

Lines of flight

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Abstract

I am worried about the long-lasting effects of the dominant, neo-liberal and capitalist systems that are having a devastating influence on planet Earth and on the life and relations of all the beings, human and non-human, living in this world. When Gregory Bateson wrote “Steps to an Ecology of Mind” (1974) and “Mind and Nature” (1979), he already made clear that human beings do not see the interconnectedness of everything, and because we do not see it, we break it. The breaking of connections has created fractures, wounds and fragmentations in nature, between people, between humans and non-humans: animals, plants and other matter. This has created a gigantic ecological crisis and a profoundly unethical and unjust world with an ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor, the people with resources and those without. We perform our systemic practice in this context. What is our responsibility? In what way can we resist the destructive powers and support actions of hope: *lines of flight* (Guattari 2015)? We can find inspiration in other areas where activists formulate manifestos as a start of other hopeful practices. In this paper, I give the example of a group of journalists that started *The Correspondent* and I invite all readers to think about actions that we could start, maybe with a manifesto for systemic practices?

Abstract (Dutch)

Ik maak me zorgen over de langdurige effecten van het dominante, neo-liberale en kapitalistische systeem die een vernietigende invloed hebben op de planeet aarde en op het leven en de relaties van alle wezens, menselijk en niet menselijk, die in deze wereld leven. Toen Gregory Bateson “Steps to an Ecology of Mind” (1974) en “Mind and Nature” (1979) schreef, maakte hij al duidelijk dat wij mensen niet zien hoe alles met alles verbonden is en omdat we het niet zien verbreken we de verbindingen. Dat verbreken heeft fractures, wonden en fragmentatie veroorzaakt in de natuur, tussen personen, tussen mensen en niet mensen: dieren, planten en andere materie. Dit heeft een enorme ecologische crisis veroorzaakt en een wezenlijk onethische en onrechtvaardige wereld met een groeiende kloof tussen de rijken en de armen en mensen met of juist zonder toegang tot middelen. Wij voeren onze systemische praktijken uit in deze context. Wat is onze verantwoordelijkheid? Op welke manier kunnen we ons verzetten tegen de destructieve krachten en acties van hoop: *lines of flight* (Guattari 2015) ondersteunen? We kunnen inspiratie vinden in andere gebieden waar activisten manifesten formuleren als een begin van andere, hoopvolle praktijken. In dit artikel geef ik het voorbeeld van een groep journalisten die de *Correspondent* startten en ik nodig alle lezers uit om na te denken over acties die wij kunnen starten, misschien met een manifest voor systemische praktijken?

The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty: not knowing what comes next.

Ursula K. Le Guin 1969

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.

Donna J. Haraway 2016

For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.

Aristotle 350 BC

Introduction

Starting my university studies in 1969/1970 I plunged into a context full of life and changes, fired by the student revolts in Paris 1968.

After two years struggling to orientate myself, I was involved in endless smoky political discussions about the dominance of the bourgeois powers, the discrimination of women, the destructive dynamics of the capitalist system, the oppressive system of psychiatry. I was part of the feminist movement in the Netherlands, was involved in the anti-psychiatry movement and supported to start shelters for abused women. Apart from that it was the time of flower power, music, marijuana, spirituality and yoga. Although these two movements were not much connected I was involved in both. I never really was in the centre of activities, I was curious, supportive but also always in doubt, questioning the premises, dynamics and dominance of groups. Nevertheless, I came to live in a commune where many of my friends studied politics and Marxist-Leninist theory and some of them decided to become members of the communist party. For me it was clear I would never join that party because of the pressure to agree with their convictions and the lack of space for dialogue. Entering a communist festival on 1st May, Workers' Day, I saw a big banner: "abonneer u op *De Waarheid*" - subscribe to *The Truth* - the newspaper of the communist party. I thought it was crazy to pretend having a monopoly on the truth and I took a distance. I realised that they were only talking about their own truth, their convictions. Truth was and is an important category for me, but as a *process*: seeking truth, finding local and personal truth or truthfulness.

Another reason was that there was no place for interconnectedness and spirituality. Spirituality and spiritual experiences of feeling connected with the whole world, nature, trees, beauty, animals and people, always were, and are, in my life. I felt at home with Arne Næss, a Norwegian philosopher and environmentalist who started a "deep ecology" movement which asserted the interconnectedness and equality of all organisms, human and non-human (Næss 1989).

Part of the communist movement was about rejecting the power of religion and churches, thought to be “opium of the people”. With this, the spiritual (soft) powers that are related to the experience of interconnectedness were ignored and rejected as soft, mystifying and bourgeois.

Later, when we found out about the fierce oppression of people and of the free word in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe we got disappointed, most left the party and concluded that the communist system failed to offer people a good life.

We finished studies, found work and started families. Other practices and theories came to the foreground.

When I came into contact with family therapy, systems theory and systemic practices, I was immediately interested and excited by the attention on relationships, families, family dynamics, generations and context. Leaving linear cause-effect thinking for circularity. Later there was the awareness of multiple truths in post structuralism and social constructionism, attention for diversity, for a multiplicity of voices, complexity, narratives, power and gender, uncertainty, not knowing and curiosity, communities and culture. I felt at home and experienced that all my voices, ideas, practices and doubts could have a place. So I never left the field.

In the last decade fresh attention is emerging for the theory of Karl Marx, and again for publications and talks which address the destructive power of the capitalist system and neo liberalism. At this point in time, this is fuelled by the ecological crisis, the endangered planet earth, the enduring injustice in the world, the ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor, the mass of drifting people searching for a possible life, and the emptiness of consumerism. I would argue that in these days authors and philosophers are much more aware of the interconnectedness of everything and that spirituality has eventually found her place.

Now, towards the end of my career, I decided to make space for a professional doctorate in systemic practices with Gail Simon and her team. She invites us to have an ethical and political agenda in our research.

Research in our field tends to contain a social justice or critical responsibility agenda in its intention to improve lives and promote equality. The aim of systemic practitioner research leans towards producing innovative and leading-edge systemic practice rather than attempting to prove something.

Gail Simon 2018, p.52

I thought of a concrete way of adding to this agenda.

In this text I suggest exploring concrete practices in the same spirit, practices that do not come directly from the systemic field but that can be related to our field. I hope that these connections can bring us further and open up new possibilities. In this way we can create a learning community that is larger than our own field.

New Possibilities

A growing group of contemporary philosophers, scientists and artists are again drawing our attention to the devastating effects of the capitalist system, striving for free markets and profit maximisation; a system that created an ecological crisis that nearly destroys the planet earth and all the human and non-human life. But now the interconnectedness seems to be in the centre, talking about “new materialism” where relationships of humans and non-humans are seen as inseparable. The “post human” era has critiqued the centrality of the human being, Anthropos (a white male, able-bodied, Aryan, heterosexual stereotype hero). The Anthropocene era is, or has to be, ended (Haraway 2003; Braidotti 2013; Karen Barad 2007; Bruno Latour 2007).

This creates new possibilities for political action and change.

The book *Lines of Flight: For Another World of Possibilities* offers an early but newly translated text by Félix Guattari (1930-1992) a French psychoanalyst, philosopher and political activist (Guattari 2015)

He anticipated, and believed in, decentralised forms of political activism. He wished his book not only to be theoretical but also practical, and although the book is written in a dense (the translator calls it a “baroque”) style, it offers a fresh set of conceptual tools for imaginative and engaged thinking about capitalism and effective forms of resistance to it.

As Robert van Hennik mentions in his thesis, *Practice Based Evidence Based Practice* (van Hennik 2018 p.28), Guattari wrote about these lines of flight earlier, together with Deleuze, referring to actions of resistance against dominant systems.

Reading these days for my doctorate, and listening to presentations in *youtube*, made me become aware of the connections, Karen Barad (2014) would say *diffractions*, between Ursula le Guin, Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad, Arne Naess, Gert Biesta, Gail Simon, Robert van Hennik, David van Reybrouck, Jim Wilson, Lex Bohlmeier and my own thinking, longing and doing. In order to understand what Karen Barad’s ideas about diffraction are she describes the process of earth worms and soil “earth worms revel while helping to make compost or otherwise being busy at work and play, turning on the soil over and over, ingesting and excreting it, tunnelling through it, burrowing, all means of aerating the soil, allowing oxygen in, opening it up and breathing new life into it” (2014, p.168). Diffractive reading, as I understand it, is reading through one another of texts that create space, air, for new ideas to emerge, often suddenly. Writing this sentence, an old text from a German theatre maker, Botho Strauss (1970), comes in my mind: “Versuch ästhetische und politische Ereignisse zusammen zu denken” – (Try to think of aesthetic and political events together). I didn’t have any thought about this text for years, so maybe it is an example too. While thinking about diffraction and how to explain this concept, I made a connection with Botho Strauss’ writing about the going together of political and aesthetic qualities in theatre, needing each other and feeding each other, and creating something new. It is about differences, acknowledging the differences, and seeing new perspectives by thinking (or doing) the differences through one another.

Doing this we can also see the similarities.

The authors that I mentioned are all worried about the long-lasting effects of the dominant, neo-liberal and capitalist systems that are having a devastating influence on planet Earth and on the life and relations of all the beings, human and non-human, living in this world. When Gregory Bateson

wrote “Steps to an Ecology of Mind” (1974) and “Mind and Nature” (1979), he already made clear that human beings do not see the interconnectedness of everything, and because we do not see it, we break it. The breaking of connections has created fractures, wounds and fragmentations in nature, between people, between humans and non-humans: animals, plants and other matter. This has created a gigantic ecological crisis and a profoundly unethical and unjust world with an ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor, the people with resources and without. This tragedy has created a growing group of refugees, poor people, homeless people and dislocated migrants who are excluded from belonging, a home and a proper life. Not only adults, also children, families and the elderly are involved. Also close by to the University of Bedfordshire where I am studying: the *Luton Post* of the 1st December 2018 pointed out that Luton was one of the top homelessness spots in the UK. A study by a homeless charity centre found that Luton has 3,458 people living homeless in the borough, which equates to just one in 63 people. Shelter’s chief executive Campbell Robb said: “This is the tragic result of a nation struggling under the weight of sky-high rents, a lack of affordable homes, and cuts to welfare support.” (Robb 2018) - all symptoms of the neo-liberal capitalist system.

We have to face this crisis that is the larger context in which we work with clients, families, organisations and companies.

The thinkers, artists, practitioners and authors mentioned above try to find ways or niches where other stories can be told, other movements can be made, stories and doings that connect, affirmative performances of possibilities to resist inequality and create collaborative and ethical practices.

In her presentation in Amsterdam, March 2017, Donna Haraway proposed that we cannot hold Anthropos and the Anthropocene responsible for all the failings and the threat of destruction of planet Earth and the life in it. She suggests a more historical and situational term: Capitalocene, referring to the devastating effect of the capitalist system over time.

Haraway also argues that a new term is needed: she suggests Chthulucene, a word derived from chthon, meaning “earth” in Greek and which is associated with things that dwell in or under the earth.

The Chthulucene, for Haraway, refers to processes of reworlding. She suggests it is more like a process of composting than one of being Posthuman. The path towards something that might possibly have a chance of living on, Haraway argues, is through the activation of the chthonic powers that are within our grasp, as we collect up the waste of the Anthropocene and the exterminism of the Capitalocene.

Allan Parsons 2018

Haraway states that we need string figures, connected stories, performances and actions that hold each other, not autopoietic but sympoetic. Maturana & Varela (1984) introduced the concept of autopoiesis in the field of systems theory and systemic practices. As biologists they wanted to distinguish living systems from non-living systems. Living systems, they argued, are self-producing systems, which maintain their particular form through self-regulation and self-organisation: autopoiesis. Haraway makes a big step in introducing the concept of “sympoiesis”. Although she doesn’t explain this concept, I suppose she is referring to living systems as processes of creating and organising together and regulating life together. In this process we need stories that connect, stories that are related to art, science, action, speculative fabulation (SF) that are never finished, that are on-going. We could add “practitioner research” to this context. According to Haraway, the stories of care for on-going life got lost in the Capitalocene.

Rosi Braidotti indicates that *“The pursuit of practices of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro practices of everyday life, is a simple strategy to hold, sustain and map out sustainable transformations. The motivation for the social construction of hope is grounded in a profound sense of responsibility and accountability”* (Dolphijn & van der Tuin 2012, p.36)

It is an inviting thought and a challenge to suggest that we can act responsibly and accountably by pursuing practices of hope and possibilities for change in our everyday practices. My supervisor, Alexis Weedon, commented, “It is as if the performance of something positive and an internalised strategy, prepares the ground for the seeds (to use a gardening metaphor).” I like that metaphor. We can do that with our family, friends, colleagues, clients, students, in the streets, in public transport and other public spaces, in theatre, in writing, in art, and so on - everywhere. For me this is related to being dialogical in the world. Jaakko Seikkula told me, “It is not a way of doing, it is a way of life” (2012).

Haraway invites us to stay in the trouble, not to walk away from it, to find new ways, other possibilities, but from within.

This is related to the theories of Gert Biesta on education (Gert Biesta 2014). He is worried about the educational system that nowadays is designed to adapt children to the capitalist system, to make them flexible workers that can continue the system. And to make them good consumers of goods, to preserve future economic growth. Children are stimulated and manipulated to feel a longing for special shoes, gadgets, games or holidays. Biesta states that the freedom the children learn is the freedom to shop. He argues that this is keeping children and youngsters infantile. We know that the reality is that we cannot fulfil all our wishes. And according to Biesta we need to experience and accept limits to become a responsible adult, to ask ourselves: “Do I really need that or can I live without it?”. Children need to learn to say NO. Biesta wants to raise in children the longing to be adult and to make a contribution to a good world. To resist should be a part of the curriculum in schools. He goes against the “child focused” learning, children need to be educated to focus on the world and the other. My freedom cannot be without the freedom of the other, he says, referring to Levinas who is a big resource for him. The question, “who or what am I?” is not so important for Biesta. Rather, the question is more “How I can matter for the other? How I can make a difference in the world?”

Gert Biesta wants to shift the attention in schools from getting high grades as soon as possible in order to enter a profitable career, to teaching. Teaching doesn’t mean that teachers know everything, they do not. Teachers, and other adults cannot know everything and do not understand everything. According to Biesta, uncertainty and not knowing is in the centre of teaching. The task of teachers is to interrupt students, to give them difficult assignments, complex tasks. And some learning processes need time. They cannot or should not be done in a hurry.

His ideas and practices seem very important to me. I do not know if he realises that he infers that schools can be outside of the mainstream capitalist system. Unfortunately, schools are influenced and also sponsored by businesses. It will take a lot of effort to create free space for schools that want to incorporate the ideas of Biesta. But we have to search for the landscape of possibilities. I do not know if Haraway and Biesta know each other but they both underline the challenge to stay in the world, to accept the challenge of uncertainty, ambiguity and frustrations and find your way dealing with the complexity.

I would argue that this is related to what Guattari means by “lines of flight”. This paper is also meant as a *line of flight*. We need to create a larger learning community with signs of political activism in a world of possibilities (Guattari 2015). The lines of flight together can create a fabric, string figures (Haraway 2017) that can offer imaginations of a more relational world between humans and the non-

human. These lines of flight can also help us as systemic practitioners and researchers to imagine new movements and performances in systemic practices.

A line of flight that came in my life a year ago is: *The Correspondent*.

When my youngest son Marek (born 1987) send me a Dutch article and podcast from *de Correspondent* on evolution, written by the young historian, researcher and author, Rutger Bregman (born 1988) - with a more social relational theory, totally different from Charles Darwin, and far from the theory about selfish genes by Richard Dawkins - I was struck by the original thinking and got interested in this online journal.

When I read about the history, politics, mission and activism of this journal, I was emotionally touched and energised.

What is this project about?

A Dutch philosopher and journalist Rob Wijnberg (born 1982) had to leave his position as the editor in chief of the NRC, a major Dutch daily newspaper, because of his wish to change the narratives told in the daily news. Together with colleagues he developed a project. The founding of *de Correspondent* in 2013 was a political act with the purpose of **building a movement for handling news in a radically different way**.

Wijnberg argues, news is fast food for the mind.

The news makes us passive spectators to a world full of insane events we seem to have no control over. Though it promises to bring the world closer, it actually distances us from it. It sows cynicism, division, and suspicion, and reaps polarisation, conflict, and despair. It makes us afraid of each other, of the world, and of the future.

Wijnberg 2018

Wijnberg reflects on what the news does to us. We can hardly escape the news bubble we are in, the stories told in TV, radio, newspapers, screens in public transport areas, push notifications, laptop, phones, twitter, everywhere the "breaking news" is demanding our attention. Wijnberg presumes that we are all addicted to news and the stories told, and that this influences our worldview more than we are aware of. The stories told in (social) media, and the way they are told, are one of the most powerful tools for populism.

The team of *The Correspondent* formulated 10 founding principles, a Manifesto.

(<https://thecorrespondent.com>)

1. We are your antidote to the daily news grind

News mostly is about what happens today, but rarely about what happens every day. It covers the most sensational exceptions, leaving you uninformed about the rules. The Correspondent wants to redefine what news is about, shifting the focus from the sensational to the foundational. Our correspondents cover the most important developments and underlying forces that shape our world, rather than speculating about the latest hype or scare. Put another way: we don't cover the weather, we cover the climate, informing you about how the world really works.

2. We do not take ad dollars of any kind

The Correspondent is an ad-free platform. This includes so called sponsored content. We are funded by paying members. Our business model is providing you with quality journalism, not selling your attention to advertisers. The Correspondent is open to collaborating with media partners. We also accept funding from organisations whose investments contribute directly to our journalistic goals. Any such agreement will include one non-negotiable condition: full editorial independence.

3. We fight stereotypes, prejudice, and fearmongering

The simplest way to make headlines is to insult a group of people and generate outrage. The flood of news coverage then leads to a second rage cycle aimed at media excess. This pattern reinforces some of our worst habits: stoking fear for commercial gain or political advantage, trading in stereotypes to trigger response. The Correspondent is committed to fighting harmful simplifications, and steering clear of breaking news that is meant to shock rather than inform. We try not to be driven by the fear of missing out, allowing us to dig deeper and fact check more thoroughly.

4. We don't just cover the problem, but also what can be done about it

Consuming a lot of news can make you feel cynical and powerless. The Correspondent aims to counteract this effect by searching for common ground between different people, and by giving as much attention to solutions as we do to problems. We call this 'constructive journalism', not to be mistaken for 'good news'. Constructive journalism tells the stories in a way that might get things moving in a different direction. We believe in journalistic activism, meant to bring about change.

5. We collaborate with you, our knowledgeable members

Collectively, our readers know way more than we do about most of the stories we cover. That's why The Correspondent does not simply broadcast information. When we cover something you know a lot about, we invite you to contribute your expertise and share your experience. That's part of being a member. Correspondents share their story ideas and research questions from the start, inviting feedback from members to make our journalism better. We don't see you as a mere news consumer, but as a knowledgeable contributor of expertise.

6. We don't take the view from nowhere. We tell you where we're coming from

At The Correspondent, we don't think journalists should pretend to be 'neutral' or 'unbiased'. Instead, our correspondents' level with you about where they're coming from, in the belief that transparency about point-of-view is better than claiming to have none. We are not on anyone's team. We're not the voice of a party. And we believe facts matter. But we also know facts need interpretation to have meaning. That's why we are open about the worldview and moral convictions that inform our storytelling, and we will change our minds if the facts tell us to.

7. We protect your privacy, by minimizing the personal data we collect

Most free online services let their users pay by turning over their personal data. At The Correspondent, we minimise the data we collect about you. We only collect the data we are required by law to collect, or that is necessary for our platform to function correctly (such as login names and passwords). We do not sell this information to third parties. Our reasons for collecting data must be explained clearly. And wherever possible, members must have control over the data collected.

8. We want to be as inclusive as possible

Journalism is at its best when it includes many different perspectives and worldviews. That's why we seek to include people from a broad variety of backgrounds, both in our newsroom and on our platform. Our principle of inclusivity extends to the way we find writers, reach readers, and treat members. Expecting writers to have a point of view helps in recruiting a diverse staff. Members can share our journalism freely with anyone, expanding our readership. And we have an inclusive pricing model, so nobody is excluded from our journalism because of purchasing power.

9. We always put journalism before financial gain

For over a century, the dominant business model in the news industry has been selling the attention of audiences to advertisers. The end goal is to maximise shareholder profit by attracting as much attention as possible. At The Correspondent, our goal is to serve our members, maximising trust instead of financial gains. That's why we do not maximise shareholder return, limiting dividends to 5 percent of revenue. We do not accept investment capital that does not adhere to this dividend cap.

10. We believe in transparency and continued self-improvement

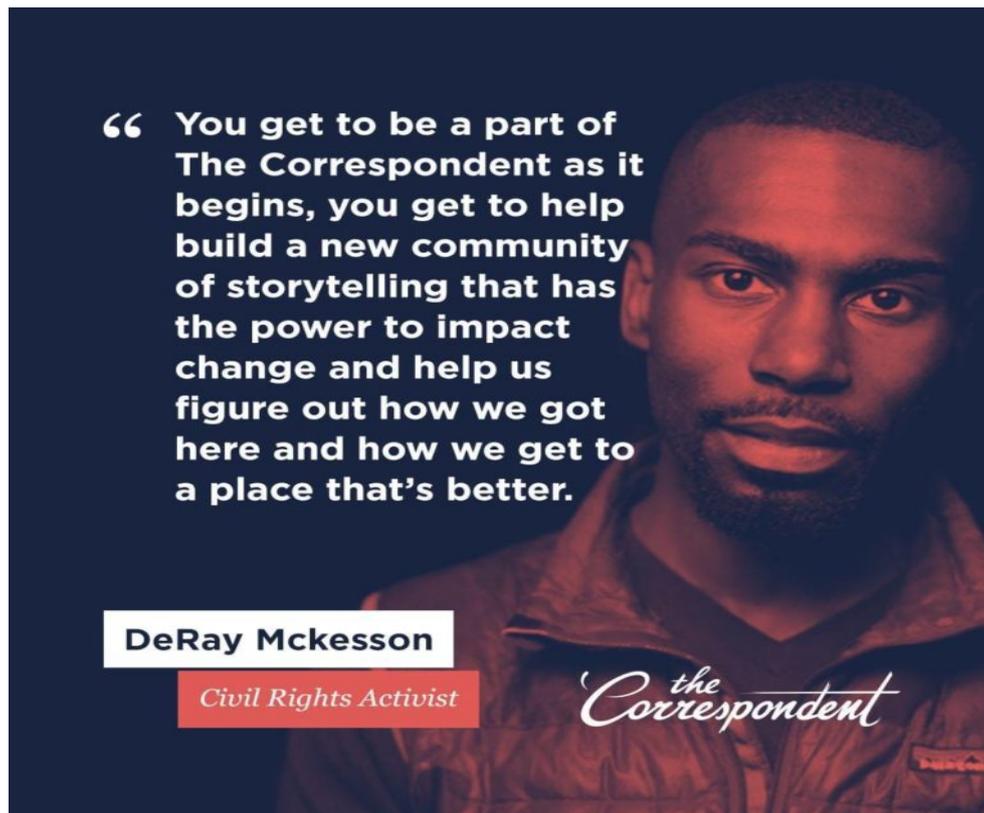
We know we're not 'the fix' for what's wrong in journalism, and we know that there's no one way to do it. When we make mistakes, we admit and correct them. We will also be transparent about how we spend your money by publishing an annual financial and editorial report. And we will keep pushing ourselves to do a better job, inviting you to help. Together we will keep learning, about ourselves and the world around us.

So far these are their founding principles.

Five years later more than 60,000 Dutch speaking readers are member of the open access journal, paying €70 a year as a member if they can.

In September 2019, they will start with an English/USA version to be able to influence the stories that are told in the world, and structure the world, much more (<https://thecorrespondent.com>). They gave it the name: "*The correspondent for unbreaking news*". They are able to start the English-speaking community through much support from members and well-known people, mostly from the USA. They are creating a critical mass for change.

One example from **their website**:



I am an active member of *The Correspondent* now, listening to in-depth 45 minutes personal interviews by journalist Lex Bohlmeier with diverse people from different contexts talking about how active colonialism still is, about psychiatry, education, ecology, personal histories, theatre, music, death, love, sports and many other relevant issues. After five years of his two weekly talks he mentions that he is radicalising (a term that is mostly used for worries around radicalisation among Muslims). He became aware that the foundation of many problems in the world (climate change, migration, wars) is the fundamental inequality and injustice in the world, and that many discussions about problems arising from this, distract us from resisting this fundamental inequality.

Reflections

Can *The Correspondent* or other related initiatives make a difference? I think they do because they aim to create a just world. There is no linear connection with these initiatives and change but they add to the critical mass that can bring about change.

What I value about this initiative is that they are beyond critique, not only going against, but creating new worlds, new hope, as Braidotti would say.

Barad says in her interview in Dolphijn & van der Tuin (2012) that she is not so interested in critique. She sees critique as a negative, destructive practice to dismiss, to put somebody or something down, distancing from the other. She prefers the idea of Turing (1950) about critical mass, “that is, when a single neutron enters a critical sample of nuclear material which produces a branching chain reaction

that explodes with ideas” (p.49). So we need a size or amount of actions large enough to explode with ideas, to bring about (often unpredictable) change. Barad talks about the need to be suggestive, creative and visionary.

I would argue that the Manifesto of *The Correspondent* is relevant to systemic practices too. As systemic practitioners, we challenge fragmentation and want to see the patterns that connect; we want to fight stereotypes, prejudices and fearmongering; we don't just cover up the problem, but ask what can be done about it. In collaborative practice, we understand that clients know a lot and are experts about their own lives. Like *The Correspondent*, we acknowledge that we cannot be neutral or unbiased, that we have a worldview, a vision, and we can change our mind. Their principle to protect personal data and to collect as little data as possible should be a holy rule in our practices too. I am worried about the amount of personal data of clients in computer systems. In the mental health field, data collection is not minimal but maximised. This is an on-going worry for many of us, and a practice that we should resist by all possible means. *The Correspondent* is as inclusive as possible as well in their diverse professional team as in the diverse topics and persons they address. I know we wish the same but space for diversity is still an issue that needs much attention. Like *The Correspondent* we want to put the mission of our work before financial gain. This fundamental value has been under pressure for a long time due to the dominance of the economic market principles that have become so dominant in the mental health field and other areas of the arts and public services. But in systemic practice we have the same drive: social benefit over financial gain. The last sentence of the manifesto could be said by a practitioner in the systemic field: *Together we will keep learning, about ourselves and the world around us.*

Could we also make a manifesto? What would be our main principles? Can we still be suggestive, creative and visionary?

Talking to colleagues about this I get the impression that many have lost hope. They feel so oppressed by the ever-growing bureaucracy, the pressure to produce and make enough money for the company, to do assessment and follow protocols. They do not feel space to be creative. They feel silenced.

Many publications that address the *loss of trust* come in my mind when I think about this issue.

Jim Wilson (2017) worries about the loss of trust in the mental health field. In his latest book he describes the de-humanising practices of technological activities like finding an accurate diagnosis, following protocols, and producing measurable and cost-effective outcomes. These neo-liberal practices correspond with the introduction of economic market processes into health care. This has led to controlling therapeutic practice and endless bureaucratic activity where complexity, ambiguity, creativity and risk-taking do not have a place anymore. Control came in the place of trust and this has led to a culture of distrust, in which professionals have lost pleasure in their work and feel more and more alienated from their original values, their interest in people and their wish to diminish the suffering of people. Wilson suggests many ways to resist these negative processes and to stay creative, by staying in relation within communities, in teams, with others (2017).

Another author and systemic therapist that I want to mention on the issue of trust is Robert van Hennik. In his thesis, *Practice Based Evidence Based Practice* (2018) he reflects on transparency and trust in mental health care. He quotes Byung-chul Han saying “Trust is only possible in a state between knowing and not knowing, trust means establishing a positive relationship with another person in spite of not knowing” and van Hennik adds the question, “how can we produce trust and

trustworthiness in a post-modern world?" (van Hennik 2018, p.25). His suggestion is to form a collaborative learning community of therapist(s) and client(s) using Feedback Informed Systemic Therapy (FITS). In this approach, the therapist is a therapist as well as a researcher, and clients are clients and co-researchers. Together they reflect on the outcomes and effects of their collaboration, creating a collaborative learning community. In this way trust can exist in between knowing and not knowing in the context of uncertainties.

How can we create a context for new hope, for new lines of flight, or re-member lines of flight of earlier times? We need string figures (Haraway) and communities that can resist. String figures can be connected actions, like the manifesto and actions of The Correspondent; the actions of the 15 year old Swedish girl Greta Thunberg that started the school strikes for climate that went all over the world (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAMmUIEsN9A>) and the actions of the USA students that mobilised thousands against gun violence started by Emma Gonzalez. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/24/us/emma-gonzalez-march-for-our-lives.html>) and the actions of the artist Jason de Caires who makes stunning under water statues to rescue the undersea life and the coral reefs (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWil7AkDX-o>).

What can we do as systemic practitioners, what actions would fit in these string figures?

I hope this *line of flight* adds to our unique systemic community and I also hope that more will follow in the image of beautiful and complex murmurations.

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