

# 1. From Engineer to Co-Creative Catalyst: A Living Thesis

## 1.1. General Overview

This thesis has a purpose and a history, and has developed and matured in dynamic relationship with my own personal development.

Its purpose is to share thoughts and a way of viewing organizational development as an extension and inclusion of my own development, as an extension and inclusion of 'receptive space' (Rayner, 1997). As a Co-Creative Catalyst I influence the dynamic configuration of space around me and within me in helping to 'fluidize' often rigid, objectively reinforced boundaries around us and within us.

This thesis aims to build on published academic work and will critically engage with these concepts. The thesis aims to introduce a different approach to traditional Change Management concepts and practices in making them relational and Inclusional by developing an epistemology that uses creative space to fluidize boundaries within traditional organizational change paradigms. This approach is relevant managers, employees or Change Agents who believe that there are different ways of engaging in the work they do, to create and sustain change.

This thesis aims to show that there are many different ways to engage in a Change Process, and that there is no one defined best process. Instead there are various Inclusional approaches, which can increase the chances of a sustainable new way of engagement with each other, which leads to a change that all will accept as an improvement on a particular situation compared to one that existed before. This thesis will introduce a process to fluidize boundaries through creative space, called 'Edge of Fluidity', as a way to create sustainable, lasting, deep personal change and simultaneously a continuous ability to sustain organizational change by 'learning how to learn'.

This thesis will explore and introduce the following key concepts:

- How to integrate the current body of rational, reductionistic management and behavioural knowledge into a relational, interrelational and fluid set of complementary theories

through the concept of Inclusionality. This thesis aims to bring about an involution in the current thinking and ideology within organizational transformations.

- To introduce the concept of the 'Edge of Fluidity' as an Inclusional, transformative and co-creative process as a way of being, linked to development; both as individual and collectively in order to create variable, fluid boundaries. The 'Edge of Fluidity' allows and facilitates co-creative relational interactions, emergent and random, which are Inclusional and co-creative. The process can create a responsive, Inclusional and inviting place to develop and mature ideas.
- The influence of development, either individual or social formations, on management theories needs further examination. I will critically engage with concepts of development in this thesis in relation to Inclusional and relational change.
- To demonstrate that one of the main barriers in any transformational Change Process is the economic system that we live in. This needs to be recognized in all action for development and change by the integration of economic theories into social theories. This thesis will demonstrate the creation of a Living Theory which is 'economically' inclusive.
- To show through the narrative, video clips and examples in this thesis how I have generated my own Living Theory from 'old theories' by adding 'relational existing' theories into my epistemology.
- This thesis is also meant to show my own development over time.

In order to help the reader of this thesis to understand why I have written this thesis and how I have developed my Inclusional epistemology, I would offer the following 'frames of reference'.

Over time, I have been introduced to various theories; management theories, economic theories and social theories. At the time of introduction this was new, exciting knowledge. This new found wisdom was something that I used in developing my own practice as a junior manager.

Over time, especially when I switched from the 'technical side' to the 'managerial side' as I became a 'Change Management Consultant', I became more and more aware that the single distinctive theories could not be integrated with each other. There were points of divergence between these theories that made integration of two or more theories difficult. I started to realize that there was an 'in-built' reductionistic property in every theory because of the starting points that led the author to investigate the particular topic, and the relevant local and relational aspects surrounding that particular inquiry.

I needed an approach that allowed the integration of all the elements of the various accepted theories in a non-reductionistic way. This thesis will engage with selected theories with critical judgement, without in any way criticizing the individual theories. This thesis recognizes the value that the selected, distinctive theories have to offer as a relational, collective group of theories.

The concept of 'Inclusionality' (Rayner, 2005) allows distinctive theories to be used in an Inclusional and relational way as 'tools' in local and distinctive inquiries.

*"Inclusionality is an awareness of space and the variable fluidity of ideas across boundaries.....that inseparably line it, as connective, reflective and co-creative, rather than divisive."*

(Rayner, 2005; pp. 5 <sup>Footnote 1</sup>)

The concept of 'Inclusionality' allows movement across distinctive boundaries. These could be boundaries found between departments in organizations (see section 3.9, pp. 188), these could be boundaries between people (see section 4.5, pp. 251) or these could be boundaries created between 'reductionistic' theories. There are many types of boundaries.

Inclusionality introduces the concept of 'variable fluidity' in conjunction with the concept of space between us, around us and within us. Rayner (2005, pp. 6) compares this with being 'solutes' and 'solvents'.

*"We are like solutes, which, together with the solvent can produce a solution full of creative potential. Hopefully, we may thereby find a richer, more peaceful and environmentally sustainable way of living together, seeing ourselves as inclusions of the solution rather than rationalistically as solutes abstracted apart from the solvent that brings us into life – individual (dis)contents abstracted from a spiral context."*

(Alan Rayner, 2005, pp. 6)

It is the introduction within traditional management theory of the concept of variable fluidity and the way space can be creatively 'used' I claim as an original and new contribution to my epistemology and knowledge. Rayner's concept is that we are all 'connected (dynamically continuous) to each other through a fluid and permeable space', and that it is the emergent and creative recognition of the possibilities within this space that allow boundaries to be fluidized.

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Footnote 1: [www.datadiwan.de/SciMedNet/Leadarts?Rayner\\_Inclusionality.htm](http://www.datadiwan.de/SciMedNet/Leadarts?Rayner_Inclusionality.htm)

It is this 'poetic language' that I recognise. I often describe myself as the 'glue' between people, departments and theories. This thesis will use many quotes in a 'poetic' rather than a 'literal' way to clarify the emergence of my ontology and relational epistemology.

This thesis will also use the concept of 'reflective comments' within all the chapters and sections. Because this thesis was written over a long period of time, because of the ongoing emergence of my 'Living Theory', because of my developing epistemology, I have added reflective comments that demonstrate cycles of active inquiry as part of my ongoing development. This is how I have resolved the changes in my language over the years that I have been writing and researching this thesis to be evident, without the need to re-write this thesis in the light of my current understanding. This thesis is at this moment in time a reflection of my knowledge, but at the same time I ask the reader to recognise that it is also an ongoing inquiry.

The concept of 'Inclusionality' as described is a theory. But my 'Living Practice' is about being a source of help in changing the situations people find themselves in. Simpson and Johnson (2006, pp.6) describe what the outcome could look like, and what would be visible as the outcome of an emergent, Inclusional process where people 'fluidize boundaries' and use the 'space' between them creatively (see the quote by Simpson & Johnson, pp. 293).

*"In fact their success suggests a well-developed sociality that allowed players to read the emerging situation and anticipate each other's moves within the flow of the game. This in turn, freed them to take risks and to improvise as play proceeded, frequently surprising their opponents and delighting their fans with totally unexpected moves."*

*(Simpson, B and Johnson, G; 2006, pp. 6)*

This thesis therefore introduces the concept of "The Edge of Fluidity" as a practical, Inclusional, local and distinctive process to fluidize boundaries. The 'Edge of Fluidity' as a process, allows the Inclusional, co-creative design of a creative 'space' required to help people 'read emerging situations' and to create and implement new ways of being.

The 'Edge of Fluidity' is different from the 'Edge of Chaos' (Stacey, 1996 see also pp. 186 in this thesis) because it allows movement from linearity to non-linearity by design and back. The concept of 'Edge of Chaos' describes a rationalistic model of movement from non-linearity to linearity. Chaos is imposed and the process will restore 'order'. The 'Edge of Fluidity' assumes that there are many elements that are in a linear state, but allows for distinctive changes to be

explored by deliberately moving a particular area of inquiry, concern or a wish for development from linearity to non-linearity and back.

Therefore this thesis claims that using the concept of Inclusional within traditional management theories, to develop an emergent and Inclusional 'Edge of Fluidity' process to utilize the creative space in, between and around us to fluidize boundaries to create change and development, is the creation of new knowledge.

This thesis will demonstrate how I have used my current and past practice to improve my understanding of my ontology as a 'Change Agent' in my increasingly 'Inclusional' theoretical and practical approaches (my Inclusional epistemology) to being or becoming a 'Co-Creative Catalyst for organizational change', by transforming the way 'Change Management' within industrial settings can be approached, by creating 'fluidity' across boundaries and the creation of a co-receptive space. In this way this thesis creates its own 'Living Theory'.

In my practice, co-creating a space at the 'Edge of Fluidity', I have observed that there are two important areas' that need further reflection. These are personal development and the influence of economic theories and practices as systematic barriers to fluidizing boundaries. This thesis will discuss both in detail.

This thesis will critically engage with personal development, and use existing theory within the field of personal development. In my practice I have found that being in a space that fluidizes boundaries, requires trust, humility, openness, a belief in other people's creative skills and willingness to co-create. At the same time living at the 'Edge of Fluidity', for me and what I have observed with other people, is a scary place to be because the outcomes are not certain. People have to live with ambiguity, uncertainty and a belief in other people that they will do what they said they will do or the best possible efforts within their ability. Therefore this thesis engages with distinctive theories of personal development.

All theories seem to express a linear progression in development, a sequential set of identifiable development stages. This thesis will not engage with these stages of development as being better or worse. Rather, this thesis will engage with these theories from a position of recognizing the influence of development as both a goal of Inclusional relational change, and as an enabler in co-creating emergent space for the individual or social formations to be in. This thesis will also recognise that within individuals and social formations, that there is a possibility to have various development stage attributes, as described by these theories, relating to various aspects of an individuals or social formations engagement with others or organizations. The theories of

development are important as a reference point for a Co-Creative Catalyst to help in the design of the creative space, as part of creating 'The Edge of Fluidity'. These theories create reference points for engagement with the individual participants, and can be used as 'tools' to enhance the creation of the right conditions for emergent, creative and non-linear relational and Inclusional conversations between people.

Further related to my practice, set in industrial organizations and in a 'for profit' environment, it seems that recognizing boundaries as places of integration or differentiation in terms of financial impact is important.

Within our social-economic system, financial considerations are an important consideration. It is a fundamental pillar on which our Western society is founded. To ignore this in the co-creative design of solutions for change is to ignore a dominant force against change. It is for this reason that this 'Living Theory' thesis engages with the economic domain, and places it as a fundamental barrier to change if not recognised. Embracing economic theory within a 'Living Theory' thesis is new and unique. Therefore this is a further claim to originality that this thesis makes.

These are the key concepts that this thesis will examine.

There are two further questions in relation to claims to knowledge that need to be examined in this thesis:

1. What has this thesis done for me and others?
2. How do I know and describe that this concept works?

This thesis is my 'Unit of Appraisal' (see page 60). This thesis shows through the narrative how I and my practice have changed. I describe the challenges and opportunities arising from my various roles within the context of my evolving practice.

I have developed, in an Inclusional way, the 'Edge of Fluidity' as an Inclusional process that allows in a non-linear way creative and emergent space to be explored by individuals and social formations, to suit local change and development opportunities as identified and co-created by the participants in the process.

I present evidence in this thesis how to find representative forms for the use of data in an Inclusional and emergent process. For instance this thesis engages with the use of data (Tufte, 2004 on pp. 121), and with alternative forms of data representation (Eisner, 1997 & 1998). This

thesis shows how I integrate new forms of data representation in an Inclusional way at the 'Edge of Fluidity' (Chapter 4, pp. 209).

This thesis presents data and narrative describing my personal development. Anderson (1998, pp. 16 – Appendix 7.2.1, pp. 464) writes about the lack of interpersonal skills I had, and the need to develop these in 1998. Included in this thesis, for instance on pp. 459 - 464, there are other voices commenting on my development as seen through their perspective at a later stage of development in my life. Section 4.5 (pp. 251) in this thesis reflects extensively on my own cycles of inquiry in respect of my own personal development, and how that has allowed me to develop as an Inclusional being.

What this thesis does for others is enabling individuals and social formations to co-create and internalize a process ('Edge of Fluidity') that allows triple-loop learning (McNiff, 2000, pp. 61). This concept of 'learning how to learn' allows the people to engage with each other in emergent and creative space. It is an Inclusional process that allows a 'mix and match' approach to co-construction of a place of inquiry, change and development.

It allows ownership of change to reside with the people who will be most affected by change. It allows these individuals and social formations to co-create the process and the changes to suit the local conditions best.

Proof of any 'good' Change Process is that it is sustainable (Stack, 1992). Sustainability is only possible if all the points raised above have been incorporated in the local design of the 'Edge of Fluidity'.

*What I do as a co-creative, Inclusional transformational Change Agent is to integrate the benefits of reductionistic and rational thought with creative and boundless thought ('Edge of Fluidity'); to integrate order and chaos which complement each other; to integrate individuality and freedom with structures and processes; to constantly challenge and advance my development and help others to do the same, so that dynamic relational changes can be accommodated in existing or new boundaries, to enable modification as required whilst still recognizing that there needs to be structure and order; to use concepts of the social sciences and engineering and integrate these where possible; to be totally transparent in what I do. (Reflective Comment, 2009)*

In order to help the reader of this thesis to understand some concepts that I use, I have included some short definitions or descriptions below.

Catalyst: Catalyst is a term that is derived from the field of Chemistry. A catalyst is an 'addition' to a process to change the reaction speed.

*"Catalysis is the process in which the rate of a chemical reaction is either increased or decreased by means of a chemical substance known as a catalyst. Unlike other reagents that participate in the chemical reaction, a catalyst is not consumed by the reaction itself. The catalyst may participate in multiple chemical transformations. Catalysts that speed the reaction are called positive catalysts. Catalysts that slow down the reaction are called negative catalysts or inhibitors. Substances that increases the activity of catalysts are called promoters and substances that deactivate catalysts are called catalytic poisons".*<sup>Footnote 2</sup>

In terms of a co-creative process, I would offer the following view of a catalyst. A catalyst is an enabler which creates conditions for a conversation to start analysis of a work process. A catalyst is a person who has particular knowledge, power or personality to create 'engagements'. It is a person who is able to create conditions for emergent and potential change. A catalyst is a person who either starts these or takes the conversation further once started. I call these persons in Appendix 7.2.4 (pp. 537) also 'multipliers'.

*"Catalysts for transformative learning are disorienting dilemmas", situations that do not fit one's preconceived notions. These dilemmas prompt critical reflection and the development of new ways of interpreting experiences. In this way 'Transformative learning involves reflectively transforming the beliefs, attitudes, opinions and emotional reactions that constitute our meaning schemes' "*

(Merizow, J, 1994, pp. 224)

Co-Creative: I have learnt that I can be a catalyst for an idea, but in order for the idea to work, to find acceptance and support, that idea needs to be developed by a number of people. What I mean by co-creative is that the creative process of the emergence, of the development, of the vision and possibilities needs to be co-built, co-developed, and co-created with others. As a catalyst I will at the earliest opportunity find multipliers who can help develop the idea in a participatory way. This requires me to listen with empathy and involve others' experiences.

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Footnote 2: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalysis>



Sustainable: For ideas, visions or emergent views to be accepted and carried forward, there needs to be involvement. If this cannot be achieved, an emergent view will only be carried forward as long as the creator and the passion are there. I have seen in practice that the less an idea, view or vision is accepted and internalised, the less likely it is that the emergent idea survives. See also Chapter 4.6.2 (pp. 269) for a more detailed description on sustainability.

This thesis will critically engage with theories such as Inclusional (Rayner, 2004) and the work on 'Meaningful Identities' (Beech, 2009; Hibbert and Huxham, 2005; Simpson and Carroll, 2008). This thesis will also engage with theories describing the use of narrative in constructing and transferring meaning (Huxham, Sims and Beech, 2005).

*"Identity is a concept that speaks to all of us – it is about who we are, who we are not and the features that differentiate us as 'individuals'. But identity is a paradox – we can all make claims to having an identity, but each of our claims is one of uniqueness. Identity thus makes us the same as others, at the same time as it makes each of us different from everyone else!"*

(Pullen, Beech, Sims; 2007, pp. 1)

This thesis constructs a Living Theory out of my experiences, and this is done by giving examples and illustrations and to demonstrate how these concepts are relevant in managing change, within my experiences, but also in personal development. Therefore how I construct my identity, my role and the role of a Co-Creative Catalyst in a Change Management process is an important part in transferring meaning.

I started this journey believing that management theories in themselves were the answer to everything related to organizational development.

As an Engineer, my traditional approach has been to reduce complex questions into segments and then find solutions. It is from this perspective that I started working with managerial theories to help create change in organizations. Having been trained as an Engineer is very useful in understanding patterns and logic, and translating this into a structure for me to work in. I am aware that as an Engineer I am caught in linear language and patterns, and this competes with being co-creational and Inclusional.

As an Engineer I could not cope with added demands of managing people. I needed to understand people. This can be seen in Appendix 7.2.1 (pp. 464) where Bill Anderson writes that *'I need to develop in the non technical areas'* (Project Manager Excellence).

This thesis will demonstrate how this paradox is held within me. How I can be a strong, thoughtful individual driven by a desire to understand, and yet willing to listen to others and take ideas on board.

I wanted to understand how to 'mix and match' theory, particularly in organizational development, because as a professional Change Agent I had seen many failures in Change Processes and didn't understand their origin.

My initial approach was to find ways of integrating, for instance, Senge's Systems Theories (1990, 1994 & 1999), with Argyris' theories on organizational defences (1990, 1996) and with Shaw's ideas on conversations (2002). There are many more combinations possible. As my inquiry continued, and my experiences of organizational change became more and more diverse – different organizations, different people, different languages, different countries, new learning, – it became increasingly difficult to re-assemble these separate theories into a new dynamic Living Theory. I was starting to find these separate theories, each making good sense in their own right, also created difficulties when combined. There are distinct boundaries, places where the approach is divergent and difficult to integrate.

Instead of these theories being liberating and helpful, I was beginning to find that my approach – whether reductionistic or holistic – was restrictive and confused. For instance, Shaw's concept of open and emergent conversations is in contrast with the concept of the 'Incisive Question' by Nancy Kline (2001), which is very much about focussed questioning. Both theories create conflicting views (barriers) on the concept of conversations, how they start, and their importance, and ability to generate emergence, understanding and clarity.

This thesis will make these existing theories relational to my own epistemology. I realize that I am an actor and a player at the same time in this epistemology, and that this epistemology reflects large parts of who I am.

*“More fundamentally it is about the social processes involved in naming, fixing and transforming the social aspects of organizations and the social actors engaging in organizing and/or being organized. These processes are translation (in transferring meaning from one language to another), transformation (the focus on aspects of change – social, organizational, and/or discursive change) and transgressions (alternative readings of organizational phenomena and the less obvious aspects of organizing).”*

(Oswick, 2008, pp. 2)

*Oswick refers to the main issues concerning organizational change. Social processes in an organization need to be understood and acknowledged in addition to the technical and organizational processes. For a transformation to occur the emergent issues need to be translated into something all participants understand and then put into action (transformed). Therefore all the actors need to be playing on the same field, with the same ball, with the same intent. This doesn't always happen, there are transgressions: either intentional or not. They are barriers to change.*

*For a sustainable change all these elements need to be understood and acknowledged. If one is over looked, then the whole process becomes sub-optimal, and a non sustainable change is created (Reflective comment, 2009).*

What I am looking for is a way, a method or a concept to be able to better integrate distinctive theories where they diverge. Instead of divergent and distinct boundaries between concepts, I am looking for a 'space' where concepts and ideas integrate through 'fluid boundaries'. Can both concepts be true at the same time? How can they not be mutually exclusive? This is a concept that is seen within Improvisational Theatre <sup>Footnote 3</sup> where actors use improvisational techniques to perform spontaneously. They use the audience for inspiration as to what the topics and theme of the play are.

It is in the quest for a 'space of integration' of concepts in management theory and organizational development in this thesis that I will demonstrate that the nature of my living boundaries is dynamic and continually changing. I now look very differently at the dynamic configuration of space that constitutes my relational boundaries. I see space as a continuum of individual development levels that continually and simultaneously influence each other. I see this space as an enabler for relational interactions, where all participants play a role in creating a new paradigm that is valid for all (including me) for the particular issues in a local setting. Every setting is unique, because of the unique mix of actors, identities, development levels, issues that require improvement and boundaries that are in play.

I see the notion of development levels within individuals at the same time important to what can be achieved within a particular social formation. Development levels are different for each individual. There can be varying levels of development within each individual depending on subject, emotion and skill set. This is neither good nor bad; it is creating an awareness of the possibilities within the creative space. I want to stress that this notion is equally not a form of

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Footnote 3: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Improvisational\\_theatre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Improvisational_theatre)

measurement and/or judgement on or about individuals.

The way that this space is perceived is influenced by how language is used. Language can unite and divide by the choice of words. The way we position ourselves and how we interact with structures around us depends on how language is used. It is not just language, but also our behaviour to create and transfer meaning and intent. It is also about trust and core values.

A key intention therefore in this thesis is to engage with the concept of boundaries, and to understand how boundaries can be made 'fluid'.

I see myself as a dynamic inclusion in the organization that I work with. I see my passion as being able to help unlock embedded knowledge. I bring a receptive spatial influence into play that can help create and sustain fluid boundaries. I am in a dynamic relation with others. I help create transparency and do this in relation with others. I see myself as a Co-Creative Catalyst.

I embrace continuous learning, with a shift away from my linear, engineering, Newtonian and reductionist viewpoints to a more Inclusional, non-linear way of being, never forgetting that both ways of viewing the world can and should be Inclusional.

Simultaneously I value my engineering background, and I want to retain both these influences in an Inclusional and co-constructive way in what it is I do. This thesis will show this approach by the way the language changes; the concepts and the various case-studies are integrated and included. Throughout this thesis the language changes from Change Agent to Co-Creative Catalyst, from rationality to Inclusionality, from blame to co-creation and acceptance (tolerance, trust, listening, etc.).

*I talk about boundaries within systems, concepts and organizations, and I will also show how I as a person, created a boundary through my actions, my being in relation to others that mitigated against change. How my identity, and the way I saw my role got in the way. This is an important learning for me. This is my 'shadow' (Barry, 2008) (Reflective Comment, 2009).*

An important concept in this thesis is the 'Edge of Chaos' and how I believe this could be transformed into the 'Edge of Fluidity'. Flood (1999, 2000) uses the 'Edge of Chaos' to describe how out of chaos order can be created. Flood uses this concept not only in natural settings, but also as a model for organizational development. A 'disturbance' in the equilibrium leads to a new balance and a new order.

This concept in itself is not fluid. There is a rigid geometry underlying his concept, which is enshrined in the objective rationality of Complexity theory. This theory does not, for instance, describe how the other theories are integrated at the 'Edge of Chaos'. There is again an impositional definition of boundaries, and the process is not fluid in itself. It is here that the concept of Inclusionality (Rayner, 2003) can help.

This thesis will engage with the concept of Inclusionality and show how this can be integrated with current concepts of organizational behaviour and management theory in a way that facilitates organizational transformation. Inclusionality provides a catalytic space for the dynamic integration of participatory techniques and other theories, and allows boundaries to become more fluid due to interrelational cooperation and co-creativity.

I introduce this as a process to help people to reach the 'Edge of Fluidity'. This process is relationally dynamic, and is a sustainable concept that recognizes all resistances, and involutes the current ideology within management theory from discrete, objective boundaries, to distinct, fluid boundaries where management theories can be integrated and co-evolve creatively. I demonstrate how to introduce co-creative evolutionary processes into organizational structures.

The 'Edge of Fluidity' is a place where people can 'dream' together or as individuals. It is about being able to think 'outside and beyond the box' in a blameless, open and receptive space. It is a space where a new paradigm can emerge; a new vision.

Simpson and Johnson (2006) describe fluidity as follows:

*"In fact their success suggests a well-developed sociality that allowed players to read the emerging situation and anticipate each other's moves within the flow of the game. This in turn, freed them to take risks and to improvise as play proceeded, frequently surprising their opponents and delighting their fans with totally unexpected moves."*

(Simpson, B and Johnson, G; 2006, pp. 6)

This description can be seen as a relational way to enhance the way people interact and anticipate each other's emergent patterns.

*Simpson and Carroll describe a method of evaluating the quality of interactions. I, as a catalyst, introduce a process that is random, emergent, which allows people to engage with each other 'safely', that does generate a predictable outcome - people working*

*together in a more well-developed sociality! I will argue in this thesis that an Inclusional, fluid and dynamic space is created and influenced by the players within themselves, and the space around them and beyond. Simpson and Johnson talk about reading emerging situations and creating patterns out of emergence. They talk about unexpected moves for people who observe this from outside. Because this pattern is repeated many times it is not random, and therefore is a predictable pattern in a particular conjuncture. People are learning in a local, emergent situation. They are developing. And this is a paradox. Some literature (Quinn, 2000; Covey, 1990; Torbert, 2001) indicates that behaviour at this level requires advanced personal development, whilst in the literature pertaining to identity formation (Beech, 2009; Hibbert and Huxham, 2005; Simpson and Carroll, 2008) and Inclusionality (Rayner, 2004) there seems to be no mention of development levels. It will be argued that development is related to the quality of the change, sustainability and speed. It is linked with how deep the learning will be (see also Chapter 3.6.2, diagram 12, pp. 154), and in turn the 'Edge of Fluidity' will create further opportunities for growth and development. This thesis engages with this from the point of view that a Co-Creative Catalyst can create conditions for a process to be emergent and be transferred and assimilated by individuals and social formations (Reflective Comment, 2009).*

This vision needs to be put into practice, implemented and built. This is a further intention of this thesis; to show that a major barrier to change is the economic system. I want to demonstrate that the implementation is not just dependent on social formations and social values, but also on the social-bureaucratic systems and processes that govern our lives, for instance Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPG 3) <sup>Footnote 4</sup>. PPG 3 sets out a required housing density per acre of land of 30 houses. This is enforced by a planning inspector when an application goes to appeal. Therefore, the local values, the traditions in style and build, the quality of life in an area can be challenged by any builder out for profit. All the builder has to do if a local council fails the application is go to appeal, and this single guideline will almost always ensure success. Profit of an individual wins out over any other community value.

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Footnote 4: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1020432883668.html>

Often human processes are reflected in terms of wealth creation. Education and health for instance are seen in economic terms; what will this contribute to the Country and what does it cost? It seems that an important measure of creativeness and contribution to our society is in terms of monetary value. Our social system and values seem to be influenced and defined by economic theory of one kind or another.

If this is the case, then this is the single most important reductionist process in our relationships that we have constructed as a society. If we disregard economic theories and do not integrate these with social theories and organizational theories of change and management, then the implementation of visions created at the 'Edge of Fluidity' will have a propensity to fail. This is one reason that a significant percentage of change projects fail. I will raise this for deliberate inclusion and more attention within Action Research and Participatory Inquiry projects, in addition to other barriers such as identities, role (Pullen, Beech, Sims, 2007 et al.) and organizational defences (Argyris; 1990; Senge, 1990, 1994, 1999).

Yunus (2007) has developed a different social economic model, and he shows that it is possible with his social business model to run a successful economic and human development program in India. Economic theory and social theory can be integrated in the creation of sustainable business. This is an Inclusional model that can be developed further into organizational development. Yunis (2007) does this in a fundamentally new way, by turning the different economic theories 'inside-out', by ignoring or changing the 'risk and returns' balance or ratio required on investments made. See Chapter 3.5 (pp. 123).

From experience I have seen that when economic systems are related to change requirements, that this is a place where definitive conditions are imposed on a Change Process, which reduces or eliminate values such as happiness, clean air, relationships, good education and a safe working environment to name a few, and replaces these with financial measures. Without addressing all value measurements as equal and valid, the financial boundary will be dominant. And therefore the 'system' invalidates the possibilities of all creative measures.

And yet I have seen that if creative responses are sought, if an effort is made to link, for instance, safety and monetary values in a creative and transparent way, then change can be co-created for a better working and living environment for all; see Appendix 7.1.2, *The 5<sup>th</sup> Man*, (pp. 357) and Appendix 7.2.2 (pp. 467).

It is the social business model created by, for instance, Yunus (2007), augmented by the concept of 'Freedom as a development level' by Sen (1999) that can be used to demonstrate that in order

to co-create better relationships and a better change for all, that these places of integration need to be explored with urgency. Sustainability is linked with increased development levels within people.

It is here also that I propose that the concept of Inclusionality, and the 'Edge of Fluidity' can integrate not just organizational transformation with social and management theories, but that this is a place where economic theory can also be integrated to bring about transformational change.

In this thesis I will explore my identity, my role and how I have developed through extensive self-reflection. Through the letters in the attachment, the reader can form an opinion of the identity that others have of me. For instance, client letters in appendices 7.2.1 (pp. 437) and 7.2.2 (pp. 467). Appendix 7.1.8 (pp. 419, *Winning a Contract*) represents my practice which I use when I engage with potential clients for a Change Management project.

This is a journey of personal change, and inner values. The opening of co-creative space is principally about inner values and the co-creation of new values to accept and integrate with others, to fluidize the boundaries. It is about a way of being in relation to other people that is transparent, that is open, and understanding, so that the question is always about the possibilities that Living Contradictions (Jack Whitehead, 2005) might be able to create when an understanding is sought about where the boundaries can be integrated.

I have written parts of this thesis over 7 years or more now. And the way this thesis is organized actually reflects some of my journey in the way the concepts, narrative and examples are written, but also in the structure of this thesis. The sequence of the topics with the thesis describes the main influences that occurred on me in terms of theories and practices (Chapter 3, pp. 77). I then explore my self-development in relation the rationalistic and reductionistic experiences gained in organizational Change Management (Chapter 4, pp. 209) and start to develop my own epistemology of change grounded in my standards of living.

This journey is reflected by the examples given. These are not just my examples, they are examples, the form, the narrative and the content of which, have developed in a participatory worldview with the people I have worked with. I have also used cycles of reflection, and invited others to reflect on my actions. This thesis claims to be a thesis based on Action Research.

*"If yours is a situation in which: people reflect and improve (or develop) their own work and their own situations; by tightly interlinking their reflection and action; and also making their experience public not only to other participants but also to*



*other persons interested in and concerned about the work and the situation, i.e. their (public) theories and practices of the work and the situation, then yours is a situation in which Action Research is occurring.”*

(Whitehead, 2009, pp. 79)

The initial part of this thesis is very linear, very Newtonian and builds on my rational past – the ‘inner’ Engineer. I have chosen not to change this style, and have resisted a major re-write because it is exactly this style I want to highlight. This thesis contains various writing styles, each with a specific use of language. It is in the evolution of my language that I can demonstrate how I as a person have developed and have become better at building and maintaining meaningful relationships, which enables me to be a co-creative influence in creating a receptive space.

My theory of being (ontology) has changed. My outlook used to be about ‘Me’ – a selfish behaviour. My values were not accommodating to others.

My ontology is now about the quality of my and others’ presence in space, and how the configuration of that space can be transformed into a creative and fluid flow of ideas and energy. This is about trust and integrity. It is about living the values that you hold. This is the 3rd major element that I want to show in this thesis.

This thesis is for me a milestone in a sense. It is the first attempt to bring a number of divergent thoughts together in a coherent and structured way that I believe to be different and challenging of accepted practice and theory. I see this thesis as a way of sharing my experiences. Maybe the numerous practical examples from industry can be seen as a gift to the wider academic community, as a way of contextualizing my epistemology.

As explained in this thesis, this text is also written with a pedagogic intent for me and my clients. The act of writing is a further journey to clarify my values and my beliefs.

In their work on ‘storytelling and the use of narrative’, Huxham, Sims and Beech (2005 pp. 33 – 36) reflect on the ‘paradoxical and convoluted transfer of meaning’. For this thesis to transfer ‘meaning’ I have to capture the imagination of the reader. I have tried to do this with various forms of representation such as video clips, case studies, narrative, papers, theoretical models, 1<sup>st</sup> person inquiry. They state:

*“The transfer of promising practices to new practitioners relies on story snippets and imagination on the part of the audience. The implication of this is that the*

*focus of attention needs to be on maximising the effectiveness of style, snippets, imagination and rehearsal, rather than achieving the simpler, 'accurate' univocal accounts of what has been done in previous practice."*

(Huxham, Sims and Beech, 2005, pp. 33 – 36)

Examining my role as a Change Agent or Co-Creative Catalyst is what I set out to do; it has become important for me to understand how I create that identity. How do I become accepted, how will people trust me, what will people I work with perceive what it is I do, and how will they then translate what it is they see, hear, feel, into giving me or giving the 'Edge of Fluidity' process I bring a chance? In doing this I need to allow time for me to understand the particular collaborative situation that exists at that time, and how this works within the local context!

*"Actors enter complex interpersonal, organizational and structural relationships with the ability to achieve both difference and compliance in their identity negotiations."*

(Simpson and Carroll, 2008, pp. 41)

Identity, as Simpson and Carroll point out, through interpersonal or structural relationships could also mean the creation (intended or not) of a constructed and perceived boundary condition; "A place of integration and/or differentiation" (Simpson and Carroll, 2008, pp. 44).

The focus of the process described in this thesis is on local, collaborative learning in a well-developed sociality; in a co-creative Inclusional way. Local, because it has to be tailored to the specific circumstances the actors find themselves in.

Local learning is defined by Hibbert and Huxham:

*"Local learning is a necessary precursor to substantive (goal oriented) learning in the sense that it is needed for the collaboration to function at any level. Secondly, since substantive learning will usually happen, whether by explicit intention or as a 'sideline' to other collaborative activities, the two types actually take place in parallel. It seems likely therefore that the two may at times be difficult to distinguish from one and other."*

(Hibbert, Huxham, 2005, pp. 63)

This thesis has been built and developed with individual pieces of work that have occurred over the last 12 years. In that period I have had to change the language (choice of words) that I use in

my practice. This is an important point to recognise, and it is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4.6.3 (pp. 279).

Local learning is related to the same types of issues as transferable learning and defined as 'enhancing understanding of the nature of collaboration and/or developing prescriptive approaches to guide [managerial] action', but it is tailored to the particular circumstance (Hibbert and Huxham, 2005, pp. 60 - 61).

Happy the Man, and happy he alone,  
He who can call today his own:  
He who, secure within, can say  
Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.

Be fair or foul or rain or shine,  
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate are mine.  
Not heaven itself upon the past has power;  
But what has been has been, and I have had my hour.

From: Horace: Odes book 3 no. 29 <sup>Footnote 5</sup>

*This poem embodies a work ethic, and an approach to life and a set of values that cannot really be put into any economic perspective, and yet they are the most important of all. And yet if I manage to transform and live a life as described, then I will be part of a group of people who will create a change for the better of all. And the outcome of that can be measured in a better quality of life, less accidents or any form of measurement that is chosen. This is what I will describe, and mean with the writings in Chapter 3 (pp. 77) in this thesis. (Reflective Comment, 2009).*

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Footnote 5: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1020432883668.html>

## 1.2. A Brief Description of the Chapters

We don't know what we don't know. But I do know that after I have been through an experience if it was comfortable and pleasurable, or never to be experienced again. I learn from my experiences. I can produce a description and explanation of my own learning from experience. I see my experience as taking place in defined systems with boundaries (Senge; 1994, 1999; Flood; 2000, 1999; Checkland; 1999). The definition <sup>Footnote 6</sup> they all use is:

*A system is an organized collection of parts (or subsystems) that are highly integrated to accomplish an overall goal. The system has various inputs, which go through certain processes to produce certain outputs, which together, accomplish the overall desired goal for the system. So a system is usually made up of many smaller systems, or subsystems.* <sup>Footnote 6</sup>

Recognising and articulating the boundaries is the first step in changing the dynamics around and within these systems; this helps me as a person be more purposeful, and allows me to live with more intent. If you like, it gives more control. When attempts at change are made at the 'right levels', boundaries can be changed.

Analysing the associated emotions and feelings, surfacing the tensions within boundaries (Senge; 1994), and then identifying the core issues that need to change, allows me to become a better Co-Creative Catalyst, a more effective person in relation with other people and my environment, providing I step into that challenge openly and willingly, with respect for others.

I learn through my actions and collaboration with others and in the process develop my capacity through the feedback received. I call this being able to 'travel a distance' in a metaphorical way. Argyris (1990, 1996) and Flood (2000) call this 'feedback loops'. It allows me to engage with people at the appropriate levels, in relation to my personal development level. I develop a skill, habit, (Covey; 1990) Intentional Arc (Quinn; 2000). Once acquired, it is not lost.

*Once acquired it is not lost is probably true, but I do feel that if I have not practiced certain skills, then I am 'rusty'. I now realize that I need to practice and I need to*

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Footnote 6: <http://managementhelp.org/systems/systems.htm>

*understand that I need to not assume that I have still got those skills and that I can just resume where I left off; for instance, conversations with empathy, or 'incisive questions' (Kline, 2001) get better with constant use and practice (Reflective Comment, 2009).*

In the interactions between all people, there are countless permutations of outcomes possible. And yet there seems to be some form of self-organization. Outcomes and patterns seem to have been reduced. We seem to have a capacity to organize order out of what seemingly is an emotional and chaotic world. This could either be the influence of the co-creative Inclusional process on a change project as it develops, or it could be a form of stabilization that is seen in nature (Gell-Mann; 2002; Kaufmann; 1993).

It is helpful to explain the purpose of each of the chapters within the thesis. What is the purpose of this thesis, where is it taking people, and how did I get there? This reflects a core value I have of showing a visible 'red thread' in any paper that I write. The 'red thread' is a logical and understandable flow in the narrative.

## **Chapter 1 From Engineer to Co-Creative Catalyst – A Living Thesis**

This chapter sets the tone for the thesis; how the thesis is built up and how this thesis evolves in terms of my epistemological development. I show my ontology is developing into a relational and Inclusional way of being with others. This chapter in essence points out what I offer in terms of knowledge advancement, and how I intend to show my development in terms of my linguistic and narrative development. The structure of the thesis reflects my ongoing development from Engineer to Co-Creative Catalyst. This chapter aims to highlight these observations and help identify the main points.

This thesis will explore and introduce the following key concepts:

- How to integrate the current body of rational, reductionistic management and behavioural knowledge into a holistic, interrelational and fluid set of complementary theories through the concept of Inclusionality. This thesis aims to bring about an involution in the current thinking and ideology within organizational transformations.
- To introduce the concept of the 'Edge of Fluidity' as an Inclusional, transformative and co-creative way of being, linked to development, both as individual and collectively in order to create variable, fluid boundaries. The 'Edge of Fluidity' creates patterns of action, emergent and random, which are Inclusional and co-creative. The concept can create a responsive, Inclusional and inviting space to develop and mature ideas.

- The influence of development, either individual or social formations, on management theories needs further examination. I will critically engage with this concept in this thesis, and relate this to concepts within Change Management.
- To demonstrate that one of the main barriers in any transformational Change Process is the economic system that we live in. This needs to be recognized in all action for development and change by the integration of economic theories into social theories. This thesis will demonstrate the creation of a Living Theory which is 'economically' inclusive.
- To show through the narrative, video clips and examples in this thesis how I have generated my own Living Theory from 'old theories' by adding 'relational existing' theories into my epistemology.
- This thesis is also meant to show my own development over time.

## **Chapter 2 Introduction**

This chapter will frame the thesis in such a way that there is clarity about my interests, the structure that I have used in this thesis, and my goals in writing this thesis.

It sets out the foundation and expectations for the thesis. This chapter also sets the standards of judgement for validating the claims and comments made. In addition this chapter describes how the form of the thesis was created and how it can be judged. This thesis is my 'Unit of Appraisal', and contains both propositional and dialectic forms of logic, which are embraced within 'Inclusional' logic. These are Inclusional, as is the purpose of this thesis.

This chapter aims to clarify what I see as important ways to view this thesis, and explains why I have taken certain approaches in my writing or the inclusion of evidence.

## **Chapter 3 Perspectives on Theory and Tools**

In writing up this thesis, and also in my quest for understanding and knowledge, I have come across a number of concepts, theories and writers that have influenced my thinking.

It is in this chapter that I have attempted to draw together the major strands of this body of knowledge and distil this down to manageable and relevant chunks of theory that matter to me, and I use in my current practice. I start this chapter with a number of perspectives on Change Management; what this is and could be. The process of creating change is what underlies this thesis, and particularly my role in this. This could be initially as a Change Agent or later as a Co-Creative Catalyst. This is a logical next step that I explore; Change Agency? What can be understood under that name? Change can be made incrementally or in bigger steps. This can be made visible in certain ways, and that needs to be incorporated in any Change Process. I also look at and explore various frameworks that have shaped my perspectives on change.

Within this thesis, I look at barriers for change, and have identified the financial systems as a major point of interest. I explore this and underlying concepts more, mainly to build understanding and to visibly explore the impact that financial and economic theory has on Change Management. Development levels are a further fundamental building block in creating change. This will also be further explored in terms of how one can understand the role of development levels in a Change Process.

All change is created through conversations. This concept is further explored in this thesis, as well as creative theories such as 'The Edge of Chaos', Boundaries and Inclusionality. These are some of the building blocks for explaining how my epistemology in this thesis has evolved.

I accept that the authors quoted have points to make, based on research in a particular field. I equally want to explore, how in certain circumstances, these viewpoints present difficulties in transforming my practice. My aim in this chapter is to start to engage with this theory, and I have identified areas within managing change where I believe the addition to knowledge can be useful.

#### **Chapter 4 Distance Travelled**

It is here that I will start to detail my thoughts and my processes further. It is here that discussion will be generated on reaching a new and different understanding and perspective on what it is a Change Agent does, and how a Change Agent can improve his practice and start to develop towards a Co-Creative Catalyst through an Inclusional and relational epistemology.

This is where I want to link my growth, through my stories and theories to what a Change Agent actually does, i.e. what it is I do and why I believe that these viewpoints are an important addition to the way Change Management is conducted. The detail of this chapter is based on theory generally available, as well as my practice. It is the combination of both and the new body of theory that I introduce to help me become a more effective Change Agent that is important to me as a researcher. It is in this chapter that I will also start to demonstrate what it is that makes a Change Agent different from a Co-Creative Catalyst and how this change can be linked to an expansion from the traditional management theories, including 'Chaos' theory and 'Complexity' theory, with the introduction of 'Inclusionality' as a framework to being able to hold all these theories under a single, integrated 'umbrella'.

I will demonstrate that being a 'Co-Creative Catalyst' is an evolution on a further development level, within the management concept known as Change Management, or Organizational Change Agent. This development is dependent on the ability of the facilitator to develop his/her own 'way of being'. Hence the title 'distance travelled', because this chapter relates directly to the

integration of personal development, development of the people that are seeking the change, and creating an integrated, Inclusional framework for development that has been co-created.

## **Chapter 5 Epilogue**

It is the final chapter of this thesis and it aims to show where I have come from, what it is I am practicing today and where I would like to expand my practice to. It is my next steps and where I would like to expand my practice and knowledge.

This chapter is about 'what is next for me', where will my journey go next? This chapter also aims to engage with the significant observations made in this thesis.

I explore here what it is I think the theory of Inclusionality can do to help transform Management Theory and help to create the 'Edge of Fluidity' as a place of creative, relational thought, and how this can be built into Change Management in general. This chapter will demonstrate that current theories can all be used to create the right environment for 'Inclusional' change, provided certain key elements are taken into consideration with the design of a Change Management process, and that careful attention is paid to the 'Inclusion' of others within the creation of the Change Management processes. I have demonstrated this in Appendix 7.1.8 (pp. 419) where I show that within Industry there is excitement and a demand for a more Inclusional approach, because this demonstrates paying attention to the local requirements.

## **Chapter 6 Bibliography**

This chapter lists all the references within the thesis. I have split the reference list into 3 main chapters:

- Books , Publications, thesis and other written materials
- Multimedia audio-visual materials

The books, papers and references are in alphabetical order.

There is no other reason for the divisions used than format of the reference. The copies of the CD's are included after the appendices, and can be played on any computer or television format.

## **Chapter 7 Appendices**

This chapter contains all the appendices referred to within this thesis. The appendices are a selection of materials that have been co-authored with the participants in the Change Process and have been published at industry specific forums or in Industry wide conferences. Permission has been given to use the data and the names.



The appendices also contain a set of stories that are significant in changing my thinking, and my practice. All these stories are based on 'real' situations and relate to significant aspects that are relevant to points made in this thesis.

Within the text, I have referred to material within the appendices, as either an explanation or as an example of how I use a particular methodology within my practice.

The appendices contain a large number of comments from individuals who I have worked with within a Change Management Process, and who have played, in one way or another, a significant part in the way a particular project has evolved. This influence is also directly relevant in how a particular presentation has been shaped, or how data have been collated and represented. Never the less, all the work collated within the appendices has been published (distributed) under my responsibility within the various companies that they relate to, and I am accountable for the content.

