationships to her colleagues at the same level in the organisation? Her relationship to her boss? Her relationship to the other persons at the course I was teaching?

Relationships are always local, specific, concrete. More than the abstract and academic definitions and presentations of what a relationship "is", it might be a useful idea to let those with whom you work come up with their own definitions and words that might be theirs to characterise



the relationships they are a part of using their own experiences with relationships. The Danish philosopher Ole Fogh Kirkeby (2000) has coined the term "the principle of translocutionarity" to express the idea that you do not know what you think until you have heard yourself say or seen yourself write your thoughts. Your thoughts aren't just ready-made inside your head. They are created while you are saying them. Michael White talks about the importance of "saving the said from the saying of it" (2000, p. 35ff.) to point out that new ideas can be lost in the process of searching for words to express them. Relationships are named and through this naming process they get their significance and identity for those involved.

### Self

As persons we *learn* how to be human (to follow Bateson's ideas) from the context in which we grow up and are active over time. We not only learn one story about our selves, we hear probably many stories about ourselves. We also have models that originate from "copies". We might "copy" our parents, grandparents, teachers, film heroes or other persons that we have seen act and whose story lines we have heard or read about. We are always active in this learning process. We internalise practical ways to live a life and ways to be a person, to act as a person. In this process we at the same time create stories, discourses, about who we are. The CMM term often used is that we develop "scripts" for who we are that legitimate what we do, as if it was a script for a role in a plot. The rumour goes about Bateson that he once should have said that he had never taken a fully conscious decision, because he could never be conscious about the premises from which he took his decisions. Bateson's point is that our actions as humans are performed as actions in a culture and from cultural premises, values and principles that we cannot always be aware of. Therefore the non-conscious premises from which we act are spoken of as social – or cultural as it would be in CMM terms.

At the other hand there is always an "I" or a "self" that experiences and speaks. We could call this a phenomenological self, an experiencing self. This self, this "first person position I" is usually not always in doubt, but is most often quite conscious and aware of his/her intentions related to the actions in life. Seen from "the inside" of the experience "I experience my world from *my* perspective." I experience *my* story, *my* thoughts, *my* feelings, *my* ethics, *my* intentions - although I might be in doubt of many things and often feel confused. My world might be fairly stable – and suddenly I find myself with my hands trembling or feeling depressed, having anxiety, being in love, being fired, being excited, being angry. And these modes or states can change within seconds – like a stream of consciousness (to follow the notion of the American psychologist William James (McDermott, 1977)).

CMM assumes that the self is created in stories and that these stories are guidelines (scripts) for actions. The self can therefore best be explored, experienced and "developed", changed or transported by the person him/herself through different practices of telling and re-telling his or her stories. For instance, by being interviewed, being listened to or by having the opportunity to listen to others talk about what the person has just said (re-telling practice). The important point here is that it is only the person him/herself who has "the truth" about his or her own life.

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You find out “who I am” when you listen to yourself talking or formulating yourself in writing. Then you might explore the stories that either are preferred or are not preferred by you. You do not know who you are until you have formulated a story about who you might be (following the already mentioned principle of translocutionarity). The self is constituted through words and meanings we have borrowed from the culture. Every experience can only be expressed in words that our culture allows us to use. The self is therefore always emerging through the processes of conversation, storytelling and making meaning from actions we and others perform and from stories we hear or tell ourselves.

Even emotions can be considered as actions. This point of view might sound very strange and weird. In our culture the dominant story is that emotions and feelings are inside the person, inside the self and belongs to the self. Emotions are generally not understood as skills and actions related to the body and that they basically are learned in specific inter-actions, meaning systems, narratives and cultures. Emotions are at the same time closely connected to the specific individual self *and* to the specific cultural context in which this self is actually realizing itself. The words, the language and the language-game that the culture offers and allows individuals to *speak themselves* in, creates invisible limitations for our understanding of ourselves:

“Our selves are “given” to us by our society... We are expected to act within a cluster of rights and responsibilities deriving from our parents’ position within the social structure, the community in which we live, and the pattern of conversations in which we are able or required to participate. The social process of conferring an identity is so powerful that it is usually invisible....Our selves are part of the process by which we make our social worlds. Patterns of conversations with our parents, brothers and sisters, teachers and classmates, and government officials *produce* the “self” that we know ourselves to be”.

(Pearce, 1994, p. 250-251)

People sometimes make conclusions about themselves that sometimes are “thin”, not very rich and have few possibilities for actions in the “production of the self”. It is the purpose of the CMM theory-inspired practitioner to enrich this “thin” description of those with whom we work to co-create a more thick or richly described alternative story about the person so that the person in focus can have more options to choose about in his or her “conclusions about the self” (White 2000). You do this simply by inviting more stories with more examples related to “the preferred self” – the self you would like to be(come). The usual way to think and talk about the self is inspired by psychodynamic language “mechanisms of the self”, “psychological mechanisms”, “defence mechanisms” or by psychiatric language, “I am depressed”, “He is a borderline”. CMM theory offers an alternative to the traditional intrinsic languages of the self (which most often lead to feelings of failure) that are based on the person’s own experiences and preferred stories (White, 2000). Kirkeby (2000) has similar ideas; he calls his approach radical *phenomenology*.

It is most useful in any professional context to ask people to speak about what is precious and important for them. Through such processes it might become more clear how the self is constantly in the process of making and remaking – as we saw in our example in the beginning of this



paper. When a person is bringing "order", meaning, into his or her own experiences ("waterfall of moments"), he/she is at the same time "authoring" and "re-authoring" these experiences into a story about his or her preferred identity and most often feels more clear about what to do (White, 2000).

### Culture

In the CMM theory the concept of "culture" is perhaps as complex as the concept of "self". "Culture" seems on the one hand to be such an obvious and straightforward concept ("we all 'know' what 'a culture' is") and on the other hand it is extremely difficult to define this concept. When "culture" is everywhere and when everything can be seen as part of the culture the concept "culture" has no counter-concept and becomes a merely descriptive and perhaps an empty term. In everyday language we speak about the "Islamic culture" or "middle class culture" to point to some differences in ways of living. There are different rules for social interaction in different cultures. Over the last thirty years it has been common to speak about "organizational culture" to try to describe was is particular for one organization compared to another (Morgan, 1988).

One of the key concepts the CMM theory offers when we are dealing with culture, is the metaphor "horizon". When we look at, live in and speak about the culture we live in, we might take it for granted. Our culture is the world. As in the Middle Ages we might assume that there are no other *real* worlds than the world we live in. We don't even think of the horizon as having a limit. We often don't reflect or philosophise over our own culture and the invisible assumptions that counts as rules in the communities and societies we live in. "There are many different cultures in the world with different scripts, frames and rules" (Pearce, 1994, p. 298)

A culture is constituted by the rules for acting and speaking: What can be done by whom and to whom? What can be said by whom and to whom – and in which contexts? We learn the rules of "our culture" when we grow up as children, some take a critical stance to some part of our culture, others defend the existing culture, and it is always done by actions, through the practices, of human beings. "In the beginning was the deed", as Goethe writes in *Faust*. Not "the word" as it is said in the Bible. Not "the meaning" – but the action. One action might have very comprehensive consequences: The attack on the twin towers in New York City, September 11th 2001, the killing of John F. Kennedy, a marriage, a divorce, a sexual affair, etc. This means that the pattern of the culture that we follow more or less willingly can always be changed. There is always a possibility for another action.

Power is an essential part of any culture: which rules are dominating? who is dominated? who is marginalized? which way of talking is preferred? To have a strong focus on the cultural aspect of our worlds, as CMM theory has, is therefore to go against the tendency to individualize, personalize or even familiarize in a way that creates faults and failures and makes individuals feel guilt, shame and not good enough. There is always a problem – otherwise the story wouldn't be interesting, as Bruner (1996) writes. Power in modern cultures seems to function in such a way that we have become our own policemen. We have an eye on ourselves and become our own best critics.

CMM theory invites everyone to reflect and to philosophise over the norms and the actions in

the specific culture in the culture and/or to the horizon of your culture a flight to where there is culture as "the inexpressible" was able to express and

The term game making to engage in conversation called rhetorical sensitivity is following when the own preferred story as as neutral (not judging) that you are really in share them.

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the specific culture in which we live to make it possible to strengthen some parts of practice of the culture and/or to weaken other practices in the culture. You might discover the *boundary* of the horizon of your culture, when you speak about your culture and its practices: "Always take a flight to where there is a better view" as Wittgenstein (1977/1998) writes. He speaks about culture as "the inexpressible (that).. perhaps provides the background, against which whatever I was able to express acquires meaning" (1977/1998, p 23e, written in 1931).

The term game mastery is central when you want to create change or if you want to be able to engage in conversations with persons from other cultures. Game mastery is based on the skill called rhetorical sensitivity, which is the ability to be sensitive to the moral order another person is following when they speak about their perspective. This skill demands that you can leave your own preferred story and moral about how the world is and should be. It requires an effort to act as neutral (not judging or evaluating) and interested and curious as possible; to show the others that you are really interested in their perspectives, values and hopes, although you might not share them.

Rhetorical sensitivity and game mastery are two sides of the same coin. These skills imply that you can engage in a conversation with others in such a way that the rules both yourself and others are following can change. Game mastery consists in the ability to formulate or to create conditions in which the others you are engaged with, might formulate another story based on other rules and moral assumptions than the ones they have followed until now. To practice game mastery requires a willingness to experiment in life, to go against the taken for granted; to dare to say what has perhaps never been said before in the specific context and culture. And to enjoy this process and the sparkling, consummatory moments this process might create. This is also when teaching and learning is at its best.

### Summary

In this paper I have outlined some of the main ideas of the CMM theory. They have to some extent been related to the example in the beginning of this paper. Speech acts are those actions you perform when you say something to others in a conversation; you do not know your own speech act until you get a response. Speech acts can create a pattern that you might describe as an episode with a start and an ending. In any episode you have relations to others. Through these relations you are constituted and constitute yourself as a self. You perform actions in many relationships and in this sense you have many selves. Any action of the self takes place in a certain culture that at the same time is maintained by these actions or might even be changed by the actions of people. Life can therefore be seen as an art in which you perform skills and knowledges. You only learn "the culture of CMM theory" by participating in it, by using it. You do not learn it by reading or hearing about it. By the practice of reading you only become a better reader. Through the practice of playing and experimenting with the notions of the CMM theory you might get a better insider knowledge and understanding of what CMM theory can be used for.



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