CMM:
REPORTS FROM USERS

In 2000, Western Communication Association President Sandra Petronio invited me to organize a session on CMM at the annual convention. I immediately started thinking of all the people that I would like to invite but equally quickly realized that only a small portion would be able to come to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, in February, 2001. I decided to use a survey as a way of bringing their voices into the room, and this document is the result.

If we start counting with the publication of W. Barnett Pearce, "The Coordinated Management of Meaning: A Rules-Based Theory of Interpersonal Communication," pp. 17-36 in Gerald R. Miller, ed., Explorations in Interpersonal Communication. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1976, CMM is 25 years old in 2001.

As these reports show, people are using CMM in ways and in contexts that I could never have predicted. I'm convinced that every reader of this document will find something new, interesting, and useful in the work described here. These pages display their authors' passion, creativity, and a commitment to improving the world in which we live. I'm honored to be associated with them.

I've done very little editing of the pages that follow. I asked the respondents to address a short list of questions, thus sacrificing the potential for unexpected richness for the virtue of comparability.

At the WSCA convention, Kevin Barge, Liliana Rossmann, Arthur Jensen, and Kim Pearce reflected on these responses. Their comments, and the discussion around them, is may be found at: http://webboard.fsc.edu:8080/~cmm/.

Finally, let me extend a grateful "thank you" to the 25 people who gave the time to respond to my questionnaire; to the four people who read the responses and reflected on them at the WSCA convention; and to Sandra Petronio, for getting this whole thing started.

W. Barnett Pearce
San Mateo, California
June 27, 2001

CMM:
REPORTS FROM USERS

CONTENTS

Jeremy Kearney

Background

I remember having a conversation with you in which I said that I was very pleased to have your draft document 'Using CMM' as it presented the history and development of CMM and explained it very clearly and I (sort of) suggested that some of your other (later work) hadn't done that. You very politely pointed out that you thought 'Interpersonal Communication' was actually completely based on CMM. I was suitably abashed but somewhat confused as I had read (and enjoyed and learnt a lot from) 'Interpersonal Communication' but hadn't really noticed that it had mentioned CMM very much. However, having read the article by you and Kim - 'Extending the Theory...'- I now realise that this confusion related to the point at which I came in contact with CMM. This was in the early '90s through my contact with KCC and then with yourself in 1994. At this point CMM was moving from from 'interpretative to practical theory', so I have always understood it as a practical theory which functions as a guide for practitioners. What I realised was that I had missed the earlier phases and its importance as a' theory' of communication (not surprisingly as I do not have a background in communication theory).

I was reading 'Interpersonal Communication' as a fascinating read, full of interesting ideas and examples and I still use it (and advise the students to use it) as reference book. Want to know something about 'stories lived. stories told', look in the index of 'IP' and you will find a succinct description. But at the time I didn't have a theoretical map to understand it as a wonderfully detailed description of CMM levels.

The second contextual point is that for the last six years I have run the M.Sc programme in Systemic Management and over the evolution of the programme we have used a range of CMM ideas as ways of thinking about the organisational issues and problems that students brought to the course. And the more I have used the ideas and models the more useful they have been. There has been a nice linking of theory and practice here, as over this time I have had contact with you and Kim and PDC and KCC and as a new theoretical idea has appeared or a new model or a new technique, it is tried out and tested and integrated into the programme. So some times the theoretical developments have outstripped the practice models and vice versa. However as you know I have spent most of this year developing and rewriting the programme and hopefully it has now integrated much of this material (and although it doesn't say this specifically) it is to a large extent based on CMM. Therefore, over the last six years, the course has been an on-going workshop for experimenting in a not terribly coherent way with CMM ideas and practices.

Hopefully, the above will be helpful in understanding how I try and answer the questions.

*1.   What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g.
         hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)*

As I tried to explain above, as new ideas have come out or I have read something about CMM or been to a workshop, it gets tried out. Usually on the M.Sc programme, but also on the undergraduate social work programme, or at conferences or in papers. So on the M.Sc, I introduce people to CMM at an early stage and then go through the different models - hierarchy, daisy, LUUUTT - and discuss the different usefulness of each of them. Then we try them out in live consultation with course members.
So some examples of things that have emerged from this process:

(i) the usefulness of focusing on speech acts as a way of understanding what is going on in an organisational system. Just recently I was working with a group of mainly health and social welfare managers looking at the wider contexts in which their organisations operated. What emerged from this was the consistent influence of the 'Third Way' policies of the Blair (labour) government and how these were being worked out in practice in their organisations. We were able to identify key phrases that are used by the government in all these different contexts 'best value', 'performance indicators', 'quality', 'joined up thinking', 'blurred boundaries' (between different disciplines), 'user involvement'. 'delivery'. We then identified how many of these outcomes were contradictory and the problems this led to and opportunities it might offer.

(ii) this then led on to an analysis of the contextual forces that were coming downwards on the organisations from these government policies. We then looked for the affordances that might be offered and in particular how they might increase implicative forces from their positions within their organisations

(iii) this then led on to a discussion of the serpentine model and the logical force that was being created and how possibilities for action were being increasingly attenuated. And then we did some work on how people could create more options for action within their systems.

(iv) as you know students have to write assignments and projects based on their work in their agencies and for this work they often use CMM - at the moment the hierarchy model and LUUUTT model are particularly popular. They actually apply the models directly to their work settings so they map the different levels on to a hierarchy diagram or specify the stories (told and untold) within the organisation.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g. education, training, therapy, consulting).

I would say I work in at least three of the contexts you suggest - education, training and consulting - and I would say I am also a practitioner and a researcher.

As described above I teach an M.Sc programme but while working on this programme I feel I am also a practitioner and consultant, as I work directly with the issues students bring from their work settings. In all these contexts I use CMM ideas and practices.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a 'story from the field' about consulting, therapy, training or research............

As described above, I use CMM constantly in my work and students also do so. Some examples are:

(i) one student was trying to reorganise their team because its role had changed and was experiencing considerable difficulty in making progress because of 'resistance to change' from some older team members. On using the hierarchy model as a means of analysis the student identified significant features in the 'life scripts' of the team members concerned which explained their 'resistance' (they had both worked as coal miners for many years before entering community work and were used to working with clear procedures and guidelines). Therefore, under the new plan which wanted to 'empower' staff to make their own decisions, these team members felt quite anxious and uncertain. By recognising this the manager was able to 'match their grammar' and move them forward in an appropriate way.

(ii) at a recent conference in the Social Work Dept. of the University of Pittsburgh on University/community links I presented an impromptu session on the LUUUTT and related it to community 'stories'. This got a lot of positive feedback and people immediately clicked into the idea of 'told', 'untold', 'unheard' (etc) stories. One community organiser who worked with women's' groups in the North of Ireland came up to me afterwards and asked 'what about 'hijacked' stories?'. Apparently women's stories often get taken over by politicians on both sides of the political divide.

(iii) as you know I have also used CMM as a theoretical approach and model in a research project on 'child protection' social work. This looked at the speech acts involved referral process and the contextual and implicative forces that operate on social workers in such cases.

(iv) I have also tried to use some CMM ideas in an ongoing debate on the development of social work research in Britain. This is taking place at special conferences and also on a web site. I have been attempting to participate and reflection the discussion using CMM ideas and I have received some interesting responses from other participants.

4. As we look forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

As I have always seen CMM as an evolving theory and practice - both forwards and backwards, as I now realise that there is all this CMM history and material that I wasn't aware of - I see it as developing all the time, with new ideas and models arising. And also, new ways of utilising the older models, which is equally exciting. So I would say, let this process continue.

5. As we move forward, what forms of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

For me the excitement is developing the ideas in real contexts, so I feel lucky to have the M.Sc programme which is in many ways an ongoing CMM workshop with direct applications to practice. So my hope is to expand and extend this, by involving more people (i.e. others involved in CMM as presenters, teachers, consultants, etc). As you know I am very excited about PDC's community based work and was greatly inspired by the opportunity to observe the community congress at Cupertino. I feel that this kind of work is a really good testing ground to examine the rigour and complexity of CMM (and it seems to be showing up well so far!)

Personally I would hope to be able to get involved in similar kinds of projects in Britain. My overall view would be 'let a thousand flowers bloom' and let there be as many different sites and settings for the exploration of CMM as possible.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

If you think any of this is useful, please feel free to use as you wish. If the title 'master of the universe' is already taken, then director of the centre for social research and practice [University of Sunderland] will have to do.

Robyn Penman

1. *What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)*

I think it has really been the "meta-theory", as it were, that has been the most useful for me-all those broader elements implicated in the social construction process. On the other hand I did find the hierarchical structure of meaning particularly useful when I did al that research on communication in courts (see below)

2. *In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)*

Research and consulting

3. *Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.*

My major instance would be the courtroom communication research in which I used the notion of hierarchical levels of meaning to capture the two, paradoxical games being played in court-the fact game and the face game.

4. *As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?*

Barnett, this is truly a hard one. I guess some of the developments arising from the Cupertino work and talked about in the Communication Theory paper are the most obvious things to proceed with.

5. *As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?*

Quite clearly, practical activity that is an arm of practical theory. Done by all manner of people working to improve the human condition in its various guises . More specifically, communicative work that acts to bring about change; and change that opens up new possibilities.

6. *May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)*

Of course.
Robyn is an independent communication researcher, consultant and writer and Adjunct Professor in Communication at the University of Canberra, Australia

Eduardo Villar

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

All the concepts!! Hierarchy is the one I used most. The basic idea of context marker is very useful. The idea of Narrative, conversations from first an third person, the use of Deontic operators. The atomic model of conversation or margarita model, patterns of communication. The use of the Context.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I'm working in therapy, training and education.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I have a lot of stories, because I have incorporated very strong the CMM, and I used in my daily life and work, for give one example from yesterday while I was in a session of therapy with a couple and they describe a "dispute" I used the circular questioning and the Margarita model to understand their beliefs and actions.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

First of all, we have to write a "simple" way of explaining what is CMM and its use. Develop some articles about the implications and use of CMM, and the relations with concepts like paradox, sintoms.
Some ideas are so clear, and the people think they understand, but their actions show other understandings, or the contrary; how we can used, in a way they incorporate and change the actions. We have to share our experiences, exercises to create new ideas and new developments.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Education and Consulting

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Eduardo Villar.MD. Director Sistemas Humanos. Therapist.

Laura Fruggeri

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

The CMM concept that has been more useful to me is the hierarchy model. I find it very useful to describe the dance of co-construction that takes place in an interactive process. As I have told you in other occasions I think social constructionism is very inspiring as far as the emphasis on joint actions doesn't obscure the individual contribution to the joint action. We need complex models in research and therapy that is models that don't stress dualism (individual versus relationship) but model that in a complementary way describe the interconnection of the two levels (individual and relational). The hierarchy model (taken in a flexible and creative way) is a good start for reflecting on this interconnection. Of course it is not enough we also need to develop a language for the description of joint actions, that is, in Bateson terms, for the description of the form of the interaction. By the way I don't think that the more accredited social constructionists have yet develop such a language!

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I work in a multiple context: university, therapy, training and consulting

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I have used CMM in research and mainly in trying to show how the outcome of an interaction is linked to the coordination of actions and meanings. In particular in trying to analyze the iatrogenic effect of psychotherapy, or the relationship of teachers and parents, or simply the outcome of a therapy.
      Iatrogenic effect of psychotherapy: a therapeutic intervention could have negative effect not because the therapist does anything wrong, he or she might be very good in applying the "rules" or the "techniques" of the therapeutic model, but you could still have a negative effect because those very same rules or techniques might connect with the client's believes system in a way that the outcome of the coordination of actions and meaning is a confirmation of some level of the believe system that maintains the conditions for the problem to be.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I think more research on the process on the coordination is needed and more work on the connection between the notion of coordination of actions and meanings, and the notion of unintended consequences should be carried on.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

It would be useful if you could collect the type of studies I am suggesting in point 4) and maybe have a small research team to reflect upon them in pointing out differences and analogies.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

If you want you can quote these few lines if you find them useful. I am associate professor of Social psychology at the University of Parma and Faculty at the Milan Center

I wish I could attend the February seminar it sounds very interesting and I hope a new start for research: Social constructionism is becoming more and more a philosophy, I like to think of it as a methodology.

Pietro Barbetta

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

Initially I was using mainly the hierarchy model, and the loops that can be created inside the model, then I was learning more, reading many times your topic, and I found very interesting the idea that any form of communication is inhabited, in some way, by loops. The idea of contextual and implicative force. And at the end I re-evaluated the topic, which initially I liked less, of constitutive, and regulative rules.

I found very interesting too the idea of the different forms of communication (monocultural, ethnocentric, modernist, cosmopolitan).
>
2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I am Family Therapist, I am trainer of Family Therapy, and I teach Dynamic Psychology at University. Those years I have been working a lot with immigrant people and families

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I find it very useful in Family Therapy training. After a consultation with a family, during the activity of training, I use many time the CMM concepts to reflect with my students of the processes of communication of the ongoing therapy. I used it some time in a joint activity of training with Gianfranco Cecchin, who is a good estimator of your theory. Particularly on the Intercultural Communication topics

 4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

As any theory, I think CMM has a "left wing" and a "right wing" interpretation. The right wing probably focuses manly on hierarchy and rules. The left one on cultural meanings, and lift scripts issues. I consider myself a left wing interpreter, but as far as I'm going to be old, I tend to be interested on right wing topics. But I do not want to live my hermeneutics point of view about CMM, even though the authors couldn't completely agree with me.

 5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

I am sure that the topics of immigrant people and refugee, the topics of public discourse (that you and Kimberly have developed during the last years), the topics of bioethics

(abortion, debate on medical issues, interculturality in education) are the most important in which CMM can give a contribution.

 6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

I would like to be considered mainly as Trainer of Family Therapy at the Centro Milanese di Terapia della Famiglia in Milan.

John Burnham

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I use practically all of it except some of the 'fine detail' at the 'bottom level' which always reminds me of mathematical formulae which puts me off. The hierarchical model is still useful when I 'tack back and forth' between the atomic model and the hierarchy. Strange loops come quite easily to me now and I use them with people in all sorts of contexts without necessarily explaining the other parts of the model, because the loops often show one the the most important uses of the model which triggers people to want to know more, rather than explaining it all and then wondering: 'Ok but so what?'

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

All of the above

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

This is a 'little question' with a 'big' answer' since I use it all the time. I think I will tell you about one which has had significant influence beyond the original family with whom I developed the strange loop. The family came with their son diagnosed with 'aspergers syndrome' by the specialist unit within our clinic. He went into the inpatient unit and they said he was 'odd' but not aspergers. The family were referred to us, in part, to consider this dilemma (not to give a deciding opinion about asperger's). The son (aged 14) did not attend since he was fed up with professionals. We worked for quite a while doing different things and then 'it hit me' in the middle of a session and I offered the parents the following loop as a description of their situation. I have this on a 'map' but will just talk it through here. If the parents (esp father) accepted the diagnosis of aspergers (life script of son) then he acted towards his son (defn relship) in a compassionate, patient and forgiving way, when he did this the son improved to such an extent that it led him to think 'this is not aspergers' and he acted more strictly, less forgiving towards his son, the son deteriorated which led them back to 'this is aspergers and so on .... The parents acted as if a 'light had been turned on' and we went on to look at the ideas (deontic operators?) that pushed this loop around. It appeared that while the idea or question 'Is this apspergers or not?' was the main question (can you have deontic questions?) then they went round the loop. When we chose another questions: 'What kind of relationship do I want to have with my son?' then there was a greater possibility of 'escaping' from the loop. This worked very well for the parents and they began to report many changes in their relationships (the mother did not have to act as mediator between son and father so much and father and son became closer. They then moved on to "When is it useful to think of it as aspergers and when not' since the boy could gain some important advantages in the educational system when the diagnosis was used (this

was not re-entering the either/or loop) but using the diagnosis in a both-and way. The efects for the family were and continued to be significant. I wrote about this loop and the changes for the family to both of the professional units who had been involved and they found it very useful, especially the unit that diagnosed the aspergers in the first instance. They found that it applied in many situations and I now regularly consult to them about their work with families. So the episode of the work with this family had a significantly implicative effect within the professional systems and the culture of the specialist unit is now significantly different. I use this kind idea with many other families whose child has a 'definite diagnosis'. I think I am telling you this one in particular because it my have got me and other professionals out of professional loops in relation to diagnose or not to diagnose. i think the clinical stories I remember to tell are more likely to be those where I have learnt something significant too.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I think it is important to make it more user-friendly. I remember that Steve de Shazer tried it (early 80's) and gave up because it took too long to work out the loops. Similarly I know that it remains a mystery to many people and so I try usually to get people to talk about something on a tape and then put their information into a 'ladder' or 'daisy' so they can see that they already think like this and the model helps them to organise and play with 'what they know'. I often say that 'CMM did not invent these levels, it helps you to organise the relationships between, play and use the knowledges that you and your clients/students already have about your life script culture etc. I also think that CMM is more often used with individuals??

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

I think you are already beginning this process. It would be useful to extend this to include clients and trainees who have benefited from CMM

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.

Yes. John Burnham, Consultant Family Therapist, Parkview Clinic (BCH) Birmingham England and a Director of Training at KCC, London

Christine Oliver

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I may be an old fashioned girl but I find the hierarchy model has the most heuristic power. The hierarchy model allows one to imagine the connections, contradictions and ordering/relationship amongst contexts which then helps to position us in action. Two terms that seem to be almost extinct I have found helpful in conveying the notion of grammar - constitutive and regulative rules. In the nitty gritty work of psychotherapy and organisation consulting, to be able to enquire into rules for meaning and action at that level is helpful. I have begun to talk in terms of 'grammatical enquiry' or 'language game enquiry'.

I run workshops on the use of strange loops and connect their grammar with complexity theory, re-presenting loops as a development of complexity theory in the ways their construction can facilitate hypothesising and be used as working texts with working groups. I find the strange loop provides an 'externalising' aesthetic which facilitates an experience of coherence juxtaposed with a previous experience of dissasociation, confusion or stuckness.

My work as a teacher of organisational consultants (particularly in Finland) suggests that this frame offers a lot as a working tool.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I work in most contexts including - running a masters programme in systemic organisation and management, masters programme in systemic therapy, training, organisational consulting and psychotherapy. I have not done much in the public/community domain however.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I recently wrote a paper where I had used the hierarchy model to research the domains model (theory/practice) as an example and re-presentation of systemic constructionist theory. It was used to research the value claims/discourses of moral logic represented by the domains model (in description of it and action in it), focusing on themes of legitimation, obligation and purpose and exploring subject position and person position in the context of action within different domains of experience. I have attached some tables to show how it was used and the paper itself.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM?
For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I think moral/deontic logic is at the heart of the model and could be developed into a much richer description. Also - the ability to tell stories of purpose and to co-ordinate those are essential abilities in most contexts. More could be done with that. More could be done with constitutive and regulative rules. I find the atomic model not particularly useful. Probably more guidance could be offered on cmm as a frame for questioning and other forms of positioning.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

This feels a bit like - how long is a piece of string - but from my perspective I am interested to do some research with an organisation I am working with long term (training all its managers, mentoring the chief executive, working with the senior team) to explore how education constructs grammatical abilities (in terms of moral logic) in the management working context).

The research tool I developed (see the attached paper) is being taken up by people at the University of East London as a tool for conducting social constructionist research - we will see how that goes.

I would want to be involved in writing and working with others on developing significant cmm themes as I find it has profoundly transformed my practice.

I would like to be able to put more thought into all these questions but cannot give it more time right now.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Christine Oliver is a systemic psychotherapist, organisational consultant and director of the MSc in Systemic Organisation and Management at Kensington Consultation Centre.

The 4th International Conference on Organisational Discourse:
Word-views, Work-views and World-views

Christine Oliver and Graham Brittain
Kensington Consultation Centre, London

**SYSTEMIC CONSTRUCTIONIST MANAGEMENT:
A STUDY OF THE DISCURSIVE MORAL FEATURES OF AN EPISODE OF MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION**

ABSTRACT

It has been claimed that an under development of 'applied' research in the context of metaphors and organisational discourse might make us desperate for any scrapings off the applied research plate….."we still have only the most partial of insights into the fundamental metaphors which shape organisation theory and organisation action. It is tempting, given the paucity of research into the metaphors-in-use, to suggest that any applied research would be "good" research" (Oswick & Grant, 1996).

This is a generous context to act into. It will be treated as an opportunity to give an account of 'good' research that locates itself in the 'undecidable' (Derrida, 1967) space between the 'applied' and 'theoretical', thus challenging (in use) taken for granted dichotomous categories (which of course have their uses, in fact can be seen as metaphors-in-use in 'their own right').

The justification for conflating the categories is the desire to extend meaning as use (Wittgenstein, 1969) and use as meaning. A paradigm for structuring organisation theory and action will be presented here which, although is in relationship with other discursive projects and methodologies, can also be said to provide unique features which are insufficiently articulated in the organisation context and capable of enhancing organisational discourse.

This paper will research the discursive moral features of a systemic constructionist paradigm in the context of management education. An MSc programme in Systemic Organisation and Management Studies provides the context for research into the discursive resources and practices of situated teaching and learning from within this paradigm. Recursive links will be drawn between the moral discourses embodied in the systemic constructionist approach and those constructed in the learning process during a specific episode of teaching and learning. Of particular interest will be how language use such as 'can', 'must', 'will', 'should', structure the theory itself and impact on powers in making meaning and action in management education. These small, often taken for granted words and associated metaphors, will be re-presented so as to create opportunities for generating worlds that work for practising managers and for generating words that work in the context of research.

Specifically, attention will be given to the moral means by which the theory described and represented here, makes claims about what is important and how its claims structure reality. A frame defined as the domains model, will be presented for managing both theoretical and organisational contexts, as one example of a structuring of systemic constructionist theory and the moral discourses embedded in its use will be explored.

The layering of contexts, an analytic model offered by Co-ordinated Management of Meaning Theory (Cronen & Pearce, 1985), will be used to identify and compare the discourses of moral logic embedded in the theory and practice of the domains frame. The themes of purpose, obligation and legitimation will structure the data.

This analysis will set a context for a more extensive study of the links between moral discourses in learning and action for the participants of a management development programme in a voluntary organisation, delivered by the authors over a period of a year.

SETTING CONTEXTS

Hopes for development and focus for organisation research

At the British Academy of Management (BAM) conference 1999 it was reported that funding for organisation research from the ESRC had been under utilised in the previous year. The ESRC had identified a significant feature of the 'problem' as being an impoverished effort or ability in management academics interacting with 'real life' researchable situations in organisations. The claim being made seemed to be that management academics needed to reach out and interact with the real world. Chia (1999) has pointed out that in academic life, the search for 'truth' is privileged over the attempt to engage and deal with the affairs of the world. He complains that the focus in management education is on what is of academic interest rather than practical relevance. Interest and relevance are thus dichotomised.

In a connected but different vein, Grant et al (op.cit), in their invitation to organisation theorists to conduct more applied research in organisational metaphor and discourse, challenge us to take stock. In particular, they plead for more research into the fundamental discourses of organisation theory itself.

This paper seeks to explore the discourses of a specific organisation theory with reference to the moral logics structuring the theory and an examination of its core discursive tools and their moral consequences. The word discourse has been used in connected and different ways in organisation research. It is being used here to refer both to practices of talk and to the layers of context that construct the moral motivational meaning that structures action (e.g. purpose, obligation, entitlement). Analysis will shift between the particularity of the text and the discourses that inform it

As a way of setting a context for this endeavour, we will start by reflecting on the 'either/or' discourse that could be claimed to be structuring the discomfort described above, to wonder about its consequences and to suggest a more complex relationship to the discourses that organise organisation theory. This will be offered in the interests of hypothesising about the apparent difficulties in linking the 'stories told' about organisational life by academics and the 'stories lived' by organisational members (Pearce, 1994). It will also work as a helpful orienting move in facilitating an exploration of the discourses of the systemic constructionist paradigm which aspires to collapse the theory - application dualism.

Theory - application

The dualism of 'theory – application' dogs discussions about what counts as valuable in research discourses. It seems to us that although the terms 'applied' and 'theoretical' can be felt to be useful conveniences, they may also be structuring our experience in ways that are limiting. The distinction 'theory – application' is arguably drawn from a modernist discourse where language does not construct action but instead either professes to transmit or critique its meaning. Thus, theory is not treated as making reality but standing outside it. This position presents the danger of treating theory as inconsequential to action, although paradoxically, academics, practitioners and popular management authors lament that the two are not connected (Marshak, 2000). This phenomenon connects to the widespread treatment of talk and action as separate (Marshak, 1998). For instance, in popular management theory we are exposed to a prevailing 'action' discourse (e.g. Peters, 1994) and in the academic world words like 'pure' arguably add preferential value in the research context. Academics in this tradition act as if the pursuit of context free and generalisable truths is the primary purpose.

A systemic constructionist paradigm, aspiring to enquire into the discourses structuring theory, consciously accesses meta-theoretical discourse in a context of situated moral agency. As such, it privileges postmodernism in its approach to language, treats language/theory as consequential and holds the notion of 'meaning as use' (and use as meaning) in the foreground of its commitments. The question is posed:

what are we doing with our words and what can we learn from our experience about how to use words?

In this context, action (in the organisation) can be thought of as potential research 'stories lived'. The more research 'stories told' are in mutual recursive relationship to research 'stories lived', the more aesthetic and coherent will be ones understanding of meaning as use and use as meaning in both organisational and academic contexts. Both the manager and the academic, in these terms, show appreciation that their practices have reflexive effects and choose to develop a reflexive consciousness in their management of meaning and action within a multiplicity of contexts. In these terms it is more accurate to think about action as re-search and research as act-ing, both dimensions of practical theory.

"…..a practical theory informs a grammar of practice that facilitates joining with the grammars of others to explore their unique patterns of situated action. The proximal reason for joining is the co-creation of new affordances and constraints for creative participation in the instrumental and consummatory dimensions of experience. It is importantly informed by data created in the process of engagement" (Cronen, in press).

Table 1 here

The relevance to organisational practical theory of exploring moral logic

While critical language theorists show interest in the moral dimension of language in the ways, through research processes, they explore multiple layers of meaning, and work to make assumptions visible, their primary interest is in how language enables membership of social groups. In particular, the focus is on patterns of domination and exploitation (Woodilla, 1998). While that focus would be of partial interest to systemic constructionists, there is also an attempt to elaborate on the systemic connections in the network of meaning and action that constitutes and is constituted by the moral. Organisational tasks, episodes of communication, identities, relational and cultural rules and patterns are treated as constituted in language and as contextual sites for meaning (Cronen & Pearce, 1985). We are encouraged to develop our consciousness about the moral logics that inform our actions with reference to these sites for meaning and those that are constructed by them. Co-ordinated management of meaning theory in particular, has given attention to the construction of narratives of purpose, obligation and legitimation (Cronen & Pearce, op.cit., Oliver, 1992) as dimensions of meaning. In addition, person position and subject position are given attention as devices for managing moral meaning and action (Shotter, 1993; Gergen, 1994; Cronen & Pearce, op.cit.; Harre & Gillett, 1994; Oliver & Brittain, 1999).

Key orienting questions for the re-searcher in these terms are:

what are the moral contexts constructing language?
- how does our situated decision making come about?
- what are the convincing and compelling forces of emotion and thought that construct our moral reasoning?
- how do these get expressed in stories of purpose, entiltement and obligation?
- how do cultural/organisational rules influence our decision making?

- **what are the moral contexts constructed by language?**
- how does action hold potential for making our social worlds better or worse places?
- how does language convince and compel?
- what is created through the unique ways we express purpose, entitlement and obligation?
- how are organisational realities such as motivation, determination, responsibility and loyalty developed?

Theory can thus be treated as a special use of language, constructing its own moral discourses with consequent opportunities and constraints for self and other to act with agency. In this context, a core

commitment of the systemic constructionist approach would be to advocate a reflexive relationship to an organisation theory's own discursive construction, what Chia (op.cit) might call a metaphysical enquiry.

The construction of the paper

Systemic constructionism as organisation theory will be more specifically located, defined and developed with particular reference to the moral logic and commitments shown through 'theoretical' descriptions. The research process and methodology will be described, drawing on and expanding co-ordinated management of meaning theory (CMM), a tool for highlighting the moral logics contained in the discursive processes studied. An episode of systemic constructionist education will provide the research context for examining discourses in use and their coherence with 'theoretical' aspirations explored. The primary interest will be:

how might the systemic constructionist paradigm provide a means to make moral worlds that work?

Some reflection will be offered on the implications of drawing attention to moral discourses in organisational practical theory both for management action and further research. In particular, its relevance will be considered for a major research project being conducted in autumn 2000 on the connections between the moral discourses in management [teaching – learning] and management [practice – theory].

SYSTEMIC CONSTRUCTIONISM LOCATED, DEFINED AND DEVELOPED

Systemic constructionism brings systemic and social constructionist approaches together as a practical theory for managing meaning and action. A community of systemic constructionist practice has evolved for psychotherapists, organisational consultants, teachers, researchers and managers over recent years but its contribution has not been widely disseminated in an organisation research context (Burnham, 1992; Lang & Cronen, 1990; Oliver & Brittain, 1999).

Systemic approaches to organisational life have facilitated a focus on relationship, pattern, connection, context, learning, enquiry, questioning technologies, metaphor, reframing, reflexivity, networks of meaning and action (Bateson, 1972; Campbell, Coldicott & Kinsella, 1991, Flood, 1999 Lang, 1991, Morgan, 1997; Oliver, 1996; Senge, 1991). The Batesonian systemic tradition accessed here, stresses the significance of the relationship between culture, context, meaning and language and takes the position that patterns connect through relationship. Systemic practice includes making stories about and enquiring into the patterns of meaning and action that connect organisational contexts of significance.

Social constructionist approaches are concerned with the connections and contradictions expressed through language, exploring the discursive resources and practices of the social worlds that we make, and who has a say or stake in making them ((Oliver, 1992, 1996; Oliver & Brittain, 1998, 1999; Cronen & Pearce, 1985). Furthermore, such approaches aim to explore the moral implications of what is made in language, hence a focus on moral logics, contexts and meaning, person and subject position (Pearce & Cronen, 1985, Oliver, 1992, Shotter, 1994). In this context, co-ordinated management of meaning theory has provided a frame for identifying the moral dimension of talk (Pearce & Cronen, 1985), directing us towards themes of entitlement, obligation, prohibition and legitimation. We will be advocating here that the contexts constructing such moral motivation become a significant site of interest in the analysis of meaning, positioning and action.

The juxtaposition of systemic and social constructionism as systemic constructionism, provides the means for a metaphysical enquiry into the theory's relationship to language and its construction of moral realities. Systemic methodologies and techniques, such as the domains model offered here, in structuring and generating conversation, facilitate the connecting up of narrative fragments enabling the potential for highlighting and developing the strength of our moral logics for how working life should, could, can't, won't and must be.

This is important when working from the position that in naming things we 'create' them; we structure our understanding and experience through language (Morgan, 1996). Thus moral responsibilities and account-abilities are accorded to management teachers and researchers for their contribution to the worlds that are generated in ignoring, maintaining or reframing words.

Systemic constructionism thus provides a frame for management learning and practice through taking a position that:

- Language is seen not as representational but as both a partial re-presentation and a construction of reality.
- Communication is the medium through which we construct experience, knowledge, identity, relationship and culture.
- A metaphor that works is to treat the organisation as a network of conversations.
- Communication is always unfinished although in conversation we can create temporary boundaries around meaning.
- The interest becomes the recursive relationship between how people live out their conversations in the organisation and how narratives are facilitated to structure experience that fit and develop organisational purposes and visions.
- Since language is treated as fateful, the interest develops as to how such narratives shape possibilities for effective action.
- The focus becomes conversation as performance with the manager in a key legitimised role of influence.
- Conversation thus takes on a moral dimension because through this medium managers are positioned to facilitate or inhibit powers for self and others to act
- The connection between moral logic, person and subject position and action are treated as core dimensions of power and relationship
- The manager is encouraged to make conscious, situated judgements about tools and frames for action, that reflect and develop the complexity of contexts that are being acted out of and into
- A focus on moral discourses in use facilitates reflexivity for management theory and action

Meaning as use: how might the moral discourses in theory facilitate management action?

Managers who pay attention to the power of communication for constructing organisational realities, will take seriously how they contribute to the construction of frames and tools for talking, listening and the development of purpose (Marshak, 1998). This core skill will help them in the tasks that comprise management practice in the contemporary organisation. The emergent management identity encouraged here is informed by a postmodern sensibility but not determined by it. The focus is on the making of situated judgement with reference to a complexity of contexts such as – the primary task of the organisation, theoretical and ethical commitments, aesthetic considerations and the diversity of voices that make up organisational life. The task in constructing agency (for self and others) that enables coherence, integrity and co-ordination of relationship, is complex and never finished.

RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The methodologies and technical processes described in this paper should be regarded as exploratory work-in-progress in the context of a pilot study, designed to facilitate a clarification of workable forms for analysis for use in a future (larger) research project. One claim for validity in this venture is based in the developing need for connection between the existing academic disciplines of critical management theory, discourse analysis and mainstream management literature. The authors make no grand claim in this respect, but offer within this paper a re-presentation of some of the developments incorporated in the systemic constructionist management field as a potential guide to practical management action, study and research.

Of particular interest for this research process is how moral discourses shown through words like 'can', 'must', 'will', 'should', structure the theory and impact on powers of making meaning and action in management learning. There are four dimensions of moral discourse that will be examined:

1. **Layering of moral contexts**

The frame for co-ordinating meaning and action provided by Pearce & Cronen (op.cit.) will be used and developed here so that multiple meanings will be (temporarily) structured to convey how culture, relationship, identity, task, speech act and language use are interrelated.

In particular, we will be examining how cultural, relationship and identity stories (for which we introduce the term *macro-logics*) recursively construct task, episode, speech act and language use (for which we introduce the term *micro-logics*).

2. **Moral logic**

with a focus on themes of purpose, obligation and entitlement.

These words are not offered in the spirit of covering all possibilities. Rather, they provide a structure for entering worlds of moral meaning constituted by interwoven fragments of emotion and thought that work as motivating forces for meaning and action. They can be helped to take on more narrative form in conditions of enquiry. As enquirers into the educational text, words that are associated with purpose, obligation and entitlement, that position speakers and listeners in constructing power to act, will be selected out for reflection.

3. **Person position**

alerts us to the powers that are taken and given, contingent on whether one is speaking with the voice of:

- I /we (first person singular and plural) to
- you (second person singular or plural) or as
- an observer about self or others (third person).

Different rights, responsibilites and accountabilities are afforded and constrained depending on how voices are placed.

The research process will be highlighting person position where it connects significantly to moral logic in constructing a subject position of power in making meaning and action.

4. **Subject position**

refers to the experience of the subject (i.e. the experience in the first person position) in terms of their ability to make and express meaning (Harre & Gillett, op.cit.). It will be highlighted in the research where moral logic, person position and subject position are juxtaposed in such a way to enhance management action.

EPISODE OF MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

This section comprises a transcribed text of a lecture on the MSc in Systemic Organisation and Management (at Kensington Consultation Centre), offering a frame for structuring conversation called the domains model, within the wider commitments of a systemic constructionist approach. A case example was provided following the lecture. A consultation process was conducted with course participants, following the case example, in relation to a particular dilemma presented (in appendix). This process is described with reference to the research tools offered above.

In the teaching context, the purpose in structuring the learning by offering three experiences of the domains model, is to pursue integration of meaning as use and use as meaning. This frame has been selected as it explicitly defines itself in relation to moral purposes and offers opportunities for the development of management agency.

Text 1: Lecture

"I am going to be introducing a frame for providing meaning and structuring conversation called the domains model. I will be describing an experience where the model was used to facilitate a complex meeting between organisation consultants and managers. Then we will be using the model to structure a consultation process here.

The domains model provides a way of thinking and talking about contexts, clarifying the different kinds of conversation one is in with others and the different dimensions of conversation or position that should be privileged.

In using the model one is re-presenting a story told about a story lived. In the story lived we are in all the domains at the same time but one is foregrounded and the other backgrounded. Thus one tells a story that enables the individual to act as if one way of looking at the world fits the situation best with the recognition that other ways of looking at the world could be relevant but are not to be prioritised.

This frame is particularly valuable for helping people to move out of an experience of confusion, stuckness, complexity or 'madness' in communication. It can facilitate a clarifying separation of contexts through a temporary structuring of reality. Systemically, the complex position that we are trying to hold, is that we are continually creating temporary structures, patterns, models, truths – to help us go on in the conversation, in the context of appreciating that every position is partial and that reality is complex. This positioning allows for the creation of truths in the context of believing that it is not desirable to take a position that one can inhabit a fixed or ultimate truth.

A way of conceptualising the model is as interlocking cells where the domain of **aesthetics** is transcendent of but connected to the domains of **explanation** and **production.** The actor is treated as agent, considering in the domain of aesthetics (albeit their choices shaped by a multiplicity of contexts), drawing on discourses of modernism and postmodernism; the model thus challenges that prevailing dichotomy:

The model can also be pictured as if each domain is in contextual relationship with each other. Depending on one's situation one can decide where in the levels of context to position each domain:

Figure 1 here

In the **domain of aesthetics**:

- you make decisions about which of the other 2 domains you should be in using the reference points of the domain which are
- theory, ethics, reflexivity, fit, coherence, pattern form, elegance, eloquence
- inhabiting a systemic constructionist world view

In the **domain of explanation**:

- you are interested in exploring the complexity of the moral logic of a system
- you hypothesise, enquire, reflect, show curiosity, irreverence
- exploring multiple description, truths, stories
- engaging in divergent processes
- recognising that all positions are partial
- legitimate activities are facilitation, invitation, enquiry
- inhabiting a postmodern world view

In the **domain of production**:

- you are interested to fix problems rather than explore stories
- you are moved to create certainties, control life
- seeking truth, order and structure
- engaging in convergent processes
- legitimate activities are argument, instruction, advice giving
- inhabiting a modernist world view

The co-ordinated management of meaning and the co-ordinated meaning of management.

In the domain of aesthetics one is making decisions about the domain frame for communication that best fits organisational purposes within a multiplicity of contexts. This ability requires one to engage in a process of systemic, reflexive hypothesising so as to make sense of texts and contexts, interpreting meaning and structuring action.

The contexts of relevance may look something like this:

Figure 2 here

This structure can be used to interpret meaning within the domains. For instance the language of 'I would like you to do this', spoken by a manager to an employee, could be interpreted as:
- a speech act of facilitation (explanation) or one of control (production)
- the task might be to review a decision making process and could be treated as constructing (explanation) or transmitting (production) meaning
- the episode may be a coaching (explanation) process or calling an employee to account for bad practice (production)
- the identity story may be one of manager using consultancy skills (explanation), or a line manager disciplining an employee requiring change (production)
- the relationship could be defined as consultative (explanation) or line managed (production)
- cultural stories would be contextual in their treatment of authority and leadership

The person in either role (manager or managed) will be interpreting 'I would like you to do this' within a multiplicity of contexts which will give strength and weight to choice of domain. Cultural, relational and identity stories will all provide implicit rules with moral connotations (macro logics) for assigning meaning and structuring action. When there is a confusion or sense of stuckness about the appropriateness of domain one can move into the domain of aesthetics and use self and relational reflexive questions to enable clarity and development.

Text 2: Case example

We were two consultants who had been invited by a personnel director to facilitate a meeting enquiring into the management training needs of an organisation. Definitions and visions of management expressed by the group were confusing, contradictory and dualistic. We developed the view that the meaning of management was not well co-ordinated through leadership and organisational processes and that there was a lack of clarity about the mandate for individuals (on all levels) in decision making.

The kind of statements about good management that were expressed included:
- on the one hand management is about control and what is needed is more structure, clearer communication
- on the other hand, management is about facilitation and what is needed is more consultation

It was as if these voices did not connect, as if they were in argument. Other contradictory statements included:

- we need help but don't help us
- we need management training but the people that need to do it won't choose to do it and we can't make them.

Such complexity seemed to represent confusion in the context of domains. It was as if it was difficult to be clear about entitlements and obligations to make choices and decisions.   This observation led us to structure the discussion by using the domains model. We have been experimenting with using the model as a frame for talk not just a tool for giving meaning to talk as it was originally conceived (Lang, Little & Cronen, 1990)

We expressed appreciation to the group in helping us to see how complex the organisation and the communication in it was and said that we had designed a structure for the discussion that we thought would facilitate the talk about management training. We explained the domains model, then gave the following instructions and operated as coach to keep the talk on track within each domain:

- in the domain of explanation – talk to yourselves with curiosity about why management training is important to you at this time, what might be its purpose – make connections – recognise your own position is partial – enquire and explore – open up ideas

(A lot of energy was created with this discussion. People were able to enquire and explore in a civil and creative manner)

- in the domain of production – discuss what kind of management training would be right, what should happen.   It is legitimate in this domain to argue, state strong opinions, act as if you are speaking the truth, contradict each other, disagree.

(The group seemed to find this conversation more difficult and showed tentativeness in their interventions, even though our experience with the group until this point was that they had trouble with respect for difference, speaking over each other and making fragmented and disconnected contributions).

- in the domain of aesthetics – discuss the ethical and aesthetic considerations related to decisions about management training. Give consideration to organisational values, pattern and coherence.

(The group conducted this discussion seriously and with respect to the core values of the organisation and in ways that connected to the discussions in the other two domains.)

Table 2 here

Case consultation

A case consultation was planned to help a student think through a dilemma he was experiencing in his role as an organisational consultant. The structure of the consultation was created in the following way:

- the student was interviewed by one person for 20 minutes; this space was treated as the domain of aesthetics
- the interviewer and interviewee listened to a reflecting conversation by the other 10 participants, conducted in the domain of explanation
- the interview continued, reflecting on the reflections
- the interviewer and interviewee listened to a reflecting conversation in the domain of production
- the interview concluded with reflections on those reflections
- the whole group reflected on the experience of using the domains model in that way

The rules for communication in the different domains were as follows:

Domain of aesthetics
The interviewer and interviewee could listen to the reflections of others in the other two domains and choose what was interesting and useful to them. They should notice what communication they were connecting to and what they would like to reject. They could make choices what to explore further. They should treat all communication as partial contributions.

Domain of explanation
Participants should take a position of curiosity about the discussion in the interview, aiming to make connections between the fragments of talk that get produced, with a view to facilitating the interview process.

Domain of production
Participants should express their ideas with certainty, offer advice, argue, disagree, get their points across, be concerned with issues such as contract and think in terms of right and wrong, with a view to influencing the interview outcome(s)

The case

The issue the student presented was related to an experience of frustration he was feeling about his ability to influence a team of managers in an organisation. He had been comissioned by a senior manager, to facilitate a series of discussions with the team, with a view to developing team practice. However, although people said they enjoyed the conversations he was facilitating, he wasn't sure how the conversations were shaping action in the organisation and was concerned that the senior manager must be asking himself the same question.

His dilemma was expressed through statements like

"I have control over structure but I can't tell them what to do"

In the domain of explanation reflection, participants raised questions about:
- the connections between goals, process and responsibility
- the fit between 'good conversation' and no results
- the place of the senior manager in the process

One of the effects of the conversation was that the student began to develop the idea that he took too much responsibility for management concerns and that he should work differently with the manager to encourage his role in the process.

In the domain of production reflection, issues of contract, clarity and agreement of expectation and payment were raised. The issue of the role of the senior manager was taken up and pushed more strongly. People were vociferous in their advice about the place of the manager in the process, saying that he should be connected and on the inside of discussions about the effects of the facilitated conversations on management action.

The interviewee's response to the domain of production reflection was to say that he preferred it, that the other reflection was more polite and that he now had ideas about how to proceed with the team and the manager. He was intending to clarify expectations and goals and involve the manager in decision making differently.

Group reflections on the process
In reflecting on the use of the model to facilitate a consultation over a dilemma, the participants were interested to note the differences in the ways the domains model structured the talk and the positioning of participants in the conversation. Their comments included:

- as managers, we are more used to acting in the domain of production so are more easy in those ways of speaking; we don't have to think so much about how to do that which perhaps helps that discussion to feel and look more spontaneous and more animated

- there was more humour experienced and shown in the domain of production; this was connected to more risk being taken in terms of how what was said might be received; there was a lot of care taken in the domain of explanation to appear curious and open

- since the behaviour in the domain of production was felt to be more flamboyant and less guarded, the interviewee felt that he could take on the same qualities in his thinking as if he was ingesting the speech act at a non verbal level

- in the domain of production, people can talk over each other and be less preoccupied with turn taking, thus the energy of the conversation feels different; people can be legitimately concerned with their own rights whereas in the domain of explanation one is being careful to attune to the rights of others

- the interviewee noticed that it was easier to read the communication in the domain of production, that verbal and non verbal signals were more congruous

Table 3 here

Summary of findings

- the domains model obliges the individual to speak within agreed frames for particular purposes with clear boundaries and rules for speaking and listening, constructing an aesthetic work-ability

- the moral discourses that position the individual in this way, entitle and free participants to speak purposefully within the boundaries of clear contexts

- the clarity of obligations and entitlements of person and subject position challenge the potential for ambiguity of motivation in speaking, which can have a corrupting and constraining effect on communication

- the opportunities and constraints for the different subject positions were found to be:

the domain of aesthetics:

aspires to maximise responsibility, accountability and reflexivity thus the importance of the paradox (given the privileging of agency) in staying connected to the humility of a partial view

the domain of explanation:

subjugates the first person position in privileging connection and co-ordination, thus minimising the emotional re-source of the communication, shown in the caution and care of expression. This process can enable the listener to hear challenging ideas as potential for learning but it can also render such ideas difficult to grasp when non-verbal cues may not be in such evidence as in the domain of production

the domain of production:

is a familiar place for managers to live, given that action is privileged in a management discourse. This can be an advantage in enabling spontaneity, humour and risk, facilitating an easier reading of cues for the listener which can help in working out the next sensible action. In reflecting in front of a listener, if care is not taken, while placing them in the third person position, to speak with respect for that person's motivation and ability, ambiguity could be created about intention. The positioning of the domain of explanation discussion before the domain of production, facilitates a clear context of intention.

DISCUSSION

This paper has explored the moral means by which systemic constructionist theory makes claims about what is important and how its claims can structure processes in a management education context with a view to offering sensitive tools for effective action in management practice. The core question for the research has been:

how might the systemic constructionist paradigm provide a means to make moral worlds that work for management practice?

In using the domains model for setting forth and enquiring into the systemic constructionist paradigm, we would like to make the following reflections.

The model offers at the level of **macro logic** a frame of aesthetic work-ability, enabling temporary structurings for management of communication, of use within a variety of management contexts such as corporate planning, management development, the chairing of meetings, the management of conflict, performance appraisals and so on. The approach is radical in the way a context is created for a mindfulness of the consequences of talk.

The ability is facilitated to discern temporary, purposive representations from the 'real' or 'true'. This ability, in itself, can provide an experience which transcends habitual and unwanted patterns of talk, when people are enabled in 'act as if' mode, to appreciate that when you take up a different position, you see things differently. The ability, then, to move between positions promotes a reflexive second order thinking which can facilitate attention to such **micro logics** of purpose, obligation and entitlement as:

- clear construction of the parameters, boundaries and rules for speaking and listening
- clarification and agreement of situated purpose for the talk
- reduction of ambiguity in discussants' motivation in speaking
- contextual clarity which encourages a consciousness and transparency of moral logic
- contextual clarity which provides a coherence and richness in the layering of information, offering the potential for 'thick' descriptions

One significant value of structuring conversation so that people experience discussion in this layered, complex, contextually clarifying way is the potential for richness and coherence of information that is produced in short periods of time. This may be seen as beneficial by managers who are concerned with the efficiency gains relating to time spent in conversational forms of action. Such concerns are common in the context of the 'talk – action' dualism noted earlier as prevalent in both academic and management circles.

Inviting people to speak and listen within a specific frame for an agreed purpose could probably be said to be unusual, challenging our received ideas about spontaneity, freedom and control. How one sets a context for such invitation is crucial, requiring role, relational and task legitimacy.

The model presented here is in one sense, an arbitrary re-presentation of the systemic constructionist paradigm. It brings alive the attention given by the paradigm to the links between context, language, meaning, purpose and action. However, there are many forms (known and unknown) for structuring communication. Of significance is the power and workability of providing frames for talk in a management context that can construct aesthetic coherence and purpose, mindful of the significance of relevant discourses at a macro level.

Generating words that work for research

This enquiry has enabled a co-ordination of the domains and co-ordinated management of meaning models in ways that facilitate distinctions between person and subject position in relation to moral logics of purpose, obligation and entitlement. This working combination could be used to structure future discourse work as a tool for identification of domains in use and their relationship to moral experience. Such work could facilitate the separation and clarification of confused or conflictual contexts, enabling effective organisational action. In the context of dialogue with the 'researched', such work could also encourage reflexivity about participation in patterns of culture, relationship and identity that could enhance the primary organisational task.

In the context of our own future research, where the connections between the teaching of a management development programme and management practice will be explored, we would propose a sharper rigour in the coding of discourse.

We are aware that this analysis does not incorporate reflection about the cultural and relational processes embedded in the episode of education itself, or place significance on the antecedent or consequent conditions of the episode. Such incorporation may have enriched and sophisticated the data and could be a consideration in a future project. Our learning from engaging in this research has also encouraged us to explore the micro - logics of situated judgement in the context of management episodes and their relationship with macro-logics, in greater detail in a future project.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored how discourse is embodied in the organisation of theory and in the use of theory in organising, in the context of an episode of management education.

In enquiring into some of the basic meta-theoretical underpinnings of the systemic constructionist approach, the rejection of a 'correspondence theory of truth' has been achieved and instead, a discourse of obligation created for a mindfulness of what is created through language. The moral obligation constructed is one of aesthetic work-ability, enabling situated, contexted communication abilities. Thus the theory-application dualism is challenged and a third transcendent alternative presented. This practical theory approach encourages our 'theoretical' tools and principles to emerge from a data of engagement. The richness of detail from engagement in actual conversation facilitates the enrichment of principles and tools, which in turn are suggestive for how to act.

Chia (1999) locates the privileging of workability in the pragmatic tradition and argues for a 'strategic pragmatism' in place of 'rigorous scientism'. However, he advocates a 'thinking backwards' to critically examine our representations. Our own position, more in keeping with the obligation of aesthetic work-ability is to emphasise thinking forwards. Such an emphasis invites us into anticipating, with reflexive reference to what has gone before, the contexts we are creating through our utterances.

We have offered the domains model as an example of a frame for structuring meaning and communication. It has also been used, combined with co-ordinated management of meaning theory, to structure the research

process itself. Thus the model has taken us through meaning as meaning, meaning as use, meaning in use and use as meaning. The use of the model in these ways has facilitated a reflection of the discursive moral logics embedded in the model and their recursive links with the systemic constructionist paradigm. The postmodern move in framing talk as action, expounded by a systemic constructionist worldview, gives weight both to the endeavour in constructing a frame to produce contexted communication abilities and to the relevance of detailed analysis into its discursive products.

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APPENDIX

interview

B – could you introduce the issue then I will ask questions
P – task as external consultant – working with reorganisation – trying to work more systemically
They had learnt the word deskilling – separate from executive – not involved in decision making
The domains model useful
I have started with the doe – asked questions – introduced the comissioning project, they interviewed their own customers
Every meeting is good – we talk and talk
My feeling is that mt is asking for results – what is going on
They said ok for domain of explanation
I am asking what is happening in the process – we do have good conversation
I have introduced some clear task re customers
It will take time
Dilemma – my own – what is happening in the process?
B – the people you meet – they seem to be pleased with the space you make for explanations
How did you notice – the staying still

Did management say they wanted results or is that more in your own mind
They don't know either what is going on
Waiting for results (content and process)

B so you not know and management doesn't know
B – how did you discuss expectations from the beginning
I was clear that the way I work is more with the process – don't talk about how to act for 3 or 4 hours
B results more about you in the organisation and more how the business goes
P – I was the one who set up the goals and emailed them re their goals
B – so as far as I can hear you were empowered to run this in the way you think this is the best
So what do you think informs your dilemma
p- a feeling – I want results – when I discuss with management…..
b – pick out the feeling – how would it be seen in the organisation – how would it be noticed – how come you have got the feeling
what is the evidence for the feeling
p- I am a little bit restless myself

b – the first time you got the feeling?
P – 3 weeks ago – very prepared – at the end I reintroduced the common task – I had introduced it before by email
The conversation is good but the action…
B – when you introduced the task what happened
P – I had a feeling that this is enough for today
Now you have introduced another task
B – how did you react
P – I told them it is important to have a connection between meaning and action
B – so what is your idea about what happens when you ask them to do things – what do they expect from you
P – maybe they need more explanation
Some leadership training for groups leaders
I am the one who has control over the conversation but not the one who tells them what to do – the group should discover what to do – they should be the one to push the process

Domain of explanation reflection from listening group
- what does the group think between meetings
- fantastic process re leaving control to customers – more re his feeling of success and what is different from before
- good conversations? I wish I had listened to the good conversation – what happened
- what is his rule as a consultant in a good conversation
- he is held back by his idea about the manager waiting for results – what would happen if he left that idea
- but he has given the manager the goal – he had it in his own mind
- perhaps the goal is the process for a while – then it could be results
- reorganisation of company – I can imagine a longing for structure and results
- the question who owns the goal is a crucial question to reflect on
- goals is a hard word to use – may be different in every meeting
- where is the manager in the process – given away his responsibility to p
- how do good conversation and no results fit – good conversation could be the base for good organisation – that could be the result – but some of this is the managers job

interview
p – the goals – I havent set up the goal for the company – I have made suggestions
I stress myself – I take too much responsibility for the goals
My idea is that the conversation is a ground for making results
in a more free way – they don't dare to make their own decision

b – could it be that the manager has asked for you to create good conversations and they will do the rest on their own – what would be the difference for you if creating good conversation for you if it is enough or if it is just the first step

maybe it is enough if I just build up the platform and force the managers to do the rest

b – so what should be needed for you to connect the managers to their role – what will you need to know that you have done enough

p – confirmation from the managers

my own stress – I want to be their tool

domain of production reflection from listening group
- they protested against the task they got – now he should negotiate the agenda with the meetings and perhaps include the manager – what they need to work on in the future
- he needs the groups help to know why he is doing a good job
- process – what has it been and what does it mean
- might his stress hinder the process
- what about the process should he talk with the manager
- who is paying him – what are they buying – there must be a contract – so where are we now – with the group and manager – how could the manager be standing outside the process
- is he outside the process?
- Everybody is asking for results

Interview
P – very strict – reports every month – very controlled
B – so what was their feeling when they were rude about this
B – so how do you know what the manager knows
P – very involved in the process
But I want more ideas re how to run the process and more feedback re goals
B – what possibility for you to do it
P – a meeting – sent them an agenda – I asked them about the questions – what is new, and what from before, what unsure, your plans and goals for the future – involved but not in the professional way I want them to be
B – what most important
P – goals and how acted different
B – what happened to you between the 2 reflections
P the first very polite and the second better

Final reflections on use of the model for structuring conversation
You are trying to use fit in your work – you said you don't know what you are doing, not secure – but brave to try and use this context
Domain of production was clearer
More animated, clearer non verbal communication – clearer contextually for the person
But it matters how you put a context round it
In domain of production – introduced more humour – connect with the domain of aesthetics – when you tell us about your story it links with humour
Respond to the speech act – how I take you in will affect my way of responding to you - I can be more flamboyant
We are used to the domain of production and we can be more irreverent but the domain of explanation I am still searching for my role and it is difficult to be irreverent in that position
Big words come closer to you

Birgitta's thoughts (interviewer)
In the domain of production her experience is it started in a reflecting way – what is the difference for the different positions listening to the different domains
And how did the reflections affect b and her questioning
After the domain of production reflection he moved more into the that domain temporarily

In the domain of explanation it might be difficult to be so many people because you have to listen and connect and with the domain of production people can talk over each other

Research – could be interested in how do these domains enable you to speak and listen
Domain of explanation – listen, connect and talk
Domain of production – when arguing for your own truth it doesn't matter if it connects with anything else – you have a right to be concerned with your own rights
Domain of explanation – connect to make the story coherent all the time – obligation to follow
Rebellion – difficult to be rebellious in the domain of explanation – conformity more likely? Need both not to create fixed systems

*Distinctions between a dualistic and contextual approach to the 'theory – application'
relationship:*

	theory - application separation	practical theory
description of identity	Manager or academic	Academics and managers constituted by and constituting [practical – theory]
relationship between talk and action	Separate – in competition – managers privilege action and academics privilege talk	Talk, action and meaning are in complex, overlapping contextual relationship
use of language	Transmits and critiques meaning	Constructs meaning
consequences for research episode	The relevance of theory for practice is contested	Theory is developed through practice and practice through theory

Table 1

Figure 1

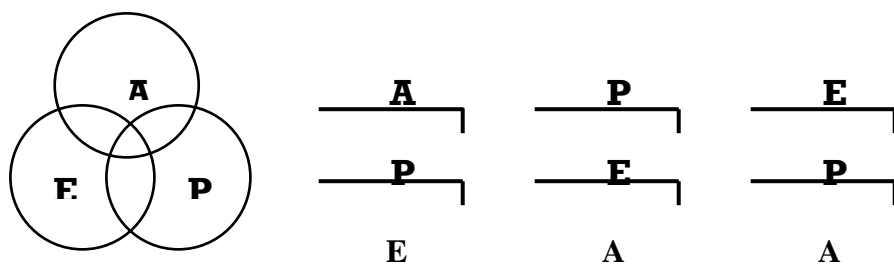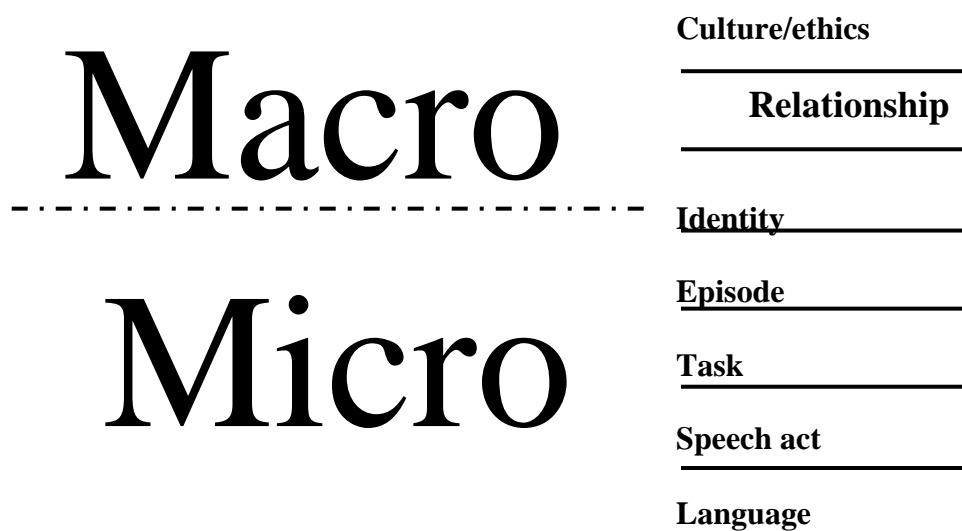The contexts of relevance may look something like this:

Macro

Micro

Culture/ethics

Relationship

Identity

Episode

Task

Speech act

Language

Figure 2 (variation on Cronen & Pearce, 1985)

Research reflections on moral discourses

Discourses of purpose, obligation and entitlement	Layers of context constructing moral discourses	Systemic Constructionist	Postmodern	Modern
Moral Logic Level: interpreted discourses	Co-ordinated management of meaning	Domain of aesthetics	Domain of explanation	Production
Macro *"Our primary purpose is development of communication"*	Cultural Ethical	Situated decision making informed by theory, coherence, fit, ethics,	Construction of complex discourse, curiosity and divergence	Construction of either/or discourse, clarity, control and convergence
"We can and should consciously speak from different person positions"	Relationship, person position, subject position	Privileging the first person position singular in the context of the first person position plural	Privileging co-ordination, connection, relational coherence	Privileging individual coherence at the expense of co-ordination, the expression of opinion
"I can speak from any position (e.g. authority, generosity) in the context of treating my view as a partial re-presentation of experience"	Identity , person position, subject position	Manager of contexts; recognising the partiality of one's position; connected to value and pattern	Privileging the second person position; experience of reflexivity and generosity	Privileging the first person position; experience of passion and rightness of view.
Micro *"We must do what is required in a context of purposeful action"*	Task	Making judgements about the relationship between obligation and domain	Exploration and connection of ideas and observations	Expressing of opinion and argument to achieve clarity of decision
"We should take temporary positions to enable development"	Episode	Domain of aesthetics discussion	Domain of explanation discussion	Domain of production discussion
"We can be hopeful about communication development"	Speech Act	Co-ordinating clarity of frame, role and purpose	Clarity of desire for meaning making	Clarity of desire for decision making
"Our talk is fateful"	Language	'Act as if you are thinking, speaking and listening from within this frame'	'Act as if you are thinking, speaking and listening from within this frame'	'Act as if you are thinking, speaking and listening from within this frame'

Table 2

Research reflections on moral discourses

Discourses of obligation and entitlement	Layers of context constructing moral discourses	Systemic Constructionist	Postmodern	Modern
Moral Logic Level: interpreted discourses	Co-ordinated management of meaning	Aesthetics	Explanation	Production
Macro "We should construct aesthetic work-ability"	Culture/Ethics	choice, discernment, purpose, agency	all views are partial; facilitation of the consultation is primary	my view should be heard; I need to persuade of its value to influence the process
"We are entitled to discern re-presentations from the real and true"	Relationship, person position,	attention to fit and usefulness	The individual should be careful about the rights of others and co-ordinate with other views	the individual should be careful about the rights of self and compete with other views
"I should engage in reflexive, second order thinking"	Identity, person position, subject position	purposeful agent in decision making, the first person position privileged with reflexive sensibilites	I should facilitate with tentativeness, uncertainty and curiosity; difficult to communicate emotional cues	I should convince and offer advice; easy to communicate emotional cues
Micro "We should show transparency and consciousness of our moral logic"	Task	prioritising meaning and linking to decision making	reflecting and making connections	advice giving, achieving clarity of view, enabling action
"boundaries for communication should be clear"	Episode	interview in the domain of aesthetics	reflection in the domain of explanation	reflection in the domain of production
"we can enjoy less ambiguity of motivation"	Speech Act	request for consultation	Inviting of connections between goals, process and responsibilites	Inviting of clarity about contract, rights, responsibilites and accountabilites
"what can I do?"	Language	"I have control over structure but can't tell them what to do"	"I have control over structure but can't tell them what to do"	"I have control over structure but can't tell them what to do"

Table 3

Gabrielle Parker

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

1.1 The most useful idea to date has been that human beings, by definition, are sentient beings who live in/ into, and act out, of some **moral order**; and, that it is useful for me and others, in most areas of life including therapy, to act out of this belief. This promotes respect for and appreciation of difference, in order to move on together.

 For example, I draw the attention of trainee counsellors and and dance movement therapists, to the wide variety of 'stories' available in the world over time and space/ geography (history and culture). I invite them to consider culture at the level of preferred ethnicity, as well as at the individual level (a more biological metaphor highlighting individual stories and experiences of 'culture').

This provides one context for inviting them to consider the usefulness of the belief (in the context of human conflict) that people may be seen as *doing the best they can in some world, with reference to the moral orders they may be restrained by (See Jenkins, on Restraints from Change – about working with men who are violent).* Trainees seem to readily take to the idea that 'all systems are perfect' (at a point in time); coupled with the NLP idea that 'all behaviour has a good intention' (in some context – Ian McDermott and Joseph 'Connor, Principles of NLP). In turn, this provides the possibility for respectful curiosity and creative 'wonder' about difference and conflict, with an idea that new contexts and more life-enhancing stories may be co-created. The ethical position of Carl Rogers also informs my work in terms of how he promotes the (existentialist) idea of taking seriously the experienced world of the other, within an I-Thou relationship. – or second person position of being a 'authentic' witness (my gloss).

I am giving you these examples – and connections – to tell you how I am locating CMM ideas for trainees who are acting out of many different moral orders and how I connect with their language, in order to introduce some difference. They also represent connections within my own experience of integrating different approaches/ ideas, in the context of my use of CMM.

1.2**. Levels of context (hierarchy) – considered in relation to moral orders.** I don't present it as a hierarchical model – but rather a heterachical model, as you do? I talk to trainees about using the metaphor of 'Windows' (95), where individual files or contexts can be foregrounded or backgrounded at a given time – and consider by whom in which context/ relationship and intention. I try out ideas of different 'frames' and possible 'reframes' which might make a different 'sense' of problematic or unacceptable behaviour.

 For example, I might ask trainees to consider the particular moral force of any utterance or interaction, in relation to a specific context. So assist this I might give an example of

the different contexts that may be informing my own stories or 'utterances' at any moment: e.g. how might my contributions to the conversation be performed differently if I am acting out of the context of my identity as: a trainer, a woman, an Irish person, a person of a certain age, a friend, a colleague, a dancer, a registered psychotherapist, a mother and so on. How might my contribution be understood differently in terms of which contexts my 'audience' assumes I am acting out of? How might it make a different sense to a different audience (context I am acting in to). And how might one or another 'audience' make a different sense of my actions in the conversation, if they were willing to consider which of my potential 'levels of context' could make a better sense of my behaviour or communications with them at that point in time.

My work here is supported by Cecchin et al's paper on the 'Cybernetics of Prejudice' – since one of our basic premises (at the level of verbal and non-verbal interaction) is that of 'mutual influence' and how it is performed, and how it may be deconstructed, in terms of 'contingencies' and playful experimentation with different ways of doing things, through role play, improvisation and reflection on new experiences and relational possibilities. In this, we use another central idea that seems to be accessible to trainees – that of *relative positioning; how the meaning of the conversation may be differently organised by how the 'actor' positions themselves and how this may position the other (or vice versa).* We talk about Shotters's grammatical positions – and also draw upon NLP ideas about 'perceptual positions': first person, the "I"; second person, Buber's "I - Thou" (or walking in the other person's shoes); and the third person position. This can be variously seen as and "I-It" , or negative 'objective' distancing and relinquishing of moral responsibility for what is 'objectively' observed.

The above may not be immediately helpful for your research objectives, but I am using the opportunity to unpack some of my work for myself. It is also a direct communication to Barnett – who often writes about 'positioning'. Maybe this is an area that could be further articulated within CMM? With my counsellor training partner/ colleague, a systemic practitioner and also a biodynamic therapist and NLP master practitioner – we use the idea of positioning, mutual influence, prejudices, time as an important context - along with Michael White's idea of externalizing (putting people into a positive 3rd person position). In turn, this relates for me to ideas in the arts therapies, differently named as: aesthetic distance; dramatic distance; and being in the position of the 'witness' in dance movement therapy. For my trainees, this different positioning seems to make more sense of the idea of ' grammatical positioning' in terms of different rights, obligations etc – via the notion and experience of a physical repositioning which creates a change of physical relationship – and thus experience and meaning.

The CMM idea of different levels of context is invaluable and we usually present it in terms of the 'daisy model'. My colleagues and I also use the NLP idea of 'logical levels of context'. These are more fixed, but equally heterarchical e.g. behaviour, capability, identity, beliefs, values and spirituality – presented in the picture of concentric circles – with spirituality at the core. This is another accessible tool which can generate useful curiosity, exercises and questions about which level may be most problematic for a given

concern and at which level (context) change might be most productive in a given time context.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I work primarily as a trainer at this point in time. I train Dance Movement Therapists on a 3 year Graduate Diploma/ M.A. of which the Graduate Diploma serves to enable people to register with the professional association in the UK. I am also the Convener for the M.A. in DMT (Israel – offsite), and I co-teach Research Methods for the Arts Therapies (Dance, Drama, Art & Music Therapies), both in London and in Israel.

In the near future, we will be 'scrutinized' by a government body currently called CPSM (Council for the Professions Supplementary to Medicine – in future to be renamed the Health Professionals). This includes nurses, occupational therapists and so on, as well as other arts therapists and has implications for pay scales and accountability for outcomes. We recently revalidated our DMT training Programme for the University off Surrey Roehampton and were granted the revalidation without conditions. We were applauded for our methods of student involvement and self - peer evaluation **(based on a social constructionist model of Dance Movement Therapy** and located in our selective use of above ideas. We believe this is a unique Programme at this time. It has taken 8 years for us to create a context to come 'out of the (social constructionist) closet' i.e. to arrive at a point where we could invite students to be curious about these ideas, without feeling they were 'too different' from their usual 'epistemology' or ways of understanding their worlds.

In an Adult Community setting, I co-train counsellors on a 4-year part time Programme, of which the first 3 years are currently in place, **based on a social constructionist ethic**. With all of my colleagues, I am also interested in questioning the possible limitations of this approach i.e. what it does not attend to (from a position that all approaches have specific constraints, as well as affordances).

For me, at the moment, the area I am personally interested in developing further is a connection between some Jungian ideas (Mindell) that focus on relationship as primary and view a connection between individual and social/ systemic problems from a perspective of metaphor and perhaps energetic communication. This exploration, for me, represents a move beyond pragmatism to a consideration of spirituality as expressed in most cultural moral orders and imperatives and individual longings (for belonging). My favourite references just now are: John 0'Donoghue's book "Eternal Echoes: Exploring our Hunger to Belong, as well as his book "Anam Cara (Soul Friend in my Celtic language). Clearly, this speaks to my age and stage of life as a person, but it puts me in mind of a relatively neglected area of Barnett's writings (in my view) i.e. "mystery" and his various reference to Joseph Campbell and the importance of 'ritual' and 'rites of passage'. What ever happened to a draft paper called something like: "Stories about the abilities to tell stories"? This left me wanting more!

I have a small private practice in individual supervision – but few 'clients' just now because I am reflecting on my practice and approach and re-visioning my work. As part of my training/ teaching I do group supervision, and individual consultations to colleagues and trainees. My individual 1-2-1 therapy work over the past few years has led me to question the limitations, for me as a practitioner, of a 'pure' social constructionist approach inasmuch as it does not invite me explicitly to pay attention to the 'interiority' of experience, as another context for making sense of the world, and the role of dance, art, poetry, literature and perhaps voicework, in supporting healing practices – in different ways, in different cultures.

Over the last few years, my dance movement therapy trainees have inspired us to seriously re-consider the Eurocentric / western philosophies of 'the self' embedded in some previous modules and approaches to therapy and change. I am committed to opening up a dialogue for other cultural formulations of the 'self', which social constructionism encourages, to an extent. However, I wonder how to make sense of 'transcendental communication' (never mind cosmopolitan communication) in the context of dance movement therapy trainees who will return to do DMT work in more traditional communication cultures e.g. Greece, Japan, Columbia and so on? How might I help them to give a 'good account' of what they have learned with me? I guess I will trust their creativity and abilities to apply the principles they have found useful. In response to this (my) concern, our revalidated Programme includes a module which invites trainees to critique the constraints, as well as opportunities of a social constructionist approach to DMT in their different cultural contexts.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

So now I get to another extremely important piece of all my training work – the idea of *self-reflexivity*. This is maybe the most important of all. In dance therapy work, we reflect on the concept in action of **'mutual influence' and 'mutual shaping' between people, beliefs, values, prejudices…but especially the very physical experience of mutual influence and shaping between people.**

Example:
One DMT student from overseas, reported back on working in a café/ restaurant. She would describe herself as a young Mexican woman, studying in London. She would describe herself as having movement qualities/ preferences or a temperament of a particular nature. She likes to 'go for it' (quick, direct and possibly forceful in movement terms) in her work and interactions with other people. A new colleague arrived in the café. Her colleague's apparent movement preferences were to be rather 'laid back' i.e. ('indulging in time, space and force') - rather the opposite of my student. Initially, the student was rather irritated or impatient with her new colleague. The she reflected on the situation in the context of ideas of mutual influence and mutual shaping - and decided to

do something different She chose to change her position to one of being more 'laid back' i.e. she slowed down, was less direct and forceful. Instead of opposing (or criticizing), she became more curious and interested on the effect (or **consequences**) **of her own choice of positioning and movement preferences (temperament?) on the other.** She reported that the effect on her new colleague was that then this new colleague was then able to show changes in her attitude to time, space and forcefulness.   She was able to take more initiative and be more proactive in this context and relationship. My take on this was one of different positioning and *implicitly* conveyed 'moral orders' (non-verbally) about the colleague's abilities to do the job and to participate in a working relationship.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

My greatest feeling about CMM is that has had the *potential* for putting itself first as a stand alone theory, rather than a practical theory with ideas and techniques, which are usable by many people, in many different contexts. Maybe this is just my response to the above question, which seems to 'privilege' the continuing existence of 'CMM' in a seemingly reified way.

Changes that I would find useful would be in connection to language which might make CMM ideas more available to everyday language users – perhaps via more storytelling examples? II say that out of my experience, both as a trainee, as a trainer of systemic therapists, as a dance movement therapy former systemic trainee, a systemic trainer/ supervisor – and now as a counselor and DMT trainer. My trainees often find the ideas exciting, but the language daunting or too full of 'jargon'. That seems to have the effect of feeling diminished in some way or they simply feel 'excluded' out!

I /we offer the 'daisy model' as a heuristic for considering levels of context or different frames for understanding interactions, beliefs and appreciating the possibility of moral actors who may be living in different stories which makes some sense to them. When, in the last weeks, I asked trainee counsellors to read Chris Olive's paper on Moral Decision Making (which I think is very clear and accessible), some trainees connected with it but most felt intimidated by the language and the concepts – somewhat incoherent with the aims of the theory! One trainee sat in a posture of physically cringing because she felt she did not understand. She experienced the presentation of ideas as "too different".

 It reminds me of something Tom Andersen said about introducing "a not too unusual difference". This was a competent woman who has successfully completed a counselling training 3 years ago, and is doing a 'refresher' with us. I do not think she is finding it too refreshing at the moment, and I feel that our choice of paper had the effect of 'de-skilling her' – *at least for the time being*. This is not my desire or intention as a trainer! (And of course, there are all sorts of other contexts, which might make a different sense of this) - **(and p.s. since I first wrote this draft, this particular trainee was able to connect**

with Cecchin's paper on "the interaction of prejudices" in a way that may make it possible for her to now appreciate and reflect on the potential of CMM for her).

But back to the point earlier, I myself now find I am sometimes impatient with the 'academic' language of some CMM papers. I so love the ideas and find them so useful for helping people (including myself) to shift perspectives and positions – that I wish there were more publications for everyday people, in everyday language (I think I am laboring this point?).

*But I do not feel confident about the effect of introducing many of the published papers in CMM, although I have enjoyed the challenge to connect with my own academic experience – and have found this very exciting in the past. Now, as a trainer, I usually feel 'obliged' to contextualise CMM papers, when and if I use them, by saying something about the audiences they are 'acting in to' – in my view, i.e. the communications profession (academia and John Searle in the past), and a fairly elite Systemic audience, mainly in KCC. I am also 'distressed' to read fairly accessible books on social constructionism in the UK, e.g. Vivian Burr (An Introduction to Social Constructionism), and in the USA, e.g. one of my favourite authors and well established psychology researcher and philosopher,Jerome Bruner (one title is Actual Minds, Possible Worlds) – **with no references to Pearce** or his associates. I sometimes feel moved to write and make connections – but maybe this is not my job.*

CMM ideas are so important for the world, but they can be quite radical in their effects, in my experience to date – sometimes so radical they are difficult to 'hear' – and that's another story of mine. What's yours? In this context, the book/ paper I feel most able to recommend to trainees is "Communication and the Human Condition".

I am sorry if this sounds in any way 'over the top' but this 'research questionnaire' has thoroughly engaged with my various reflections on CMM and systemic ideas since we last worked together in KCC – with Penny.. Your ideas are begging to be further disseminated to a wider audience – in my view. I am sure that you are doing this in your Cupertino projects – but I want more, for my purposes – so that trainees can go out into placements and explain/ legitimate their approach and practices to wider 'everyday' audiences. Maybe, translating CMM ideas and contextualising them into practical theories for living for therapy trainees, is appropriately our 'job' as trainers. I would also like to be able to legitimate (for trainees outside of the KCC world) Barnett's ideas - by feeling able to locate them in the context of the wider world of accessible published papers.

Implicit in everything that I have said above, is that (the serpentine model as I use it): deconstructing the episode, triplets, moral orders and levels of context, are all central to my thinking in practice. Strange and charmed loops, I use less, at the moment.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

As above, I think the question needs to be redesigned.   For me, it is not just about the development of CMM – it is about the particular approach, method and techniques (e.g. John Burnham) offered by CMM, and the affordances and constraints of these ideas in specific contexts, for specific people in context. And how to create more connections with what Garfinkel referred to as being more curious about and appreciative of "people's sense making practices" or ethnomethodologies.

I have tried to illustrate the context of training for both dance therapists and for counsellors and how some ideas from CMM are particularly useful (and see my previous email stories about mutual influence). Another response (and a very irreverent one from someone in my position) might be that CMM might usefully disconnect / move forward more explicitly from the original Bateson idea of context and meaning / his very useful distinction between content and relationship.

For example, I would be fascinated to hear more about how you, Barnett, with your current colleagues, have deconstructed for yourselves, your valuable practice in the 'real' world (context/action /meaning) – with the emphasis on action and consequences - over the last years; how have you decided and evaluated what you have found to be of most value for you and your communities of action; what meanings have you co-created and in which contexts?

From my reading of your research reports, it seems to me that you have found great value in your work in specific communities. CMM has provided an extraordinarily useful framework for you and for many people around the world to produces 'good' outcomes. However, I wonder if a certain 'reverence' to CMM, as first envisioned and later developed, might get in the way of your creativity in responding to the contingencies of the moment. More specifically, what I personally find somewhat missing in CMM published work is an explicit consideration of the influence of the researcher/ participant on the meanings and outcomes that are co-created.   Some further account of this would provide more coherence for me, between theory and practice, or the theory in practice.

This is a particular 'take' of mine on a second order 'social constructionism' which I am quite passionate about as a therapist, research consultant and trainer. Again, you may experience these comments as being off beam or ever well out of order here. However, as a friend and a colleague who so values our conversations over the years, and what I have learned, I trust that you will accept these comments in the spirit of colleague-ship and great friendship, enthusiasm and well wishes.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Gabrielle is a Systemic Practitioner and Co-Convenor of Programmes for the Diploma/ Graduate Diploma and M.A. in Dance Movement Therapy at the University of Surrey Roehampton, UK (home and overseas). She is also a private practitioner, a UKCP registered systemic psychotherapist, a Senior Registered Dance Movement Therapist (UK), and core co-tutor for a 4 year Diploma in Counselling from a Social Constructionist perspective.

Very long PS for Barnett:
As an email correspondent, I will also be so bold as to recommend that you consider being irreverent to the techniques of systemic therapy as some kind of 'instructional' device' about how to 'go on'. You know how to go on.   It is embedded in the work that you do (forgive my Irish forwardness).

 The idea of **'strange loops' and 'charmed loops**' still has usefulness for me, and for trainees in a very everyday sense of being in a 'double bind'. However, it can also be experienced by trainees as an invitation to become 'experts' on the 'right' context that keeps the loop in place – rather than as a way of looking and commenting on (with the client) possible incompatible loyalties to different (and mutually exclusive) ideas and moral orders.

My reading of your and your colleagues work over the last few years fits with some of the ideas you are now considering, as I see it. For example, it is an interesting conundrum for all of us who are involved in promoting 'change' on any level. How to face up to injustice/ adversity/ trauma…and so on, from a position of 'knowing' something about how things might change, and also a position of 'not knowing' what is best for the particular system and allowing/ inviting / facilitating the possibility of systemic change without trying to control outcomes in the ongoing dialogue? How to educate? Pre-empt negative outcome (as we view these)? Maintain a neutral and tolerant position while challenging injustice and murder (from our point of view)? I have no answers.

Except - in my training work, I strive to enlarge people's frames of reference (and CMM helps me enormously in this) – and often they then view things differently, and act differently; but I cannot prescribe a different action or outcome – although, my position as trainer allows me to attempt to be influential. However, the outcome is outside of my control and needs to be considered in terms of the viability and possibility of wider systems. This is a real problem for people like me who believe they may influence problematic events for a better outcome for some actors. But what about the wider systems of influence and conjoint action and intention?

Lars Westerstrom

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I use both the hierarchy model and the loops models a lot, both in therapy, management, training and consulting. I also use the serpentine model to create and analyse conversations, the triplet model in combinations with Dewey's end in view idea. That is, the end in view is speech act number "n." It might lie thousands of speech acts away. So I use the serpentine triplet model plus end in view, a quadruple model: Others antecedent act, act from own repertoire, a wanted response from the other which is decided through the detour round the end in view. It is the same idea as the backshadowing idea of Bahktin. I also use the Daisy model to highlight the simultaneousness of all the conversations going on between the different contexts. One of the leafs in the daisy will twist up and become the higher context. Then of course the ideas of lived and told stories are important. I put it the in the place in CMM at the life scripting level together with the ideas of the selves of Harré. (Self one, two and three, the latter modified by Peter Lang from Harré's " The opinions of others of me" to "My idea about the opinions of others of me). Also the different forces are useful, particularly the implicative and contextual forces. They are at work in deconstruction and reconstructions of meanings in the different levels of contexts. I also find the idea of deontic logic very useful and that could be emphasised more.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I work as a child psychiatrist, family and individual therapist (EMDR), supervision, management education in the church of Sweden.
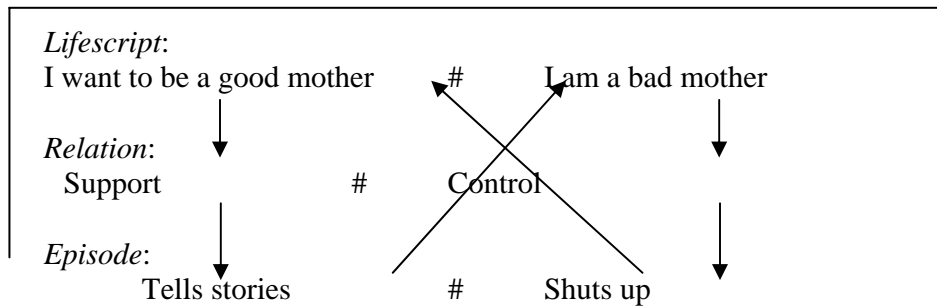
3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I use the serpentine model to analyse role plays in training eg, when we teach position changes (eg from domain of production to domain of explanation). I also use it (+ the triplet/quadruple model) to create conversations. We (my colleagues in the child psychiatric team) have become much more focused on culture and future than before, in the analytic era.

The loops I have found very useful to highlight different dilemmas but also to manage conflicting contexts. For instance in the relationship between a manager and an employee, a social worker and a client or a child and a parent, there are conflicting contexts round support, treatment, co-operation and control. It might go like this: A client talks to her socialworker. She is treated kindly and is encouraged to talk more and more freely. She starts to feel confident and tells her worst secret, that she has hit her child. Now the socialworker changes context from support to control. She starts investigating if the woman is a good enough parent. The client goes back to not telling her secrets. But

eventually she has to start talking to the social worker again to be a good parent, like ask for advice;

> *Culture:* A social worker must do both support and control.

Lifescript:
I want to be a good mother   #   I am a bad mother

Relation:
  Support   #   Control

Episode:
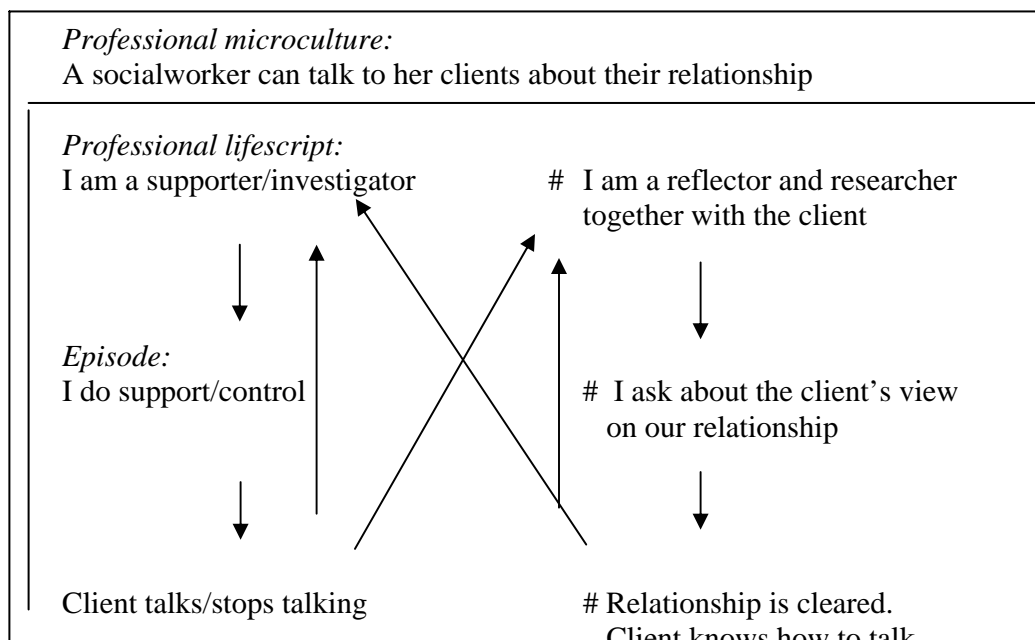   Tells stories   #   Shuts up

Now, this might also be seen as a charmed loop, the loop of support and control. A strange loop might then be crated by the social worker if she says to the client: "Now let us look at our relationship. How we can manage the dilemma between support and control together?"

When a conversation about the conversations on control and support has been done and the relationship has become clear and the client knows what she can talk about and what she cannot talk about, social worker and client may decide together to go back to the charmed loop of control and support. There must be a change in higher contexts between professional macroculture and microculture for the social worker to be able to go to the charmed loop of reflexion. It might look something like this (This example I have created together with my sister Hedvig Westerstrom-Unger for her diploma dissertation on systemic therapy), it is a combination of two charmed loops and one strange loop:

> *Professional macroculture:*
> A socialworker has to do both support and control

Professional microculture:
A socialworker can talk to her clients about their relationship

Professional lifescript:
I am a supporter/investigator   # I am a reflector and researcher
                                             together with the client

Episode:
I do support/control   # I ask about the client's view
                                             on our relationship

Client talks/stops talking   # Relationship is cleared.
                                             Client knows how to talk

We also draw a similar double loop on anorexia treatment. It helps us to decide when to do treatment and when we must not do treatment (only support giving, life preserving support) because the patient might feel tempted to talk too much or get well too soon.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I think that there is a bit of confusion around lifescript/autobiography. As I see it everything that has happened in your life plus what you expect from life goes into your lifescript. Also the deontic logic is part of the life script, but it is also part of the serpentine model and its different forces. Here I think that some work might be done to clarify/simplify the model.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Applying the CMM-tool to a lot of praxis examples trying out the model further (as done in different training contexts, DISPUK, Gothenburg by myself…

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes, of course. My title is Lars Westerstrom, child psychiatrist and management consultant or something similar.

Janne Graff and Dorte Lund-Jacobsen

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

We both agree that the hierarchy model has for us been the most useful of the mentioned, and moreover we have been very occupied with your notion of deontic logic, which we have used together with the hierarchy model - as you know from our article, which you by the way will receive an edited version of in a few days.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

We use the cmm model in all the mentioned contexts.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

There is a story in our article, but we also have another case story - called Mother Cat - this one we will attach to this document. *[This document begins on page 52*]

Other examples: We worked with an organisation (a Public school) who complained of stress, burn out and exhaustion.

We then used the cmm model and asked the participants to view the problem from the different levels and work out strategies according to how the different levels of understanding.

For example:
If we view this (the stress level)as <u>a personal problem</u>, what strategies does that invite - in order to solve the problem?
Strategy: I myself as a person need to learn how to say no! Maybe I should see a psychologist? Etc

If we view it as a matter of <u>peer group or colleagues' group level</u>?
Strategy: There is a culture here saying that to be a good teacher, one should never say no, always be happy, post educate oneself, join all meetings and have a close relationship with colleagues and parents and pupils and therefore we should at our team group or staff meetings discuss what we can do together in order to support one another or reorganize the work.

If we view it as <u>a managerial problem</u>?
Strategy:The managers does not protect teachers from demands from the outside world and does not help us prioritise therefore we should talk or protest to the managers

A <u>society problem</u>:
Strategy: Society wants more and more of children's upbringing solved in school. We must get the union to do this and that. We must go to the press etc

In the end the group worked out strategies that took into account all the different levels of interaction - and the main effect was the relieve from having the problem individualised.

Another example was in a training context of nurses where our task was to address the issue of Professional identity. We the asked them to join in groups and talk about the question, what is "good nursing" practice on different levels. You as a nurse, the nursing profession, the actual ward, the actual hospital, the society, gender etc. They were to tell stories from own experience on all the different levels. This in training gives people a good sense of contextual interactions and double binds.

We have in training developed different exercises to show cmm in practice in different context.

In therapy we have found cmm useful when we are presented to a problem told and stuck in one context, we change context level in order to make the story move.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

As we have been very interested in deontic logic we would appreciate even more developed on that - for example put together with- or held against Gergen's ideas of Multiple selves - that could create new stories of selves in contexts. We are speculating if the same deontics show up in different selves in different context, although showing different actions or patterns of actions.

We would also like the theory to be developed for use in groups - as we have found it much easier to use according to individuals.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

At the moment we are most occupied by trying to develop the use of CMM into the field of self reflection (which we refuse to call therapy) in groups

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes you sure may. Janne Graff (Psychologist) and Dorte Lund-Jacobsen (Reg. Nurse) are employed as consultants in DISPUK (Danish Institute for Supervision, Staff development, Teaching and Consultation).

The story about Mother Cat

B. is a participant of a two-year systemic supervision training programme for nurses. C. is the consultant

B: This morning I heard one of the others say that the systemic approach had learned her to be more kind and indulgent towards herself. I realised that this was just what I wished for myself. I find it strange that I am so strict with myself in spite of all my education in the field of communication and healthcare, systemic supervision etc.

C: Can you tell us a bit more about your experience?

B: I think I am a very enthusiastic and kind health worker, who is not moralising or judgmental but someone who loves my work as a supervisor and my work with children and their families. I confront a deep contrast between the way I view the life, acts and beliefs of the families I work with as opposed to the way I view myself. I cannot be generous or overbearing with myself. I am so hard on myself, that I feel the pressure is sometimes ….. (cries a bit) too hard for me to cope with. I don't understand why my knowledge and my caring attitude as a professional nurse cannot include myself. Others seem to benefit from my beliefs both in my private and professional life, but I cannot care for myself. It is like an inner voice constantly nagging me, if I don't perform well enough in social situations.

(The consultent is asking a question that opens up the story and Bs answer is both an answer in the private lifescript and the professional lifescript. And as you can see it is totally interweaved...point it out on the overhead CMM model)

C: Can you say a bit more about the voice you hear, when you're nagging yourself?

B: (thoughtful) It is like a voice of an old school master …oh I think it's the voice of the old caretaker at the boarding school. We used to call her Mother Cat. Every time we did something wrong she would blame us and humiliate us in front of the others.

C: How did that affect you?

B: I was terrified. I had no one to lean to. That old bitch embarrassed me in front of others. And I still feel terrified if someone is saying something evaluating about me……all I hear is the negative part and I bully myself: "Why did you do this or that"… it is a sticky voice…and when it is there it is impossible to escape or shake off. If there was a choir criticising me, I would immediately volunteer to be the lead singer. … I'm constantly aware not to do something inappropriate or to stick out. Everybody else is allowed to (and it is even a relief if they do) but I can't.

I know I could be a better nurse and supervisor if I didn't have to be perfect. I shall even know things before I learn them and perform well before I have trained.

(The consultant question is trying to make an episodic connection and that's the main idea in the cmm model, because in the cmm model you must connect to an episodic event, because the cocreation of meaning take place between people in conversations.
Bs answer as you can see take us to a story of her childhood…the personal lifescript and at the end of her answering we are in a story from her professional lifescript and further more about how her professional lifescript could change. So it is at the same time a story of past, present and future)

C: How do you think you would be a better nurse and supervisor if you didn't have this inner voice?

B: I would be much more playful, daring and experimenting. I would feel freer.

(The consultant connects the private and the professional story and push into future episodes. When B. answers the question she connects to the idea of creating a kind of scenario for future episodes. What would they look like…point to the episodic level at the overhead)

C: So the voice of Mother Cat tells you to stick to the rules, but as soon as you divert, Mother Cat strikes you. Do you ever go up against the voice of Mother Cat?

B: Oh yes…sometimes. For instance the other day I did a not too successful job in a supervision group. We had too little time and there were a few other bad circumstances. But this particular day I was able to tell myself: "Well, under the circumstances I did as good as I possibly could." No big deal. That was very unusual for me,

C: What, do you think, made it possible for you to do that?

B: I am not sure, but my husband is a good support for me in situations like this. Actually he is a great Mother Cat Chaser, because he is so humorous in a very loving way. That's very helpful to me and actually my children are good Mother Cat chasers as well. Also I feel strengthened by studying and by the way…watching "Fanny and Alexander" made a big difference for me. This huge contrast between my early and happy childhood abroad with my parents, and then all of a sudden at the age of nine this dreadful life with Mother Cat at the boarding school.

C: Did you at that point have a counter voice?

B: No, at that point all I had, was my loyalty to my parents, I didn't want them to know how I felt.
           No, the counter voice did not appear until I became a health worker and actually also since I saw "Fanny and Alexander".

(The consultant goes searching for countervoices or stories to the oppressing Mother Cat voice and B at first answer with an episode from the professional life. In search for circumstances for that episode you could have expected that she would give further details of the episode (point at the professional lifescript level), but again we are by the story moved into the private lifescript. And from the private and personal lifestories B. again shift into the professional story by saying: <u>No the countervoice did not appear until I became a healthcare worker.</u> In that moment Bs. life, if we look at the cmm model we can see how the shift can be understood as a shift in positioning herself in relationships. She now became an educator herself. (Point to the level of relations<u>)</u>

C: And how has it developed since?

B: Well, it seems to be getting more powerful.

C: Does this mean that you are taking more and more control over the voice of Mother Cat?

B: Hmmmm… Yes in my head…but NOT in my stomach

C: Who is mostly in charge now, you or Mother Cat?

B: Mother Cat used to govern me in my head by 90%, but now that's probably reduced to 10%.
           However, in my stomach it's still fifty-fifty.

(At this point in the interview it is like different self-stories or different parts of self are talking to each other in the conversation. And the conversation is taking place in a kind of imaginary episode, where the persons in conversations are her "stomach" and her "head."

C: In your own view, what is the worst sin you can commit in the eyes of Mother Cat?

(So here the consultant with her question contextualise the problems by pointing at the episodic outspring)

B: To claim too much space. To talk too much or be too enthusiastic about something.
Not to admit one's own mistakes.
In my stomach I have to be perfect, but in my head I actually dislike the idea of anyone or anything being perfect.

C: Does this mean that mean while your stomach commands you to be perfect, your head turns against you for the same reason?
(The consultant is exploring the relationship between the logics of contradicting voices of B. The idea is that the voice of Mother Cat has remained in the head of B, BUT in disguise of new and modern ideas like: "one should not be perfect" etc. So the laws has changed but the "bind" is the same"

B: Yes, that makes sense. That is why it feels like status quo. I keep myself checkmate. It is like a double bind.

C: Can one say that your stomach has a different logic or set of laws than your head?

B: Yes Yes…

C: How do these different forces agree on who is in control?

B: It is almost like a civil war…so cruel because it is a war against yourself

C: In a way it appears as if you have reconstructed the voice of Mother Cat in your own head: everything the Stomach says, your head dismisses with by the voice of Mother Cat?

B: Yes this is how I trap myself…in a no exit way

(As you can see in this part of the interview: If B. still goes on thinking that she is the battleground for a civil war between the head and the stomach, there would be no way out, as she herself point out. But through the consultant's questions, that connect her feeling to the context of childhood experience, there can be an opening for new story. In that way the battleground can be externalised and by externalising the consultant crate together with B, in the consultation a new story. A story of new caretakers: B and the Consultant and the participant group.)

Team reflections

We will now give you a few examples of the team reflections following the telling of B:

K: (male)   Like B. I am also brought up on a boarding school and I have been very moved by her story. For years I have had my own male version of Mother Cat. But being a Greenlander with a love for nature, I found nature to be the only place where the voice of Master Toughen-yourself-up could not reach me. In nature I made the rules. Not him!

V: (Female)   I have been thinking that B. is a real gift for her family in the sense that she allows her family to have a humorous approach to imperfection.

M: (Female)   Being such a strong counter picture, Mother Cat has taught B a lot about health work.

L: (Female)   (With a smile) I wonder if Mother Cat would have liked Bs husband? Would she approve Bs choice of man? (B. laughs out loud)

(As you can see the Groups reflections become a retelling of the telling. Each group member connect to different stories in the story and hereby they confirm in a very personal way parts of Bs story)

Summarising from the transcript

As you can see in our work we can easily connect to the following:

" The locus of identity results from how actions are situated. That is your identity in your relationship to "x" results from how "x" positions both herself and you and how you respond to those positionings. In other words you identify results from the co-constructed act of identifying" Pearce 1994

In the case of B. we can see how a childhood story had become the higher context in her evaluation and stories about herself for very long. Until the moment in her professional education where she place herself in the same position in relation as mother cat, = as an educator. Then suddenly it becomes possible for her to change the story about herself and positioning herself in another way, identifying other ways and actions.

As you can see it becomes possible for us to challenge the traditional way of thinking of

the notion of "self".

In new terms:
"….selves are not constructed in timeless space. They are found in specific instances of conversations with particular interlocutors within episodes whose framing is mutable but not infinitely so."
(Pearce 1994)

And further:

"There is no deep philosophical mystery about identifying oneself in particular situations…From experience persons come to know discursive patterns that can be coherently organised around various loci of identity. There are for example ways of talk as a representative of a group that are different than way to coherently talk as a personal friend or as a third-person detached observer."
(Cronen and Pearce 1991)

For B. through her new role of educator new ways of talking as such present itself. Hereby it becomes possible for her to create, in the moment of the consultation, a new caring and educating voice for herself.

As mentioned in the beginning we had two reason to call the workshop X-files. One we already talked about. Here is the other one and that is the recognition of the fact that all stories are incomplete. The mystery parts or aspects of the human condition.

An exercise

1.　　　What stories, that you appreciate, are told about you, as a person?
　　　　　What are the effects of these stories?
　　　　　- In your private life?
　　　　　-In your professional praxis?

2.　　　What stories, that you appreciate are told about you as a… (Your profession)?
　　　　　In other words, what do the clients say about you as a……?
　　　　　What do your colleagues say about you, as a…..?
　　　　　What do your friends and family say about you, as a….?

　　　　　What do you do or say that keep these stories alive?

3.　　　Are there stories that other tell about you, that you don`t appreciate?
　　　　　You may, but you don't have to tell the story here, but examine with your partner what effect these stories have on the way you think about yourself and on your actions (in your private and your professional life)?

4.   If you were to change or challenge some of these stories, what should you do or not do, say or not say?
In other words, what are your own contributions to keep these stories going?

5.   What private and professional stories would you like to be told about you in the future?
By whom?
And what should you do to invite these stories to be told?

Annette Mortensen

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I use all 3 of them in my work.

I think that The CMM concepts and way of describing communication is always in "the back of my head", I mean, the way I have come to think about communication is very much informed by CMM. In whatever context of communication I am always thinking about what kind of premises might explain just that way of responding, and the serpentine model I think makes the understanding and folding out of co-creating processes so "simple" to understand and explain. I think that one of the ways this model has influenced me in my work is the way I very much interview (and train others to interview) in the "concrete) details of actions and thinking/making sense in the ongoing process of communication.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I do therapy, consultation and education/training in systemic work in therapy and org. consultation/management.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I talked to a manager in a supervision context. She wanted to learn to be a better manager in the way she handled her employees. She explained that she always found the work with strategy and making plans etc more interesting than talking to her employees. I noticed that she used words like "when they complain about work", "when they criticize the job" (in stronger more negative Danish words that I don't know in English). Since I know her from another context (doing a big consultation with her and all her staff, and not having the impression of her being/thinking unrespectful to her staff) I thought that I could ask the following question: how come do you think that you use these words when you describe your staff trying to get help from you? thinking that there must be some strong story/context somewhere that might make this choice of words on the level of speech acts understandable.

She stared at me for about 30 sec! First empty, then with a lot of different emotions, as she cried out: Gosh, it must be my depressive mother!!!! She was just as surprised it seemed as I was. Then came the story of her many years as a child having listened to and tried to help her mother (parents being divorced, she the oldest of the siblings), who complained all the time about life. And nothing would help! She might succeed in getting her mothers moods a bit better, but only for a few days, then she would complain again.

This was very painful for her. We talked a while, and we created the idea that she had developed a habit of closing her ears, when people around her were talking "about problems", which really made a lot of sense to do in that relationship in order to survive.

She came back the next month, and told me that the next day she had gathered all the staff and told them about her bad habit, asking them to help her overcome it, asking them to tell her, when they recognized this happening. They all nodded, knowing exactly what she was talking about, telling that they knew from the look in her eyes when it happened, and they started to tell her when it happened the very day. This helped her conversations with the staff a lot. She was very happy, and had also decided to look for another job, a consulting job, since this only happened in relations where she somehow had a responsibility towards the other persons. She then wanted to talk about how this story had effected the way she related to her sons and husband, which we did. 3 months after this she got another job, that she really enjoys much more. It came out that she came into management by "accident", because people around her asked her to/needed her!!

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I thing that the "story-telling"-that you have already worked on would be interesting to develop further. I find myself very often in a situation training people, where I/we don't have the words for describing what it is IN the storytelling, that we as therapists/consultants pick up or don't pick up / respond to, that tells us a lot. I mean how does it show in the details in and the pattern of talking what kind of connections has been made, is being made by the person talking. Here therapists only have the word intuition I am afraid. We do pick something important up, but it would be very interesting to be able to describe it somehow. What is it our "sensitive ears" are sensitive to?

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Doing analysis of parts of communicative acts with the people involved in the communication.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Psychologist, (therapist, consultant, teacher in systemic therapy and consultation.)

Martin Ling

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

Most useful for me have been the hierarchy model and strange loops.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I work as a teacher at a special school for children with special needs and part time with supervision. I mostly supervise at schools but also with social services and in healthcare.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

A good example when CMM has been useful to me was when I supervised a group of teachers. The main concern in the group was that they had a pupil that they could not understand. If they had problem to understand the pupil they had even bigger problem to understand the boy's parents. Their big question to me was how to better understand the parents and the child.

To be able to sort out all the turns in the interaction between the child, teachers and the parents I used the hierarchy model and strange loops.

I started to interview each one of the teachers with the headline EPISODE.
When I supervise I carefully see to that the whole group knows in what context we are and what rules and frames that are decided in this context right now. This I call context marking. I tell my group what we are going to do and for how long and the purpose.

When I interviewed for thirty minutes I started to find theme to proceed. It shows that the group's questions have to do with the parents and their way of giving help with the homework. The group and the parents have agreed to give help with the homework in a certain way but when the boy arrives to school he has solved the tasks at home in another way than that was agreed. The group gets worried because it confuses the boy and he is not able to solve his tasks at school. The group says that it has happened several times and that they had had meetings with the parents about how to proceed but in some way it ends with the parents making it in their own way.

It appears that the mother of the pupil is a teacher at the same school but in another level. New questions appear in my head and i start to interview with the headline SPEECH ACTS. e.g How to teach a teacher? Is there something in your way of being, making the parents be violated? How is your choice of words?
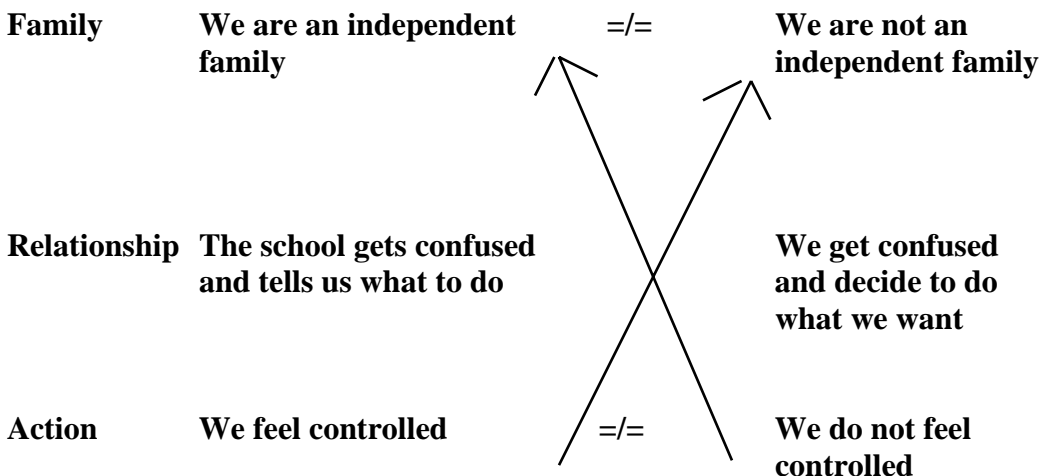
Now I begin to see the patterns how the family and the group interact. It is now clear to me how what to sort under SPEECH ACTS and EPISODES. Next step is to find out how

the family's CULTURAL PATTERNS look like. It shows that the family differs from many other families in Sweden in that way that they do not permit their children to use toys e.g footballs, computer games or films and the children's TV time is limited to thirty minutes a day. You can say what you want about this thing but for a ten years old child it will be problems in Sweden to day. They also tell me that the child's father is a medicine doctor. With this information I put new questions e.g with this piece of information do you think different about the family?

Now I can take the next step and sort out what information should be found under what headline. I now use the whiteboard to show and make clear the different headlines and their content. I ask the group if it is clearer now when they see it on the whiteboard. I also draw a STRANGE LOOP with the headline Cultural belief.

Cultural belief

As an academic family you do not need help from Anyone, especially not of a teacher when you are a teacher.

Family	**We are an independent family**	=/=	**We are not an independent family**
Relationship	**The school gets confused and tells us what to do**		**We get confused and decide to do what we want**
Action	**We feel controlled**	=/=	**We do not feel controlled**

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I am pretty lonely working with CMM in my context. I need to work more with CMM and also to interact with other persons that work with CMM. I have not got any new changes to CMM but I am working on it.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

For the most of my life as a working person I have been working in healthcare and in the world of schools so I have to admit that I am very curious about how this concept would

work out in commercial life. Especially at reorganizations and fusions I think CMM can be of great use. And Why not introduce the method to our politicians?

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Trained supervisor with a systemic approach

Susan Aeurback

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work?(e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I must say that I got to know CMM at the same time as I got to know the LUUUTT model so they are somewhat intertwined. I think the logic of meaning and action has been most helpful to me - understanding that people act a certain way because they feel compelled to do so has helped me be able to work with groups in conflict.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I have used the concepts in CMM in education/facilitation/group work. Generally, the people I work with come from either education or human services.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

Again, this may be more LUUUTT than CMM, but I did a timeline activity with a group that has been working on a project for more than a year. I put several sheets of paper on the wall and drew a big timeline. Then the group talked about things that have happened over that period. Then we talked about what were successes (written above the line) and what were challenges (written below the line). Part of that discussion was around questions like "what did this mean to you", "what did it mean to others? (stories lived) " Then we had a discussion about what did they not notice at the time that now seems important, what would they do differently if they could do it all over again, and any other issues they brought up about these events. It was a very enlightening conversation. Several events were described in very different terms depending on whose perspective was being presented.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I don't know enough about it to make a suggestion.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Ditto, sorry.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)
Of course. As for title, hmmm. Friend, student, colleague.....

Janet Fiero:

1. *What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)*

I have used CMM's attention to language patterns to augment my back ground in Gestalt methods. Gestalt theory presents a "cycle of experience" that typifies change in individuals, groups and organizations. The first step is to become aware of "what is" it is in this awareness stage that I have found the language patterns articulated within CMM most helpful. By using the strange loops diagram I can help a group see the patterns that exist and with that awareness they have choices on continuing or changing the pattern.

2. *In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)*

Mainly consulting in organizational change with corporations. I am yearning to work more in the public sector with environmental issues. I will be teaching a business course at Mesa State College next spring (2001)

3. *Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.*

Recently I was conducting a strategic planning session for the staff people of a major homebuilder (privately owned) in the SW. Prior to this 2 day event I had been told by many people that the corporate group lacked focus, there plates were too full, they were too reactivde, etc. I chose the Emery Search Conference model to use for the strategic planning session. Three days prior to the SC the newspapers carried stories on how my client company was undertaking a hostile takeover of another homebuilder (publicly owned and 3 times the size of my client company).

I had attempted to hold the planning in a hotel but the client said no. As the event began one of the key vice presidents kept his laptop open working on issues with press releases regarding the takeover. The president was being called in and out of the session by the owners (all over 70). I watched as the patterns of mutiplexing and lack of focus were manifested in the moment.

On the morning of Day 2 I did 2 interventions that contributed to saving the day. Bruce, the mutiplexing VP, was already in the room typing away when I arrived early. I said "Bruce, your voice has been one of the louder voices regarding the lack of focus in the corporate offices and yet you by typing while strategic planning are living out the exact behavior that you say you detest. As you make your choices today recognize the implications of your choices on the people here." For me this is an example of the obsessive mutiplexer living out the strange loop.

The second intervention was that I took out all the tables from the meeting room and started day 2 in one large circle of chairs. I'm not sure how this fits with CMM but the physical layout on Day 1 (4-5 chairs at each of 4 rectangular tables) typified their rigid silos and fragmentation. The rolling chairs (and people) moved fluidly on day two and allowed forming and reforming groups with more fluid boundaries.

4. *As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?*

Barnett, I think combining CMM with a model of change (such as the Gestalt Cycle of Experience) would enhance the practical use of the frames that you have packaged so well. I think stories like the ones you are collecting now can be very powerful to help us (the practitioners in the field) bridge the concept with the usefulness in complex situations.

I also think that expanding CMM to patterns in groups and organizations would be cool. Work that has been done on the individual level of system could be expanded to group and organizational levels of system.

Although you have emphasized the use of positive language in CMM, Cooperrider and Whitney have brought AI into the mainstream. Appreciative Inquiry has broader name recognition than CMM.

5. *As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?*

The crazy connection I had when I sat down was Gestalt and CMM. Perhaps the OSD (Organization and Systems Development) Program at Gestalt Institute of Cleveland would be a way to move CMM from theory to practice. (The OSD program is highly regarded in skill building for consultants). At the very least a fun workshop could be developed on CMM for GIC or NTL.

Another thought is how to piggyback on the momentum of AI? Hmmmm

Another thought is to undertake a project in the public sector with a grant and 2-3 students/practitioner (with some grant money) and focus on using CMM as the vehicle of change. Document and publish the case. Of course the reflexivity of the consulting team would be cool too.

Obviously my bias is to build the practical side of CMM and not to expand the theories/concepts.

6. *May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)*

Yes, you may quote me. "Janet is an independent consultant with her firm iee consulting, inc."

Nalla Sundarajan

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

In trying to understand how violence becomes a part of some relationships, determining the 'hierarchy of contexts' of the involved partners has been crucial. The layers and the order in the stable hierarchy helps me to understand the logical force, and interpret meaningfully the episodes and speech acts that the actors participate in. Another useful concept is punctuating. It has been most interesting to note the inevitable discrepancy in how the actors punctuate episodes. Punctuating seems to determine who the aggressor and who the victim is in a particular episode. Another concept that has been useful in understanding the 'creation' of domestic violence is the aspect of power. Typically, from the very beginning of the relationship women (and men) 'compelled' by their logical force respond in a certain way, which leads her to progressively lose power in the relationship while the man gains power. And, since almost every episode is added to the repertoire of 'resources' and is reconstructed again and again, progressively the man becomes powerful and oppressive towards the woman.

I've used the concept of 'strange loop' between the 'self' and 'relationship' to describe how violence is sustained over time. Progressively, abused women become more isolated from family and friends and depend solely on their partner to confirm their reality. Needless to say, this increases the power of the man, and since he typically does not confirm her voice, she stops trusting her perception of reality. As the 'cycle of abuse' (Walker) continues, during the 'honeymoon period' (right after a violent episode) the man promises never to do "it" again and everything is great. She trusts herself and is confident about the relationship. But inevitably, the relationship takes a downturn, her abusive partner does not confirm her reality, he 'becomes' more powerful and aggressive, violence occurs, followed again by the honeymoon period and the cycle continues. When 'self' is in the dominating context, she dislikes her partner and wants to leave him. But soon 'relationship' becomes the dominating context, and she believes that everything would be wonderful and continues to stay in the relationship despite the violence.

In terminating or changing such relationships, the concept of 'reframing' has been most useful. Since I interact mostly with the women, reframing has helped them to either block or exit violent relationships. By reframing, women are 'compelled' to change their hierarchy of contexts such that 'relationship' becomes subsumed beneath 'self' or even 'kids' which compel them to interpret their predicament differently enough to change the dynamics of abuse or to exit the relationship.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

Research

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

Recently I met a young woman in our Indian church. My mom (who is always on the lookout for a potential daughter-in-law) introduced her and said that she had recently moved from India, and was an engineer working here in the computer industry. A couple of days later, Mom called me and we had the following conversation:

Mom: Remember the young woman, Sheila that you met last Sunday? Oh, the poor thing – you must help her! Please introduce her to Sam (my brother). We must all help her 'get her life!'
Nalla: What do you mean?
Mom: She is divorced! We must 'give her life!' We must help at least this one poor girl have a life. I wish that Sam would marry her!

In the context of this conversation, my mother's reference to 'get / give her life' does not refer to Sheila going out more or meeting people, but rather the meaning is intended to reflect the very purpose for being alive. I had to ponder a while to understand why my mom felt that Sheila had "no life" at this point – meaning, no purpose for living. Sheila was financially secure, young, and attractive. The following day Sheila called me to be 'counseled' at my mother's recommendation. In the course of the conversation I realized that she, with a wonderful job here, and freedom from a violent husband, still felt that she had "no life". In fact, Sheila's perspective of her life (or the absence of it) was very similar to my mother's.

I then realized that in India, a woman's life is believed to begin only after marriage. Unfortunately, sometimes she is compelled to end hers - figuratively and in reality when her husband dies. A young widow for instance, is believed to be cursed and a curse to her family and community. The stories that I grew up with had virtuous women who gladly died with their husbands, and were elevated to divine statuses because of such acts. The 'relationship' or the status of being a wife is the woman's entire identity - the dominating context in the stable hierarchy. Self is subsumed - so much so that life has no meaning outside of the relationship. Within this context, Sheila found 'no life' and has been quite despondent since her divorce – four years ago from a life-threatening relationship.

In our conversation I tried reframing, and pointed out that she has a 'new life' now at 28 – free from fear and violence, financial independence, and now in America she would also have the opportunity to choose her own partner in life if she wishes to marry again. I called her a blessed woman who had the courage to free herself from a violent relationship, to travel alone to America, and to pursue her career. I encouraged her to live life to the fullest – to enjoy her freedom, her career, and most of all her new life here that was just beginning.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I like all the CMM concepts. However, in working with victims of domestic violence, I do believe that financial power / economic resources is a strong determinant of how, when, and if she would exit the relationship. I'm not sure where or if this would fit in with CMM concepts.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Perhaps more research in non-Westernized countries and cultures where socio-economic factors have a major influence in every facet of life including in how people communicate.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes, by all means quote me, but I don't have a career or an academic status currently!

Shawn Spano

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

Three concepts have been especially useful to me; (1) hierarchy of contexts, (2) language games (Wittgensteinian conception of rules), and (3) forms of communication.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

Education: I'm a professor of communication and have taught CMM in undergraduate and graduate courses, directed CMM-based MA theses and projects, and used CMM in my own research.

Consulting: I work with Barnett as a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium where we use CMM concepts in promoting public dialogue projects with city governments and local communities.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

Wow, this is a challenging question because CMM tends to invoke in me an eclectic theoretical infrastructure that draws from a variety of different sources (Wittgenstein, Bateson, Dewey, etc.). One of the strengths of the theory is that it is not exclusive. While I understand what kind of theory CMM is not, I also see it as intermeshing with several other perspectives.

Having said that, I do draw on hierarchy of contexts (a distinct CMM tool) when facilitating group discussions. I find it especially useful in helping me and the group get "unstuck" from an unproductive pattern of communication. For example, I facilitated a department retreat recently where the faculty was split down the middle about a hiring decision. I noticed a pattern emerge where each of the participants were speaking primarily out a "self" context. Eventually the pattern produced a kind of gridlock. So I tried asking questions that invited participants to attend to "relationships" among faculty and the "culture" of the department. The participants accepted my invitation, which in turn created new sets of ideas and a different pattern of communication.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

For me, the most exciting development of CMM over the past several years is its explicit development as a practical theory. One of the key criterion for developing new concepts, and revising old ones, is the extent to which they are able to enhance our understandings of practical actions, and our abilities to engage in such actions. I like where CMM is

going. Forms of communication stand out in my mind as one of the key concepts in this regard. For example, what are the conceptual properties of public dialogue, and how can CMM theorists join with others to create this form of communication in local communities?

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Given the answer above to #4, I think CMM should continue to be used by practitioners outside of the university setting and in ways that extend beyond traditional academic research. Hmmm, maybe that's too strong of a statement. It might actually be more accurate to say that CMM should be developed so that it integrates the skills, abilities, and interests of both academics and practitioners. My own preference is to have academics and practitioners developing CMM by working together on applied projects where the goal is to create the conditions for dialogic forms of communication in the public sphere.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes. Shawn Spano is a professor in the Communication Studies Department at San Jose State University, and a founding member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.

Sheila McNamee

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

Certainly the notion of the hierarchy has been useful.... not any longer to think of it as a hierarchy but to think of movement among various contexts that give meaning to our lives, our engagements with others. I think you can understand why I wouldn't want to hang on to the idea of hierarchy while at the same time I would agree that, in any situated moment, one issue (e.g., LS) might be more salient than another or more salient to one person than the person s/he is engaged with at the moment.... but I don't think we need to talk in terms of hierarchy to construct this sense of saliency. Also, I do like that the CMM hierarchy is not "frozen"....any "level" can be created as appropriate to the situation.....that sort of fluidity and flexibility is important. The problem: how to convey this fluidity and flexibility to those learning CMM.... I find that those new to it treat the hierarchy almost like a holy relic. Well, maybe it's a good one....

Certainly as well strange loops.... how could I live in this house and not say how important strange loops have been for me. I think strange loops are useful in a historical way to me...they were extremely generative in the 80's...but I never use the idea any more.... I rarely talk about paradox either.... this is an interesting exercise you've given us...I haven't stopped to reflect on these sorts of transitions in my own work...So the question emerges for me: why don't I use the strange loop model anymore? Hmmmmm....off the top of my head, I would say that I want my work to be directly useful to people in their situations. I found, over the years, talking about and demonstrating strange loops and even paradox very confusing to those I was trying to help. I'm sure this says more about me than those I was working with...I do believe strange loops can be a useful tool for those who use it...for me, it has been replaced with an attempt to get others to recognize their own multiplicity and avoid abstract positions by speaking from lived narratives....

2, In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

Primarily education (university).... but I consult a lot, used to work as a therapist and still sometimes consult as one, and often conduct training seminars for therapists....

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

As I mentioned earlier, the most recent use of CMM was the burnout study with Laura Fruggeri. Here, we found CMM extremely useful in generating an interview protocol. By combining CMM with Milan ideas of circular questions, we were able to interview teams of social service providers (itself a powerfully transformative move b/c in most cases these professionals did not think of themselves as part of a team). We drew upon the hierarchy in designing the questions, asking, for example,

1. How do you define yourselves as a working team? (As I said, most did not and so this question, when asked to the group, generated a moment of construction in action....)

2. How do you think your clients would define you as a working team?

3. How would your supervisor define you as a working team...etc etc. including all sorts of "invested others" like the funding source, other professionals in the community, other co-workers,...

We generated many questions using this model...so not only the question of identity but questions about members relations with each other, members relations with clients, etc etc...eg: How do you think your clients would describe your relationship with each other? How do you think your supervisor would describe your relationship with each other?.....and How do you think your supervisor would describe your relationship with clients, etc etc....the possible questions were, of course, endless...

We then used the idea of the "episode" and asked the group to identify a "typical" crisis that they confronted as a team (even if they didn't think of themselves as a team, they had to collectively agree on the crisis episode)....

Anyway, since we've published this work, I won't repeat the entire study here. The bottom line is that by combining CMM and Milan System methods, we were able to transform the way these professionals talked about their work, their clients, their situation.....their own competencies.....what we did essentially (as I now see it) is create the conversational space where new possibilities for "going on" were constructed. Of course, the research was intended to deconstruct the individualist notion of burnout in social service providers and I think we were able to use the stories people told in a successful way to illustrate that burnout is not IN a person but is a way of being in relation...

On the personal level, since Jack and I met BECAUSE of (prefigurative force) CMM, we use it all the time - usually when we are upset with each other....by saying things like, "you can't do that...it's not your life script, it's mine!" Anyway.....it is part of our everyday...

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

Well, in a certain sense, the rule models, the loop models, the hierarchy are all heuristics...they can be extremely useful. But at a certain point, they lose their utility.... I remember spending hours on end in the seminar room up in Calgary watching videos of families in therapy and trying desperately to make strange loops and hierarchies and rule models that all melded together. It seemed at times that the models were more important than listening to what was going on in the therapy.... in the stories told.

I know that for anyone who really understands CMM, these models are just that: only models. But I still have students who can't grasp that.... they are so stuck on the models and the need to use them.....

Is there a way to talk about CMM w/o the models? What would be lost, what would be gained?

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

I think the work you are doing, Barnett, is really the generative stuff...it's really important work, it touches people's lives and it uses CMM to guide dialogue processes....Do you find yourself using all the "models"? What I see is you taking the ideas captured in the models (didn't say that very well but...) and generating questions and practices that give groups new and different ways to engage.....the most important work we all should be doing is creating conversational arenas where different conversations can take place....I don't think we can ask for more than this....and I think this great.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

yes....sheila is professor of communication at the university of new hampshire and is a co-founder of the taos institute...

Stephen Littlejohn

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

 I use virtually all of the classical concepts. I have found them useful in teaching over the years and have referred to them in various forms in my writing. The hierarchy model has been especially helpful in understanding and creating contexts in my work with clients. The text-context interaction (developed originally by Cronen, et al) has been immensely helpful in work on framing and reframing. The ideas in Pearce's <u>Interpersonal Communication</u> book have been very good for translating classical concepts into pragmatic terms that can easily be used with students and clients. The atomic model and serpentine model have served me very well over the years.

 2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

 After 26 years as a professor of communication, I became a communication consultant, working primarily in the areas of group facilitation, conflict management, and mediation. I still teach college courses regularly, usually in the above areas.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

 I frequently use appreciative reframing in mediations. I see this as a special case of the hierarchy of meaning. In a recent mediation between two co-workers, for example, the parties were complaining about their working relationship. Within the context of "problem," their speech acts counted as "complaints." However, if you look for a new context, the meaning of the speech acts will change. I said something like, "I see that you are concerned about your working relationship." If these concerns were eliminated, what would change or be different?" This question suggests a new context that we might call "vision." Within the context of "vision," the speech act comes to stand for "solution." The parties, formerly unable to work with their respective concerns, now found new resources in which they could establish a better working relationship. In slightly more complicated terms, this move suggests a charmed loop--from problem to complaint to vision to solution. You can imagine how this would be diagrammed as a CMM loop.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

 Recently, Pearce and Pearce wrote a very nice article in which they explained community dialogue in terms of CMM. I think we could do more of this kind of thing. Many of us have adopted a number of innovative tools for practice, including, for example, appreciative inquiry, asset identification, Buberian dialogue, concern-vision-action, etc. Most of us would agree that these are implicit expressions of CMM concepts,

but we have not done a very good job of making the connection explicitly. I would like to see more of this kind of writing occur. CMM is a practical theory, and we can show its utility by relating it more specifically to intervention practices.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Well, I think the workshop at WSCA is a good start. It would be interesting to put together theory-development teams to put concerted effort into a set of projects. This approach could lead to an excellent edited volume of new and original CMM work. CMM could use a millennium edition! Vern and Barnett . . . ?

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes. Stephen Littlejohn, Communication Consultant

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Victoria Chen

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

For me CMM is a perspective to study communication and a way to live communication. Many concepts are useful and interesting: Strange loops, reflexivity, contingency, phronesis, pattern, logical force, making social worlds, and game playing and game mastery. Not all of them are equally elaborated or easy to teach though.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

Teach undergrad and grad students at San Francisco State University. Also a hospice volunteer and a member of a nonprofit organization that rescues and finds homes for abandoned cats. :)

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

Sometimes I think I mixed in my own constructions (such as a version of the critical perspective or some Buddhist ideas) into what I call CMM when I teach. Sometimes I use work by CMM people and think I might be putting words in the authors' mouth. It's hard to sort out my own understanding/creation of CMM, which consists of a mixture of interpretive, critical, and feminist approaches I suppose. Even though I'm not concerned with the "real" version of CMM (if there's such a thing), I do wonder if other CMMers would endorse my take on the theory. I'm concerned when I explain say Pearce and Cronen's work to my students and in responding to their questions, I say things that might well be disagreed by Pearce and Cronen. Guess I don't want to put words in their mouth in teaching my students about CMM, especially when these two CMM founders may have different ways or agenda of doing CMM research more recently. Mapping out the "logical force" in episodes and relationships has been a useful way for me to understand or reframe a communication situation.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

Well, this is a hard one. As we know, some of the CMMers take the theory into the realm of dialogue, but not all who embrace one or another version of the CMM theory. Does "CMM" go with anyone who has learned something about the theory from some sources somewhere down the line even though their interpretation or understanding could be somewhat "out of line"? Even as we eschew the notion of "authenticity," do we want to be rampant relativists in accepting what counts as CMM work or good CMM work? I don't think so, not me anyway. What are some central features of CMM? How do we

evaluate the quality of CMM work? What if people disagree on features or emphases of the theory? Is there room for different interpretations of CMM within the CMM discourse? How would a CMMer manage this "conflict" or difference?

I became intrigued with CMM years ago because the theory was/is complex, intriguing, and philosophical. It gave me a sophisticated language to see things without reducing it to the positivistic or humanistic orientation as in much of the comm literature. I love the development of CMM and the Milan family therapy. I think critical reflexivity is a crucial concept in CMM that I wouldn't want to lose sight of.

I like the practical turn of the theory, whether in dialogue or consultation, but I would not want to lose the critical edge of the theory that I believe marked the power and uniqueness of CMM.

I very much like the philosophical bend of the theory as developed over the years and hope we don't de-emphasize that in the context of doing practical theory. I know there's no reason that we have to, but perhaps it's a matter of emphasis or recontextualization.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Maybe a mini conference inviting a variety of people who associate themselves with CMM one way or another. We can discuss the historical development/changes of CMM, the kinds of research done over the years, the similarities as well as differences in people's CMM work in terms of their topics, agenda, methodology, how to teach it, etc. Who to invite? The usual suspects...We can work on that when this becomes a possibility. When and where and what about funding? Don't know. NCA panels might be a place to start, as several CMM panels have been presented over the years. But is it time to have a more coherent, "comprehensive", sustained, and systemic dialogue on CMM?

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Guess so.
Victoria Chen is a faculty member of San Francisco State University and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.

Jonathan Millen

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I still find great value in "mapping" out conversations as a way to access the process of on-going construction. Recently, I co-authored a paper (in <u>Human Communication</u>) that looks at paradoxes that emerge when bilinguals switch between languages in the flow of conversation.

2.In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

Education, mediation, and some consulting

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

A colleague came to me with a collection of "raw data" -- descriptions of conversations, diaries, personal accounts of immigrants struggling with the new culture and language. She was looking for a perspective from which she could begin to analyze the data. We started a long series of conversations about CMM. This "instance" was important in two regards. For me, I was in the role of "expert" in a non-classroom setting "teaching" to a peer (as opposed to teaching students). It forced me to talk about CMM in a way I never had before. For her, she became a convert! I saw her begin to "get it" and she now embraces the theory in her own scholarship. (We also have collaborated on two projects).

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new conceptsor tools should be developed?

I am interested in applying CMM to new and different contexts (eg, code-switching) to test the breadth of the theory.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Are we at the point where a mini conference (as in the social construction conference from a few years back) might work? I just don't see many folks anymore at NCA or ECA. Where has everyone gone? The web page might be a good first step toward re-connecting.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Jonathan Millen is an Associate (for now) Professor in the Department of Communication at Rider University (Lawrenceville, NJ).

Jonathan Shailor

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

I see the hierarchy of meanings as a tool that we can use to better understand our own and others' meanings... At first, I did this mechanically, deliberately, and occasionally. Now, I do it more intuitively, spontaneously, and continuously. When an interaction is confusing or not going well, I ask myself: what kind of episode are we creating together? How am I participating in its creation? What kind of relationship am I enacting? Is this the same kind of relationship the other is trying to enact? And so on.

The concept of "logical force" has also been very helpful to me. That concept helps me to distinguish between (1) established meanings that form the backdrop or context for an interaction (contextual forces); (2) established meanings that "require" or "restrict" the performance of certain actions (prefigurative forces); (3) desired meanings that one intends to create through the performance of certain actions (practical forces); and (4) meanings that are actually "accomplished" in the interaction (implicative forces).

The idea of these logical forces has helped sensitize me to (1) the importance of history, unstated assumptions and expectations in conversation (contextual forces); (2) the ways in which people feel compelled to act in one way rather than another (prefigurative forces); (3) the power we have to choose our meanings, and to call those meanings into being (practical forces); and (4) the ways in which what actually happens is always something less and something more than what we had wished for or anticipated (implicative forces).

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I teach courses in communication, conflict, dialogue and performance at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. I also teach "rehabilitative workshops" at a medium-level security prison for men (5 years now). I work as a volunteer mediator, and as an organizational consultant (about 15 years in both capacities).

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

There are so many ways in which CMM has been helpful! (See my general answer under #1)

A specific instance:

In my first attempt to use the Public Conversations Project's model for facilitating dialogue between people holding incommensurate positions, I brought together conservative Christians who believe that homosexuality is a sin, and gays and lesbians

who feel that that the others are both wrong and dangerous. During our three-hour session, my impression was that the dialogue was intense, but civil. People listened. Afterwards, however, I received some feedback from two of the lesbian participants where they let me know that the session had been very stressful and hurtful to them. They doubted they would ever participate in such a dialogue again. In order to make sense of this in a productive way, I used CMM to re-consider how each of the participants framed the event in terms of episode, relationship, autobiography and culture. As I did this, some things jumped out at me that were not obvious at the time. I saw more clearly how strongly each of the identities that we brought to the interaction prefigured our orientations and responses. Perhaps most critical was the fact that I was the sole facilitator of the dialogue, and I was a heterosexual academic. The only other heterosexual academic at the session was a conservative Christian who was cheerfully presenting one piece of "evidence" after another than showed how relationally and physically "dangerous" homosexual activity was. I allowed him to go on without interruption--I did not attempt to interrupt, reframe or redirect. I now see that I was implicitly legitimizing his characterization of homosexuality--that I had slipped into framing the episode as more of an academic debate (oh dear) than a dialogue in which identities were strongly implicated.

Feeding this forward: I now see the importance of being better able to see CMM "on the fly." In instances of this kind, it would mean being more alert to how identities and relationships are implicated on a moment-by-moment basis, and more practiced in moves that steer the interaction away from oppression and toward empowerment.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I have been weaving CMM into a more thorough and ongoing use of systemic inquiry (circular questioning) and dramatic performance (sociodrama). I find the intersection of these three practices to be the most exciting and generative place to be right now.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

I would like to work with others who are also interested in developing ways to use CMM/systemic questioning/sociodrama to foster community dialogues/development.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes. Jonathan Shailor is Associate Professor of Communication and Director of the Program in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at the University of Wisconsn-Parkside.

Em Griffin

1.What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

a. Although I had read about the idea that people create their own reality, the concept gained saliency, focus, and veracity as I was forced to take seriously your thesis that persons-in-conversation co-construct their social social realities and are in turn shaped by them. The social constructionist position has become a viable option for me where before it wasn't.

b. The importance of coordination even when there is little coherence.

c. The Public Dialogue Consortium emphasis on the way things are said. Coupled with the Escher's "Bond of Union" lithograph and your commentary that the form of the tape is more crucial that the content it represents, the Consortium examples of how people can be helped to say things in a cosmopolitan way really speaks to my students.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

a. Education: teaching and writing about communication theory

b. Mediation: practitioner, trainer, peer reviewer.

3.Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

See 1c above.

In my mediation training and peer reviewing I use your expanded concept of mastery including changing the game by transcending the rules to explain what my mediation center means by artistry.

4.As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

[Deleted at author's request]

5.As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

Sorry Barnett, I have no idea.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Yes, except for answer in #4. Refer to me in whatever context fits the comment.

Em teaches communication at Wheaton College.
Em is author of *A First Look at Communication Theory.*
Em is a mediator and trainer at the Center for Conflict Resolution in Chicago.

Hye-Sook Kim

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model)

Most of the CMM concepts have been useful in my work. Among those, I find the hierarchical context the most useful. Its strong merit lies in its flexibility in terms of number, nature and order

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

I teach and do researches at a university in Nonsan, South Korea.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I used CMM for my Ph.D. dissertation and other articles as a theoretical framework. And I also use the CMM framework when I have trouble in real life with friends and colleagues. It really helps to delineate the trouble

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

I think one of the CMM contextual levels--speech act--should be modified. As far as I understand, "speech act" is the interpretation of what a person does or says to another. Speech act is related to only one act or utterance and, I think, it is not appropriate to include speech act in the layers of context which should cover more than just one act or utterance.
   It is also very similar to "meaning rules" which interpret one's behavior or utterance. There should be clear distinction between those two.

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

linguists, therapists, counselors

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

a faculty member of Konyang University, Nonsan, Chungnam, KOREA

Diane Grimes

1) What CMM concepts have been most useful to your in your work?

My exposure to your work (so far) has been though <u>Communication and the Human Condition</u>. What I find useful is the whole perspective on communication. Within that framework, because I am interested in diversity, the ideas of cosmopolitan communication and ethnocentric communication—how they each "work" and the reasoning behind the forms is very useful to me.

2) In what contexts do you work?

Education. We (Professor Jensen and I) use <u>Communication and the Human Condition</u> to introduce speech communication freshmen to a social constructionist perspective on communication. I used the latter chapters in my senior level course on managing diversity. Discussions of ethnocentric communication augment other discussions of problematic ways of dealing with difference. We used cosmopolitan communication as a possible useful way of approaching diversity in organizations. This semester, I'm teaching a grad/undergrad course on different metaphors for understanding organizations and material from the <u>CHC</u> book keeps popping up as relevant. Several of the class members are TAs for the intro course now and several were students in it last year. I also draw on this work in my academic writing about "managing diversity."

3) Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM.

I teach a small three-hour once-a-week version of the Introduction to Communication course that also uses CHC. One of my advisees is taking the course. He's been a "problem child" who doesn't listen, goes his own way, and then ends up in trouble. He has bragged to me since I've known him about how he drives his teachers crazy; he always challenges them and won't listen to them. It turns out he's a dedicated foundationalist who reframes the material so that it represents a foundationalist view of social constructionism—it's just "bad science," confusion about what is "really" real, or manipulation of a foolish public by "communists," Clinton, or black leaders. Sometimes he didn't get this far, settling instead for personal attacks on the stupidity and arrogance on the book's author, the bad course design, etc.

Ironically, while trying to teach the perspective, I was trying to use the perspective to help me deal with this student. I heeded the warning against diatribe (made more difficult by the fact that I really was supposed to be teaching—but any mention of the material was seen as an attack by this student). I wished there could have been two of me, one to be the partisan instructor of the material, who defended the position, who did engage in diatribe (not my typical classroom stance). Then the second me would have been the wonderful cosmopolitan communicator, who would come in and use critical-interpretive research to make sense of the whole thing. "I" would help everyone understand, enlarge the framework so both our perspectives would fit, and offer brilliant suggestions to deal with our differences so we could get through the class with a minimum of suffering.

Instead, I realized I was the one person who could not take a position, and that if I couldn't "solve" the situation, I could at least not make it worse. Rather than be the authority, with not only the material but also my role in the classroom to defend, I became more of an observer. The syllabus already offered a particular discussion format so I had them discuss amongst themselves. Sometimes the student's assumptions (for example on gender issues) got him in trouble with the other students and sometimes they seemed to accept his perspective without comment. What was interesting was knowing of a method for dealing with just such situations but not knowing how to or being able to use it.

4) What changes to you think should be made to CMM?

Given my story (and given that in many ways this student and I are very alike—both white, middle class, US citizens, speaking the same language, etc—yet worlds apart in our thinking), do we really realize how different difference is? When we talk about social eloquence, how do we really make that happen?

In my large lecture class, when we talked about cosmopolitan communication, students knew that was something good, so they claimed that was their orientation—meanwhile talking about "them" (for example, writing about those ethnocentric people from small towns; they don't know anything; they've never seen anyone different from them, etc.) When they recognized difference, it wasn't the occasion for respect, but mostly they glossed over difference.

5) What form of activity would be most productive in developing CMM?

I will be able to answer this better as I read more widely in the material associated with CMM.

6) May I quote?

Diane Grimes is assistant professor of communication at Syracuse University.

Kevin Barge

1. What CMM concepts have been most useful to you in your work? (e.g., hierarchy model; strange loops; serpentine model).

There are several CMM concepts that I have found particularly useful in my work. First, the notion of **reflexivity** is incredibly important. Making the shift toward a view of the world that is continually interconnected is crucial to working with human systems. The idea that one is never "outside" the system is a powerful concept because it focuses one's attention to the consequences of the communicative choices we make during conversation. Berlo's old notion of "One cannot not communicate" takes a relational twist, "One cannot not be in relationship." The question becomes what kinds of relationships? This leads to a second concept I find useful: **stories told** and **moral orders**. I really take the Bakhtinian assumption that "expression organizes experience" quite seriously. When one begins to engage the power of language and to realize how language is inherently moral--creating a wide variety of moral obligations--the power of communication to transform our relationships and social worlds is enormous. Third, this leads me to the **Thor Heyerdahl principle**--that our social worlds are made and not found. I find it incredibly useful when working with people to get them to consider how their linguistic choices construct the situations in which they find themselves in. The distinction between "made" and "found" is important if we are to infuse people with the hope of changing their worlds.

2. In what contexts do you work? (e.g., education, training, therapy, consulting)

The primary context in which I work is consulting and community development. I find myself surprised in responding this way given that I am a college professor. I think the reason that I gave this answer is that it is in consulting and community development work that I am most immersed in CMM. I use CMM to organize my university classes and my approach to classroom pedagogy, but I don't have the opportunity to "teach" CMM extensively.

3. Please describe an instance in which you have used CMM. This may be a "story from the field" about consulting, therapy, training or research, or a more personal story of your own use of CMM to understand or act into life.

I really struggled with this question, because I have never thought of "using CMM." One understanding of "to use" is that of "to use a tool." I don't really think of CMM as a tool to use; rather, I tend to think of it as more a worldview. To that end, CMM informs my way of being in the world.

For example, CMM informs my way of engaging with situations. Prior to entering consultations, I engage in extensive systemic story telling. Using the **"hierarchy model"** I begin developing stories about what contexts are getting made and by whom. I engage in **"promiscuous" thought** where I play with differing punctuations of the situation I am about to enter. I try to understand the unique sense of **coherence**

that the different participants bring to the situation and then try to create a coherent story that weaves these different stories together. This process is much less a conscious tool-using reflex, "I will now use this tool from CMM…." and much more an ingrained way of being in the world.

4. As we look forward, what changes do you think should be made to CMM? For example, what concepts should be enhanced or diminished? What new concepts or tools should be developed?

As I think about CMM in the future, I would continue the trend away from "algebraic" looking models of prefigurative, practical, and logical forces. While I think they can be incredibly useful for consultants, trainers, theorists etc., they tend to be somewhat off-putting for most practitioners. Perhaps a better way to get at this is to continue to develop the notion of **story**--because stories capture the moral obligations of people and situations. I think developing additional tools that allow people to analyze and understand the power of stories is key.

I also think that we need to continue doing work in articulating the "theory" of CMM. By this, I mean **practical theory**. I think the idea of practical theory is so different from how we typically conceive of theorizing that it needs much more work. I think Vern's work is a great start, but the issues relating to reliability, generalizability etc. need to be expanded. I think that unless we articulate this alternative view of theorizing, then some in our discipline will continue to devalue the contribution of CMM. I think that other scholars need a framework from which to view what CMM is, and that framework is practical theory.

[Barnett adds: Kevin is the editor of a special issue of the journal Communication Theory (volume 11, number 1, 2001) on practical theory. Information about the journal, but not yet the table of contents about this issue, can be found at http://www.icahdq.org/publications/ct.html.]

Finally, I think that we need to do some additional work with the **ethics** associated with CMM. If CMM is a practical theory and has consequences for people's lives, what are the ethics associated with CMM practice? As a consultant, practitioner, manager, etc., how do you make choices about the kind of conversational move that you make? The work I've been engaged in with dialogical wisdom begins to address that, but still needs more elaboration

5. As we move forward, what form of activity, by what individuals or groups of people, would be most productive in developing CMM?

I think the biggest thing that we need to do is publish **"data-based" articles** using CMM. What does CMM empirical (in the broadest sense) research look like? What is the role of data collection in CMM research? Is it to map out the laws of communication (NOT!!!) or is it to provide the resources for social change? The notion of how we do research and what counts as CMM research is best demonstrated through "data-based" examples such as the recent essay by Pearce and Pearce.

6. May I quote your answers to the questions above? If so, please give me the title you prefer (e.g., Barnett is a faculty member of the Fielding Institute and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.)

Kevin is an Associate Professor in Communication Studies at Baylor University and a member of the Public Dialogue Consortium.