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Movements of Feeling and Moments of Judgement: Towards an Ontological Social Constructionism[*]

John Shotter

What is involved, in practice, coming to a judgement? The Norwegian family therapist, Tom Andersen, characterized himself as "a wanderer and worrier," he was constantly reflecting on his ways of 'going on', on his own practice, to further develop and refine them. Each new way came to him, he said, on reaching a 'crossroads', a point when he felt unable to continue any longer in the same way. But once he stopped doing what he had come to see as ethically wrong, he found, he said, that the "alternatives popped up almost by themselves" (Anderson/Jensen, 2007: 159). What I want to discuss is the fact that, while we can say that we can quite self-consciously and deliberately decide not to do something (perhaps never again) at a particular moment, in a new and particular situation we cannot be said to decide at any particular instant in time, positively what to do. New ways of acting cannot be planned; they have to emerge. As Lehrer (2009) suggests, coming to act in a way that seems to be for the best in a particular situation is not something we can decide upon simply within ourselves – judgmental work, in which we go out bodily, to relate ourselves imaginatively and feelingfully to various aspects of our current circumstances, aspect-by-aspect, sequentially, over time, seems to be required. It is what the nature of this imaginative judgmental work feels like, looks like, and sounds like that I want to discuss in this paper.

Key words: feelings, judgement, orientation, resourcefulness, ontological social constructionism

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> "To get clear about philosophical problems, it is useful to become conscious of the apparently unimportant details of the particular situation in which we are inclined to make a certain metaphysical assertion. Thus we may be tempted to say 'Only this is really seen' when we stare at unchanging surroundings, whereas we may not at all be tempted to say this when we look about us while walking" (Wittgenstein 1965: 66).

> "... what [these others] did was outside my skin. But whatever it was that I learned, my learning happened within my experiential sequence of what these important others... did" (Bateson 1979: 24).

Here, I want to discuss a major rethinking of Social Constructionism, concerned with how we can become a certain kind of person – with how to become a good listener, a good speaker, a good therapist or manager, etc., able to *engage* with one's current circumstances in such a way as to be able to *resolve* on lines of action within them uniquely best suited to one's immediate needs. The approach might be called an ontological rather then an epistemological form of social constructionism, as central to it will be a concern with people developing different kinds of what I would like to call "ontological skills," skills to do with being able to adopt this, that, or some other kind of active relation to one's surroundings. Thus, instead of a focus on us as static thinkers, concerned to do our thinking within one or another orderly system of unchanging representations, I shall talk much more of us as being able to adopt this, that, or some other *attitude*, *orientation*, or *way of relating* ourselves to our surroundings *while moving around within them*, thus to be better able, in Wittgenstein's (1953) terms, to know our 'way around', or to feel more 'at home' in them, with the consequence of better 'knowing how to go on' within them.

As we shall see, adopting this approach will entail a focus on trying to grasp how much our bodies can 'do for us', so to speak, in the background to our more self-conscious, deliberately conducted activities, a focus on how much we learn all unawares as we intertwine our bodily *movements* in with particular features of our surroundings. It will also entail a focus much more on *preparing* than on *planning activities*, activities to do with how to adopt

an attitude or orientation rather than with possible sequences of action to take.

Attention to such issues is not all that easy to sustain, for it entails trying to capture things 'in motion', which means trying to capture them while they are on the way to being *other than* they already are – in other words, we cannot easily name the *things* of our concern, for they have the character of, as William James (1890. 253) put it a long time ago, "*signs of direction* in thought".[1] They are ephemeral or transitional phenomena which have their being only in the unfolding dynamics, in the 'time-contours', of the feelings their arouse in us. However, although we cannot easily name them, we "nevertheless," says James, can "have an acutely discriminative sense" (1890: 253) of their direction and 'shape'. Indeed, as I have outlined else-where (Shotter 2005a), they continually give rise both to the happening of "transitory understandings" and "action guiding anticipations." And nowhere is this more prominently apparent to us than in the *grammatical* sensibilities at work in us as we make use of words, both in fashioning our utterances as speakers and in making sense of others utterances as listeners – and it is with how we can work with these sensings and senses that we have now have to consider.

Once we 'turn' in this direction, once we adopt this approach – and move away from the static thinking subject towards the active, moving around agent – we realize that we can face two very different kinds of difficulties in our lives, not just one. While there are those difficulties we can formulate as problems and think of solving by the application of rational or methodical thought, we can also face another kind of problem altogether: what we might call difficulties of orientation, or difficulties of relating, to the unique, never before encountered, circumstances within which we find ourselves. Such difficulties often begin with our being bewildered or confused, with our, as

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[1]   As such *signs of direction in thought* James (1890: 253-254) went on to note: "Their function is to lead from one set of images to another... If we try to hold fast the feeling of direction, the full presence comes and the feeling of direction is lost... Now what I contend for, and accumulate examples to show, is that 'tendencies' are not only de-scriptions from without, but that they are among the *objects* of the stream, which is thus aware of them from within, and must be described as in very large measure con-stituted of *feelings of tendency*, often so vague that we are unable to name them at all."

Wittgenstein (1953) puts it, not knowing our "way about" (no. 123). These difficulties cannot be overcome simply by our thinking *about* them, for at first we have nothing to thinking *with* – the qualitatively unique nature, the *character* of situation we are 'in', is unclear to us. Only gradually, as we begin to move around within it, does its nature begin, so to speak, 'to come into focus' for us, so that we can gain a practical sense of "how to go on" (no. 151) in the situation and resolve on its practical meaning for us, how we best should act within it.

This new approach to Social Constructionism thus opens up a whole new realm of inquiry to us, one far less to do with our abilities as motionless thinkers, performing inner manipulations on inner mental representations (as in all the more cognitive approaches to psychology), and much more to do with our feeling our way forward in the moment, while moving around in the world.

The image we need is, I think, something like this: It is as if we are living always within a thick fog, and must work like blind persons in terms of 'touchings' or 'sensings', rather than in terms of 'seeings'.[2] However, what we have to gain a sense of through our sensings and touchings, is not of what actual objects are there before us, but of the *possibilities* these actualities

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[2]   Here's the response of a friend, John Fenwick, to my saying it is like being in a fog: "Probably because I swim long distances at least four times each week and view myself as being a swimmer, the swimming analogy works better for me. In this regard, when learning to swim in a constantly moving stream, one has to constantly reorient and adjust constantly to once-only-occurring experiences, requiring constant reorientation of one's body to these changes just to stay afloat, and then requiring agency and all that implies (in terms of visual perception and cognition) to move with intentionality and directionality. That is, swimming requires making constant judgements in *now-time* and thinking doesn't help much, which is too slow. In terms of 'stop doing' so that one can reorient in the present, it would be like when one is drowning to stop thrashing about and to relax and float, if you get my drift so to speak. Buddhists refer to this as letting go or putting down the hot stone of suffering. Just put it down. Or it could be as when a child decides or is moved to stop playing with one toy and for some reason starts to engage in another play activity. Anyway, for me, the fog analogy in contrast implies that only the protagonist is in movement within a field of fixed objects or possibilities. Are these possibilities fixed or in constant motion and constantly changing?" Clearly, further exploration of the many different possible metaphoric images appropriate here is required. As we know, while each metaphor is revealing, it is also concealing. I am very grateful to John for this one.

present to us for our next possible steps, the anticipations aroused in us by our current circumstances.

This capacity, to operate in terms of ephemeral, dynamic phenomena, which have their being only in the unfolding 'time-contours' of the feelings they arouse in us, is of course not a capacity possessed by any mechanical entities. It is, as we shall see, a capacity exhibited by beings only with an animate, living body – a topic that, with our focus in the past almost only on 'minds', thought of almost only in terms of mechanical, information processing imagery, is somewhat unfamiliar to us, even though our bodily being is in fact very familiar to us.

Thus – if we are to orient ourselves effectively in our inquiries within it – this new, *bodily oriented* approach to Social Constructionism requires the development of a whole new range of theoretical, or better, *descriptive* concepts, if we are both to portray the rich and detailed nature of the results of our embodied 'gropings' within it, i.e., the possibilities for action they reveal to us, *and* to direct and organize our inquires within our surroundings further.

Tom Andersen and the importance of 'just happening' events

To put some flesh and blood into this account, to give it some living import, I would like for a while to discus the psychotherapeutic practices of Tom Andersen,[3] who lived through many different 'turnings' in his approach as to how he might best conduct himself as a practitioner, concerned to help others conduct their lives in a more life-enhancing fashion. He characterized himself as a "wanderer and a worrier" (Andersen, n.d.), and talked of his "professional walk" as confronting him with a series of "road forks" or "crossroads," that were to do, not with making a *choice* between, say, an A or a B, but to do with "having to give something up, really give it up" (Andersen 2007: 159).

Clearly, Tom had his own 'inner lodestone' guiding his *wanderings* and his *worryings*, his own 'inner compass' that was 'pointing' toward a 'some-

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[3]   Tragically, Tom Andersen died on May 15, 2007 from the injuries he received when he fell on the rocky Norwegian coast. He was a close and dear friend and I miss him greatly.

thing' that he never ceased trying to achieve. It gave him a feeling of dis-quiet, a feeling of '*not-yet-having-arrived*', of '*not-being-there-yet*', "a restlessness in my body that won't leave me alone," he said (Andersen 2007: 171), a feeling of restless that 'called' on him to act in some way – it is the nature of that felt tension, that feeling that seemed to guide him in all his therapeutic activities and in the innovations he made in his practices, that I want to try to highlight here. For it was not something that Tom *thought*, it is not a special *theory* or piece of information that could – if only the right words could be found – be set out as 'his' crucial perspective or framework. Indeed, as he himself said in *The Reflecting Team in Action* book (Friedman 1995): "My way of telling about the origin and development of the reflecting process has shifted over the years. At first I often referred to theories, as if these processes were born our of intellectuality. Now I do not think so. I think rather they were consequences of feelings. Although I was unaware of it when the reflecting process first appeared in March 1985, I now think it was a solution to my feeling of discomfort as a therapist" (Andersen 1995: 11). In other words, it was something that Tom first found 'just happening' in his own body, that was the basic source of the changes he made in his prac-tice over the years.

For instance, in the interview he did with Per Jensen just before he died, he commented that in the early days, even before the move out of "the closed room," he and his colleagues were already changing their practices due to their feelings of discomfort certain ways of proceeding aroused. When they tried to apply the Milan approach and say to people: 'we think you should think like this', they *felt* the unpleasantness of it. For, in effect, they were saying: 'You should stop thinking like you do, and start thinking like us'. It was about telling other people how they should live their lives, Tom said, and they could not continue doing it. Indeed, as he went on to comment, "It came as a great relief. And it was a big transition – from 'either-or' to 'this *and* this' (Andersen 2007: 159). For what might seem to be a small transition in practice, in fact turned out to be a 'door' that, so to speak, opened up a whole new world. For, as he put it:

> "Without realizing it then, I would now say that 'either-or' belongs in a
> world one can describe as immovable and to what we call also call 'the

non-living'. So that is to say we worked with living people as though they belonged to 'the non-living'. It felt uncomfortable, and it was a relief to move over to the 'this *and*' perspective [i.e, into ways of *relating*]" (Andersen 2007: 159).

For it was the beginning of a move into a world of *living* beings and *living* movement.

Gradually, over the years, Andersen continued to reflect on his own practice, on his *way* of 'going on', to further develop and refine it... and then continued to worry yet further about the right words in which to express what seemed to be his new *way*.

Each new *way* came from him reaching a 'crossroads', from him *not* being able to continue any longer in the same way, from *stopping* something he came to see as ethically wrong... and then finding that, as he turned away from it, "alternatives popped up almost by themselves" (Andersen 2007: 159). About these "road forks," he noted in a recent account: "It has been very interesting to try to clarify what made me go down one road and not the other. If those are to be called 'choices', the choices have been very emotional. I'm speaking as an Academic. There have been very few rational choices. It has also been interesting to notice that most of the choices have been to leave out something and say, 'I cannot continue on that road anymore'. I had to get out of it; it felt too uncomfortable to continue. That is interesting; not the choice of the road to follow, but to leave out things" (Andersen, in press).

What I think is interesting here, and what in particular I want to emphasize, is the minimal role of rational choice, of self-consciously conducted deliberations in this process. Indeed, as I see it, what is of crucial importance to us are the feelings that *just happen* within us as we at first 'grope around' in the somewhat 'foggy' surroundings within which we must find our 'bearings'.

A landscape of possibilities, not actualities

In the past, beginning with the notion of "joint action," and moving on through Bakhtin's (1981, 1984, 1986) talk of the "dialogical," and on to Merleau-Ponty's (1968) account of *chiasmicly*-structured events, I have been

very much concerned with events happening *between* people. But here today, I want – in a way that might seem for a social constructionist, some might say, a little 'off colour' – to talk of events that can happen within us as individuals, events that, as Gadamer (1989: xxviii) says, happen "to us over and above our wanting and doing". For, as I see it, we cannot choose how to act in the new and unique situations we encounter in our practical lives, we cannot *plan* an appropriate line of action. We can, however, engage in self directed explorations of the new circumstances (both actual and imaginative, as we shall see), and it is in these explorations, I claim, that appropriate *possible ways* of acting can emerge.

However... while we can *decide* very precisely what *not* to do, as Tom Andersen came to realize, *resolving* on a new line of action, gathering together all the relevant features of the now new situation one faces, takes *judgement* – for, to repeat, we have to consider, not facts, but possibilities. And a *moment of judgement* – the 3 to 5 second 'present' moment of a judgment (Stern 2004) – entails, I want to suggest, some *judgemental work,* work in which we go out, imaginatively and feelingfully, to relate ourselves to various aspects of our current circumstances, aspect-by-aspect, sequentially, over time, with the aim of gathering them all together (resolving them) into what we might call an *inner landscape of possibilities*. Only once we have done this, only when we know our "way about" within such a landscape can we feel some confidence in "going on" (Wittgenstein 1953).

It is what the nature of that imaginative judgmental work feels like, looks like, and sounds like that I want to discuss below. And I am going to take Tom's comments above on the emergence of his own practice as central, for, as I shall claim, they capture very precisely what emergent developments in a practice situated within the sphere of human relations are, *in practice*, actually like. For, coming to act in a way that seems to be *for the best* in a particular situation is not something we can *decide* upon simply *within* ourselves, we must turn towards the now new situation to which we have chosen to relate ourselves, and open ourselves to being spontaneously responsive to it – if we can do that, we will then find that various crucial *happenings* simply will occur quite spontaneously in the complex processes at work in the "popping up" of alternatives.

The 'livingness' of our living activities – what makes our sense of possibilities possible

However, before we can come to a grasp of what it is that allows these *happenings* to occur, that makes them possible, I must make a number of preliminary comments to do with the nature of living activities in contrast to dead, mechanical ones. For, as I see it, it is the whole *attitude of mind* we have inherited from Descartes that stands in the way of our paying attention to crucial features of the 'livingness' of our living activities.

Firstly, we must note that all our living activities are developmental, they are both *identity preserving* and *irreversible* in time; they thus have a *style* to them such that the others around us (and we ourselves for that matter) can *anticipate*, if not our actual next step, at least our *possible* next steps. In other words, they can be said to have a *grammar* to them. Indeed, as Bakhtin (1981) puts it: "The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word; it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by *that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word*. Such is the situation of any living dialogue" (Bakhtin 1981: 280, my emphasis). No machines operating in terms simply of cause-and-effect processes can arouse anticipations of next *possible* steps in each other in this way – this is of crucial importance.

Secondly, in such a spontaneously responsive sphere of activity as this, instead of one person first acting individually and independently of an other, and then the second replying also individually and independently of the first, we act jointly, as a *collective-we*. For we respond to each other's utterances bodily, in a 'living' way without our having first 'to work out' how to respond to each other. This means that when someone acts, their activity cannot be accounted as wholly their own activity – for in being spontaneously responsive to each other, everyone's acts are partly 'shaped' by those of the others around them. This is where all the (largely still uncharted) strangeness of the dialogical begins ("joint action" – Shotter 1980, 1984, 1993a and b). Of especial importance here, is not only the fact that such actions are neither yours nor mine, but truly 'ours', but also that fact that a 'something', a unique

'it' with its own qualitative character is created amongst all involved in the interaction.

Samuel Todes (2001) suggests a third important characteristic of our living, human, bodily activities: He suggests that we are often disoriented, bewildered, or *lost* in the world, in the sense that, like Tom Andersen, we find ourselves experiencing a restlessness, a sense of lack in ourselves – an indeterminate lack of something-or-other – without at first any sense of what will remove that lack. As he puts it: "We came into the world 'lost'. It was not that we *had* lost something, but that we *were* lost. If we had lost something, it would have been something we previously possessed.... [Thus] our whole quest of discovery is thus initially prompted by need rather than desire. It is initially 'directed' not to get what we want but to discover what we want to get" (Todes 2001: 177) – we retrospectively 'discover' our needs to ourselves by finding in our explorations what will satisfy them. Todes (2001) thus suggests that, irrespective of what we might cognitively desire in our actions, our bodies are primary oriented towards becoming well oriented in our surroundings, towards achieving what he calls *poise*.

Just as our two eyes automatically achieve a common point of fixation and a clear focus, thus to give us a visual sense of *depth*, i.e., a bodily sense of what is near to and what is far from us, so also with the rest of our bodily senses. Their *intentionality* is aimed at our achieving *poise*, a being 'at homeness' in our current surroundings. Indeed, as he sees it, being poised is "being in touch with one's *circumstances*" (Todes 2001: 66), being ready to respond immediately and spontaneously in what ever way is required by the exigencies of our circumstances. "To lose touch is immediately to lose one's poise" (Todes 2001: 66). In other words, the basic *intentionality* of our bodies is directed towards giving us the global sense of 'where' currently we are and where we might go next, presupposed in all our higher forms of self-directed activity. We are continually trying to learn how best to *orient* ourselves in our surroundings so as to be *knowingly in touch with the others and othernesses around us.* It is a basic need – a need quite different from Maslow's (1943) need for "self-actualization."

Thus the success of our becoming oriented is not to be found in our actually *executing a precisely namable sequence of activities*, but in something

prior to it. As Todes (2001: 65-66) says, "as soon as I am poised in my circumstance, I know *what I* am doing. I know not merely what movements I am making. I know at once, by doing it... *what* I am doing." Along with knowing how, bodily, we are walking on two rather than four feet; how we know that we walking forwards rather than sideways; that our bodies are upright rather than horizontal; that the car you are in is turning rather then going in a straight line; that are moving uphill rather than downhill; and so on and so on; these are 'sensings' continually present to us that work in the background to *orient* us in our more deliberate actions, a part of our *composure*, *poise* (balance), or *assuredness* in the world. In other words, in our coming to feel 'at home' within our surroundings, we come to be knowingly aware of the possibilities available to us in acting in relation to the others and othernesses in them. As we shall see, this work prior to our acting, to do with our becoming more well-oriented in our surroundings, is of a quite different kind to that involved in problem-solving.

Difficulties of the intellect and difficulties of the will

This urge to overcome a restlessness, a feeling of lack within onself, a specific tension, a sense of not yet being 'at home' in one's surroundings, was clearly central to the account Tom Andersen gave of the "road forks" he encountered in his "professional walk," for clearly, each fork involved, not the choice of the road to follow, but of things to leave out – only to find that as he turned toward a new context, away from a reliance on what he felt uncomfortable with, to repeat, that "alternatives popped up almost by themselves" (Anderson/Jensen 2007: 159), and it is this that I want to explore.

In exploring it – the choice to stop doing something along with the spontaneous emergence, i.e., the non-choice, of a better alternative to it – I want to distinguish between two kinds of difficulties we can face in our practical affairs: What Wittgenstein (1980: 17) called *difficulties* of the *intellect*, and difficulties of the *will* – and I want to stick with talk of *difficulties* instead of talking of *problems*, for as we shall see, talk of problems is much more to do with arriving at answers to clear questions, while talk of difficulties is more to do with overcoming confusions and disorientations in practical life.

We can formulate difficulties of the intellect, then, as *problems* which, with the aid of clever theories or appropriate frameworks of thought, we can solve by the use of reasoning, by rational methods. Difficulties of the will, however, are quite different. For they are to do with how we need to find a way of *relating* ourselves (bodily, i.e., sensitively and emotionally) to the others and othernesses around us, how we *orient* ourselves or take up an *attitude* or *stance* towards them, the *ways* in which we see them, hear them, experience them, value them – for it is these *ways* that determine *what possibilities* for action we can perceive in the *situation* we are in, they determine or 'give shape' to the lines of action we finally *resolve* on carrying out. And unlike the static contemplative thinker, we must do all this *from within* our engaged activity with the others and othernesses we encounter within the situation of our action, either actual or imagined.

To grasp a bit more clearly what is involved here, let me examine the sequence of steps involved in both these processes.

(1) First, *problem-solving*: Approaching a newness or strangeness as a problem to be solved requires us to first analyze it into a set of identifiable elements; we must then find a pattern or order amongst them; and then *hypothesize* a hidden agency responsible for the order (call it, the working of certain rules, principles, or laws, or the working of a story or narrative). We then seek further evidence for *its* influence, thus to enshrine it in a theory or theoretical system. We go on to make use of such theories in giving shape to our actions. In other words, we manipulate the strangeness (now known in terms of the theory) to produce an advantageous outcome which we call 'the solution' to our problem, and we then turn 'to apply' the theory elsewhere.

As investigators, we ourselves remain unchanged in the process; we remain *outside* and *separate* from the other or otherness we are investigating; rather than being engaged or involved in with it we are 'set over against' it; in acquiring extra knowledge *about* it – in the form of facts or information – we gain *mastery* over it.

(2) Alternatively, in *resolving* on a line of action: Instead of immediately trying to analyze it into its elements, we can treat the other or otherness as a being that is still radically unknown to us, and, by 'opening' ourselves to being spontaneously 'moved' by it, we can 'enter into' a living, dialogically-

structured relationship with it – In other words, we can become involved or engaged in an active, back and forth relationship, with it, a relationship in which, if we go slowly, and allow time for the imaginative work that each response can occasion to take place, we can gain a sense of the 'inner landscape', the 'invisible landscape of possibilities' confronting us to become "visibly-rational" (Garfinkel 1967: vii) to us.

To try to exhibit what I mean here, I would like to set out the following rather general scenario, while likening it to a number of other more specific, similar situations. To repeat, it is necessary to go slowly through this sequence and to take the time required to go through the imaginative work necessary to develop a sense of what it feels like, looks like, and sounds like, to be in the situation at each stage in its gradual articulation: We enter a *new* situation (pause – imagine a particular situation); at first, we are confused, bewildered, we don't know our way about (pause – how does it feel?); but as we 'dwell in' it, as we begin to 'move around' within it, we begin to respond to aspects of it, we begin to notice specific details (imagine the aspects, imagine the details); as we range over them we begin to get a more ordered sense of a 'something', of it as having a qualitatively distinct character[4] to it – but how might we come to a grasp of its nature. It is at this point that we often find an image comes to us, we find that we can express this 'something' in terms of an image; but what image? In trying to characterize his inchoate but still partially structured sense of what we 'know'[5] in relation to our use of language, Wittgenstein (1953) uses a city, a toolbox, the controls in the driving cab of a train, and many different types of games, all as metaphors for different aspects of our experiences of the use of language (take time to go

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[4]   Its character can emerge for us in the 'time contours' or 'time shapes' that become apparent in the dynamic relations we can sense between our different outgoing (expectant) activities and the incoming results consequent upon them.

[5]   While I use the word 'know' here, in *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein (1969) pointed out that what we rely on within an interaction, although fixed and stable within it – and can be likened to the hinge a door pivots on – it is not fixed and stable for all time outside of the momentary swinging of the door. Thus instead of saying that we 'know' these things, he suggests that we could say: "'It stands fast for me that...'? And further: 'It stands fast for me and many others...'" (no. 116) in the moment of interaction only, not for all time.

through at least some of the uses of language that can 'motivate' the bringing of such images to mind). In other words, we need to accept that no one single image will capture all the complex aspects of a complex circumstance; for beyond every image we find, we can find another, and another. And after having gone through a number of images, we can finally arrive at a sense of the landscape of possibilities giving rise to them all. Indeed, once we have gained a sense of familiarity with such a landscape, once we can come to feel confident of knowing our *way about* within it[6], we can then *resolve* on a way of *going on* within it with some confidence that, at the time, it was the best possible way.

Clearly, this means that the process of *resolving* on a line of action cannot be a simple matter of calculation, or of *decision making* as a choice among a set of already clear alternatives; it involves *judgement*, a moving around on the landscape of possibilities while being *spontaneously responsive* to the consequences of each move, and judging which one (or combination of moves) best resolves the initial tension aroused in one's initial confusion – for, to repeat, we are operating here, not in the realm of actualities but of possibilities. As Senge et al. (2006: 89) comment: "Standard theories of change revolve around making decisions, determining 'the vision'," whereas, they suggest, it is much more to do with, "reaching a state of clarity about and connection to what is emerging, [coming] to an 'inner knowing' where, 'in a sense, there is no decision making. What to do just becomes obvious', and what is achieved 'depends on where you're coming from and who you are as a person.'"

As investigators, then, we ourselves are changed in such encounters. For, in becoming involved with, immersed in, the 'inner life' of the others or othernesses around us, everything we do can be partly shaped by being in response to what *they might do*. Thus, rather than an objective *knowledge* of their nature, we gain an *orientation* toward them, we grasp how to 'go on' with them in terms of the *possible* ways they might respond to us. Although

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[6]   As metaphors for the general bewilderment we can feel in new circumstances, we might take what it feels like to have to find one's way about in a new building (a hospital, a business headquarters), in a city, in a fog, being 'all at sea', and so on.

at first we can be wholly 'bewitched' (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 109) by their 'voice', as our familiarity with them grows, their voice can become just one voice among the many other voices within us, and we can become 'disenchanted' with what they 'call' us upon us to do. However, we can never gain complete mastery over them – they can always surprise us, no matter how familiar to us they have become. Our constant vigilance is required; the precise words we use are important – for their *grammar* commits us *now* to what is expected of us in the future.

What can be called *thinking* here?

Now my purpose in asking readers to undertake the slow, step-by-step reading of the sentences above – in which I set out a rather general scenario, while likening it to a number of other more specific, similar situations – was, of course, to allow the possibility of richer, more extensive responsive movements to occur within you as readers, as well as allow time for the 'shape' of such movements to *resonate* within you, thus to "remind" you of something that is already familiar to you (Wittgenstein 1953, no. 89)[7] – to 'call up' one or two or more previous experienced concrete episodes whose 'time-contours' are similar to those traced out in the unfolding dynamics of those statements as you internally utter them. In other words, in more general terms, as we dwell in and move around in each new situation we face, a gradual growth of familiarity with their 'inner shape' can occur; we can then begin to gain a sense of the *value* of their *yet-to-be-achieved* aspects – the prospects they offer us for 'going on' within them. Thus, as we gain orientation, a sense of being 'at home' within them, we can come to find our 'footing', our placement or *who we can be* within them. And this, as was clear from your responses to my utterances above, can be done imaginatively. We can make sense of our current circumstances in relation to certain of our past experiences. So what might what we could *thinking* be like in such situations as these?

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[7] Wittgenstein (1953: no. 89): "Something that we know when no one asks us, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it, is something that we need to *remind* ourselves of. (And it is obviously something of which for some reason it is difficult to remind oneself.)"

Here we can begin again with where we began with Tom Andersen, with the nature of a felt tension, an uncomfortableness, a dis-satisfaction, with a *restlessness* that won't go away – but not with any old dis-satisfaction, but a dis-satisfaction of a qualitatively distinct kind. This time, however, Wittgenstein (1953) will be the subject of my inquiry. Disquiets were aroused in him by such questions as: "What is meaning?" "What is understanding?" "What is a proposition?" "What is a word really?" by such questions that, I sure, have occupied some of you in this conference, like: "What is a dialogue, or a narrative, really?" He sensed that there were no final definitive answers to such questions as these, that they could never be settled by the formulating of a final, single, correct theory. Indeed, in relation to them he remarked: "The problems [I would now say – difficulties, js] arising through a misinterpretation of our forms of language have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language. – Let us ask ourselves: why do we feel a grammatical joke to be deep? (And that is what the depth of philosophy is.)" (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 111). So, how might we begin to approach such *deep* difficulties as these?

Well, after having suggested that the meaning of a word is to be found in how it is *used* – in this, that, or some other circumstance in influencing the practicalities of our everyday life activities – and, in order *not* to provoke us once again into theorizing,[8] he turns to arousing occasions within us when various memorable events have actually happened to us. He thus asks us:

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[8] Wittgenstein (1953:no. 109): "It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones. It was not of any possible interest to us to find out empirically 'that, contrary to our preconceived ideas, it is possible to think such- and-such' - whatever that may mean. (The conception of thought as a gaseous medium.) And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems. These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language."

"What happens when...?" "What does it mean to say...?" or to ask us to: "Consider... X...?" or to: "Imagine... Y...?" or to question us further in such a way as ask us to think again: "But is it as we unthinkingly tend to say it...?" And in asking such questions as these, in line with his concern with how our responsive relations to the particularities of our surroundings (in discussing what might be involved in teaching a new language-game involving named elements[9]), he asserts that: "In order to see more clearly, here as in countless similar cases, we must focus on the details of what goes on; must look at them from close to" (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 51) – the concrete details of the situation matter greatly (see epigraph quotation)!

Of course, when we do focus on the details, we begin to realize how complicated (and overwhelming) is the task of (fully) describing *what happens when... x...*, when, say (to use Wittgenstein's 1953: no.169, example), we look along a line of print in a text, and compare it with looking along a line of arbitrary symbols: "&8§≠ §≠?β 8!'§*" whilst saying a sentence as we do the looking. After having asked us to make this comparison and to describe the two different experiences to ourselves, he then goes on to ask us: "Can't one feel that in the first case the utterance was *connected with* seeing the signs and in the second went on *side by side* with the seeing without any connection?" (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 169, my emphases). And we, of course, can and we answer: 'Yes, there was a difference'. But how we might best *describe* what it is that enables us to read the ink-marks of text as having meanings, while seeing the sequence of arbitrary symbols as meaningless, leads us into yet further complications.

I won't follow up these complications any further here. But what I do want to do, is to draw out of this example the importance of distinguishing between two kinds of talk: That kind of talk which is shaped merely by our

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[9]   "For naming and describing do not stand on the same level: naming is a preparation for description. Naming is so far not a move in the language-game-any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess. We may say: *nothing* has so far been done, when a thing has been named. It has not even *got* a name except in the language-game. This was what Frege meant too, when he said that a word had meaning only as part of a sentence" (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 49).

sense of the grammar of the words we are using,[10] a grammar that is in fact drawn from an intellectual framework previously learned in a classroom – so that, for instance, once we have asked, say, about the *information processing* at work in a person's brain we feel that we *must* then ask about its *causes* – and that kind of talk which is shaped by the 'shape' of a particular experience of ours. For the issue here is to do with our *right* to speak as we do, with whether we can justify our talk by being able to describe to others the *criteria* we used, or are using, in *judging* how we '*went on*', or are '*going on*', in the particular situation in question.[11]

We are moving into waters too deep to consider this issue much further in such a short talk as this. But the issue to do with our *'right use'* of words, is of crucial importance to Social Constructionists – especially those tempted to follow, say, Rorty's (1989: 44) claim that intellectual progress proceeds by "the literalization of selected metaphors." For then, as he sees it, our task is very "largely a matter of redescribing other things [not captured by current metaphors], trying to outflank the objections by enlarging the scope of one's favorite metaphors." So, rather than like Wittgenstein, who is concerned to re-connect our particular use of words to details within the actual surroundings of their use, Rorty's strategy is "to try to make the vocabulary in which...

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[10] A grammar is perspectival, i.e., it suggests an ordering of events in a particular situation. It is thus easy, given a particular word – like 'mechanism', say – to think that one *must* seek a *causal structure* at work in a situation. But once we turn to the grammar of a situation, an actual language intertwined situation, a landscape of possibilities that we have arrived at as the result of a judgement, things are different. For we find that the structure of a judgement (an achievement – Ryle 1949) is a structure of acts of judgement (a structure of successfully executed tasks – Ryle 1949), in which the things sequentially achieved in the overall judgement cannot be individuated independently of the person judging them, for it is the particular judge's end in view – the initial tension that was there at the beginning of the whole inquiry – that selects the *criteria* relevant to the dimensions of judgement applied by the (practitioner) judge.

[11] The classic argument here, over the *right* use of words, is well stated by Lewis Carroll in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*, in an episode where Humpty-Dumpty uses the word 'glory' in a way that confuses Alice: '"But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument",' Alice objected. 'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.' 'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.' 'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master – that's all.' (From http://www.sabian.org/Alice/lgchap06.htm).

objections [of opponents] are phrased look bad, thereby changing the subject, rather than granting the objector his choice of weapons and terrain by meeting his criticisms head on" (Rorty 1989: 44).

This, of course, is still to leave the issue of people's actual, practical concern, formulated in academic vocabularies, to be fought over by academics. Rather than continuing this argument here, however, let me turn very briefly to what might seem to be involved in training people in coming to make the judgements appropriate to being a certain kind of practitioner.

Conclusions: training to be a judge – on coming to know truly 'how to go on' within a practice

1. What is entailed in training to be a judge? Too often, when thinking of ourselves as practitioners, we still tend to think of ourselves primarily as thinkers, as inhabiting, not this our that actual practical situation, but as inhabiting this or that particular system of mental representations, which we describe in terms of 'models', 'theories', or 'theoretical frameworks'. We are thus anxious to learn each new theory or model as it comes 'on the scene', if we are to feel 'up to the minute' in our practices. The view I am describing here, however – Wittgenstein's view, and, I think, Tom Andersen's view also – is the opposite of this.

As I see it, following Wittgenstein, our role as practitioners, continually occupying new and unique situations for yet "another first time" (Garfinkel 1967: 9), is essentially that of a judge who must gather together, in both actual and imaginative explorations of each new situation, the distinctive details relevant to each such situation in an effort to resolve on a best way of 'going on' within them. In doing this, our initial task involves our actively dwelling in, or amongst, whatever is 'out there' in each situation in order, first, to find an attitude, a stance, or a way of relating to, what seems to be 'there' around us, and then to discover what we *can* want within it, while finally, trying to organize our engagements with the 'things-we-can-now-see-within-it' to get what we want. All this, as Todes (2001) and Luntley (2003) claim, is a part of what it is to be an agent with a will.

But it is not only the initial adoption of an appropriate attitude that is (or can be) wilful – for example, the adopting of an attitude of "speaking in order to listen," as distinct from "listening in order to speak," as described by Lynn Hoffman (2002: 181), or, as Harlene Andersen (1997) describes it, as adopting a "*philosophical stance – a way of being* in relationship with of fellow human beings, including how we think about, talk with, act with, and respond to them" (Andersen 1997: 94) – but also, as the way of relating entailed unfolds, we need, self-consciously, to manage the explorations we embark upon within it. The meaning of *what* is 'there in reality' around us, i.e., the *possibilities* for our next steps, thus only become apparent to us in the dynamic happenings (to repeat my remarks above) that occur in the relations between our outgoing actions and the consequent 'movements' and 'touchings' aroused in us as a result.

Above, then, as we imaginatively outline to ourselves – provoked by Wittgenstein's (1953) whole style of inquiry, that moves us away from theorizing to the bringing to mind the concrete details of actually remembered experiences – how particular events, expressions, etc., have 'touched' or 'moved' us, we can live out in our exchanges with each other what *experiencing*, *perceiving (i.e. looking, listening, feeling, etc.), thinking*, *valuing*, and *talking (i.e., expressing oneself)* "from within" the complexity of an ongoing situation, *feel* like, and *look* like.

Elsewhere, I have likened the discipline involved in this to Goethe's (Shotter 2005b) exact sensorial imagination. But such a discipline cannot, as is now obvious, be taught simply being told of theories, models, protocols, recipes, of frameworks in solely in a classroom. One needs to be involved in something like the serving of an apprenticeship.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2000) provides an account of apprenticeships that demonstrates how learning can only take place if, while watching an act being performed, an already a proto-performing goes along with what is being watched. She then further argues that this must also be the case for verbal instructions, that they can only be instructive if the meaning of the words used are intertwined in with a rehearsal of the enactment they are aimed at describing. What matters to practitioners learning is a skill a foundational ability for *joint* attention and the *intercorporeal awareness* that goes

along with it, i.e., the awareness that the movements of others are consequent upon their movements. Sheets-Johnstone (2000) is thus critical of Dreyfus' (1998a, 1998b) notion of apprenticeship, in which 'rules' are at first enunciated, for its ignoring of the degree to which al whole multitude of nonlinguistic kinetic corporeal concepts are ignored: concepts such as *fast*, *slow*, *turning*, *stopping*, *close*, far, etc.; as well as fundamental spatio-temporal learnings to do with, for example, one's directional movement possibilities, as in moving *forward*, *sideward*, or *diagonally*, as well as with having avenues of *avoidance* or *escape* or *in having none*, i.e., *being cornered* and *unable to move*; and on temporal learnings having to do with, for example, *sequences of movement* and *if/then relationships* – as in finding particular progressions of movements to be possible or impossible, and to be good or bad, e.g., particular progressions have particular progressive effects, particular moves constrain or enable future moves, and so on. Thus, as she sees it, in omitting these developmental, nonlinguistic kinetic corporeal understandings from his account, Dreyfus casts "an adultist net over the whole terrain" (Sheets-Johnstone 2000: 355)**,** and fails to account for what it is that makes it possible for us as adults to serve as apprentices to others more skillful professionals later in life.

2. Training in using language 'by right': Training in *using* language *by right* thus entails training a practitioner to be a judge. This only emerges in practical activities of a mattering kind, in which talk and such activities are intertwined; the simple statement of rules leaves the learner bewildered. Training to be a judge includes, centrally, coming to see similarities (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 69) and coming to speak with *a right* as someone able to speak responsibly, i.e., as someone 'in touch' with the circumstances of their talk (no. 289), thus to be able to articulate a justification of one's actions in relation to the particularities of the situation (no. 154). It is, in other words (LW's words), a matter of one being able to see things aright.

There are consequences of our adopting an attitude, says Wittgenstein (1953: 228), "but of a diffuse kind. Experience ... can inform us of them, and they too are incapable of general formulation; only in scattered cases can one arrive at a correct and fruitful judgement, establish a connection."

The involvement of will means that it is a case of judgement all the way down. This has all been about the conditions for the possibility of judgement. The recipe for that is the will in direct engagement with that which is independent of will, and the latter can include the attitude of another will.

3. The 'just happening' nature of the gaining of embodied experiences: What might we be doing in our dialogical-reflective activities – as we each present to the others in a group aspects of how an event, an expression, has 'touched' or 'moved' us? We are living out in our exchanges with each other what *experiencing*, *perceiving (i.e. looking, listening, feeling, etc.), thinking*, *valuing*, and *talking (i.e., expressing oneself)* "from within" the complexity of an ongoing situation, *feels* like and *looks* like.

Further, in facing up to, and in being prepared to 'stumble around in words' in an effort to articulate these 'feels', we can devise between us 'ways' of turning present (and past) *passing moments* into moments that we can 're-call', over and over again, thus to subject them to even more detailed examinations. Or to put it another way, we are 'unpacking' the enormous complexity of a *passing* circumstance that usually "all goes by so quick" (Wittgenstein 1953: no. 435) in such a way as to render it *rationally visible*, i.e., to linguistically portrayal, in such a way as to make it into something that can be discussed and explored amongst us in all its complex detail.

As a consequence, we can come to *embody* this kind of coming-to-know within our lives without effort, automatically, as we did early on as an aspect of our 'growing up into' the world and the culture of the those around us. It is done 'in' *our* being *spontaneously responsive* to 'things' occurring around us (including the spontaneous *expressions* of those around us), and also, by *them* being *spontaneously responsive* to the expressive aspects of *our* responsiveness. Indeed, the consequences of our spontaneous involvement in this ceaseless flow of living, expressive-responsiveness accumulates in our bodies like the effects of good and bad summers and winters are observably 'there' in the rings in the trunks of trees (this may not be the best analogy, but it's the only one I can think of at the moment). As Bateson (1979: 24) remarks, "the shape of what happened between you and me yesterday carries over to the shape of how we respond to each other today." It is a form of spontaneous learning without any explicit teaching that gives rise to *ways* of acting that we can

come to embody. Bateson (1979: 212) appropriately calls it "calibration" because, in contrast to local adjustments in *this* situation to *this* particular state of affairs, which we can call "feedback," it emerges "from a *class* of past, completed action." "By long practice, [practitioners] must adjust the *setting* of [their] nerves and muscles so that in the critical event, [they] will 'automatically' give an optimum performance" (Bateson 1979: 211).[12]

In the same vein, Lehrer (2009) discusses the switch in the mid-1980s from the 'chalk and talk' methods of training airplane pilots to the use of realistic flight simulators – with an associated reduction of crashes attributed to pilot error from a steady[13] 65% to around 17%. "The problem with [the classroom] approach," Lehrer quotes a flight instructor as saying, "is that everything was abstract. The pilot has this body of knowledge, but they'd never applied it before" (Lehrer 2009: 241). The use of flight simulators, suggests Lehrer (2009: 242), "targets the dopamine system,[14] which improves itself by studying errors. As a result, pilots develop accurate sets of flight instincts. Their brains are prepared in advance."

While Lehrer's language use is different from my own, I think his point is clear: in the practical, dialogically-structured inquiries or explorations we make, spontaneously, within the situations that disorient or puzzle us, we do not need always to bring new theories, abstract thoughts, or new factual information to bear in trying to make sense of them. We can both bring to

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[12]   About "calibration," Bateson (1979: 211) remarks that "'calibration' is related to 'feedback' as higher logical type is related to lower." In other words, what we come to embody is not simply an *average*, or a simply *mixing* of past experiences, but something like a sense of how – as in binocular vision – two or more variations on similar experiences are *intra-related* into a *chiasmicly-structured* whole, a sense that gives us a bodily experience of how to 'ready' ourselves for the occurrence of such experiences.

[13]   "Despite a long list of aviation reforms, from mandatory pilot layovers to increased classroom training," says Lehrer (2009: 240), the percentage of crashes attributed to pilot error "refused to budge from 1940 to 1990, holding steady at around 65%."

[14]   Earlier in his book, Lehrer (2009: 42) writes: "What is interesting about [the dopamine] system is that it's all about *expectation*. Dopamine neurons constantly generate patterns based on experience: if this, then that." It is not appropriate to pursue the possible contributions of that the use of neuro-scientific observations might make to innovations in people's practices further here. But clearly, it is a sphere of research that is worth attending to.

bear experience that either we already possess, or that we can come to possess by 'calibrating' ourselves by living through the appropriate experiences.

4. The gaining of a 'poised resourcefulness' with respect to human affairs: What, then, can dialogically-structured inquiries, explorations, etc., offer those, who are already skilled practitioners in a particular profession, over and above what they already possess?

They (can) work to 'remind' us – help us to become reflexively self-aware of the fact – that we continually function as one polarity in a 'creative dynamic' productive of (a usually unremarked upon) plenitude of possibilities available to us as to how to relate ourselves to our surroundings – possibilities which, because of their plenitude, present us with difficulties of a relational or orientational kind as to which of all the possibilities available to us will in fact *resolve* the tension we feel in not 'knowing our way about', or how 'to go on', in our current circumstances (to state the matter in Wittgenstein's 1953 terms).

In short, such explorations can offer the gaining of a *poised resourcefulness* in one's own special professional practice. Such a poised resourcefulness is something, I feel, that Tom Andersen came to embody in his professional practice. At greater length, such inquiries can offer us the possibility of our developing the capacity to enter each new and unique situation we encounter in our professional lives with a range of relevant responses to whatever contingencies – to do with human bewilderments, disorientations, puzzlements, feelings, emotions, and many other human disturbances we might meet there – 'at the ready', so to speak. Thus our *living explorations and inquiries* into our own 'inner workings', or own 'inner movements' of thoughtful feelings and feelingful thoughts we submit ourselves to, in our dialogically-structured inquiries, can thus be thought of a being the equivalent in human affairs to the less extensive (but perhaps even more focused) 'self-disciplines' skilled tennis players, say, submit themselves to (both 'off-court' and 'on-court'), that enable them to become poised on the brink of meeting whatever is 'served up' by an opponent with an *appropriate* or *relevant* response.

So, although such inquiries cannot offer anything objective, anything that can easily be pointed at and described, nor can they offer us any techniques

for immediate practical application. They can in fact offer us something of much more value to those of us as professional practitioners who must act in the moment, from within the midst of complexity. All objective approaches tell us only of what we already know how to inquiry into; they lead us only towards the continual re-discovery of sameness, simply the elaboration of the cognitive knowledge we already possess – they cannot inform us of the distinctively different, invisible, *possibilities for action* available to us in each new and unique situation we occupy.

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