relationships and agreements in need of careful monitoring. In invoking coordination, speakers signal different goals with respect to what Jeff Smith refers to as "the plan" (inclusive we; everyone acting together) – a logic of communicative action that they maintain and reaffirm through strategies of indirect communication (avoidance; hedging; rhetorical questions) and violate through direct communication (questioning; expression of dissatisfaction and outright concern).

« 16 » In the end, the situated model of coordination upheld by Jeff Smith did in fact lead to delayed evacuations and toward what subsequently became known as the social reality model: failure of coordination. But while *failure of coordination* theorizes communicative action during Katrina, it does not get us closer to a practical program (§20) for understanding how different reality models play out in actual communication.

« 17 » Re-writing constructivism is not a matter of philosophical argumentation. I invite Schmidt to set argumentation aside and engage instead in empirical illustrations.

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Perceiving "Things" and "Objects" from Within Processes: Resolutions Situated in Practices

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> Upshot · Schmidt suggests a resolution to what he calls "the reality problem" by claiming that we can take *processes* as "the basis for the emergence of realities." Schmidt's resolution, however, seems to me to be merely a *theoretical* resolution – a re-conceptualization – whereas I think a more *practical reorientation* is required: we need to relate ourselves directly to our surroundings in terms of our living, bodily responsiveness, instead of indirectly in terms of a theoretical framework.

« 1 » In his paper "From Objects to Processes," Siegfried J. Schmidt suggests that "philosophical problems similar to the reality problem cannot be solved but can only be resolved – an argument deeply rooted in Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy" (§2), and he later notes: "A consistent orientation towards processes allows the two nasty traditional problems of 'representation' and 'reference' to be resolved. Processes do not represent 'reality'; instead they produce real-for-us results" (§32). In my comments here, I would have liked resolutely to agree with him, for there are a great many sentences in his paper that I agree with. I am especially in agreement with him when he notes that "Perception and cognition are bound to the actor's body, are performed in a situation connected with the body, and are insolvably intertwined with the experience, knowledge, emotion, and memories an actor has acquired during his life" (§15). For, as I see it, the shift away from trying to arrive at the solution to a problem in thought, towards arriving at a resolution of it through a re-orientation à la Wittgenstein, is crucial. Thus, along with Schmidt, I also want to suggest that a radical reorientation towards what is real for us is required. But when he says: "…

there is no acting without communication and no communication without acting, this means that the question of what reality 'is' is replaced by an analysis of what we 'do' to make something 'real.' In other words: processes form the basis for the emergence of realities" (§16, my emphasis), I begin to have worries.

« 2 » Seeking *solutions* to *problems* in arguments about conceptualizations cannot, as I understand Wittgenstein's aim in his philosophical investigations, produce the kind of resolution of our difficulties we desire. "It is not our aim to refine or complete the system of rules for the use of our words in unheard-of ways," he says. "For the clarity that we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that the philosophical problems should *completely* disappear" (Wittgenstein 1953, no. 133). In other words, he is not concerned to "advance any kind of theory... We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place" (ibid: no. 109). And what appropriate descriptions can do for us – if we can of course provide them – is *to bring to our notice* facets and subtleties of events occurring in our *relations to our surroundings* as they irreversibly unfold. His aim in his investigations is to produce "just that understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'" (ibid: no. 122), that is, connections or relations within and among phenomena that we have not previously "seen."

« 3 » To explicate further the importance of what Wittgenstein is claiming here – in talking of "seeing connections" – we need to note a remark he makes on:

> ❝ Two uses of the word 'see.' The one: 'What do you see there?' – 'I see this' (and then a description, a drawing, a copy). The other: 'I see a likeness between these two faces' – let the man I tell this to be seeing the faces as clearly as I do myself. The importance of this is *the difference of category* between the two 'objects' of sight. ❞ (Wittgenstein 1953: 193, my emphasis)

« 4 » And, as Gilbert Ryle (1949) puts it, we make a "category mistake" when we fail to recognize that an utterance, say – as an *organized* collection of observable but disparate entities – is of a different logical type or category from the separate entities into which it can be analyzed. Such a mistake is

equivalent to trying to describe flowing processes in terms of their frozen products – we lose the relational nature of the unfolding facets of their flow.

« 5 » The most notable sphere in which we continually make such mistakes is in our attempts to *describe* human activities. For, as Ryle (1949) points out, we continually use "achievement-verbs" when we should be providing an "orchestrated" sequence of "task-verbs," along with their criteria of satisfaction – that is, we talk of "getting it" when we really should speak only of "tryings." It is the *way* in which a person looks or listens that in large part determines what they will hear or see. Hearing something, or seeing something, is an outcome of how they approach the tasks of listening or looking, what anticipations they bring, as a result of their developmental experiences, to the situation in which what they can hear or see is important. Ryle writes,

> Verbs like 'spell,' 'catch,' 'solve,' 'find,' 'win,' 'cure,' 'score,' 'deceive,' 'persuade,' 'arrive,' and countless others signify not merely that some performance has been gone through, but also that something has been brought off by the agent going through it. They are verbs of success. (Ryle 1949: 125)

« 6 » The people achieving these performances are *responsible* for these performances, and "a person's performance is described as careful or skilful, if in his operations he is ready to detect and correct lapses, to repeat and improve upon successes, to profit from the examples of others and so forth. He applies criteria in performing critically, that is, in trying to get things right" (ibid: 29).

« 7 » But descriptions only in terms of *achievements* preclude the possibility of error and the need for *judgments* in the execution of our tasks. Category mistakes or mistakes in logical type can occur, then, *when in the service of achieving general explanations*, we try to describe people's activities (processes) in terms of their general outcomes rather than in terms of their unfolding, particular, sequential details in particular circumstances.

« 8 » As a consequence, instead of attending to something out in the world that can be *seen*, that can be *pointed out*, we end up talking of mysterious and imaginary entities, located somewhere in a Platonic world

of ideas, whose only function is to play a part in our abstract theorizing. We must return to talking always *from within* a context or situation. It is this noticing that the particulars before us can be *re-organized* in a way different from how they first appeared to us that is crucial to our being an agent in our own human affairs.

« 9 » Why have we not previously noticed these important connections and relations of our actions to their surroundings in the past? Because, as Wittgenstein (1953) sees it, we have sought the kinds of theoretical resolutions that Schmidt is still seeking in his article. While such resolutions may seem to satisfy the tensions that can arise in us as we discuss "reality" in our talk *about* it in our academic discussions in seminar rooms or conference halls, they will fail to work in our everyday practices. For such theoretical "resolutions" are founded in *idealizations* proposed by individuals as a positive conceptual foundation from which we can, we assume, unambiguously derive all the other characteristics of a *thing's* nature (in the case here, the general nature of processes as proposed by Schmidt).

« 10 » Such an idealization is a "stripped down" and de-contextualized account of a supposedly self-contained "entity," whose properties can be described as inhering solely within itself and that can exist as the entity it is in isolation from its surroundings. – As such, it "stands in the way of our seeing the use of [a] word as it is" (no. 305).

> The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not *a result of investigation*: it was a requirement.)... – We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground! (Wittgenstein 1953, no. 107)

« 11 » The ignored contextual details matter.

« 12 » There is a shift of focus away from a deliberate fixating on seemingly separately existing, self-contained entities that need to be inter-related with other such entities in terms of rules, laws, or principles of one kind or another – the thinking in terms of

categories that is very apparent in Schmidt's article – towards attending to describable *aspects* that, so to speak, spontaneously make themselves known to us from within our engagement in an in-principle indivisible whole. This shift is the major revolution in our thinking about human behaviour that is implicit in Wittgenstein's whole approach in his *Philosophical Investigations*. So, although he notes, "it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game" (Wittgenstein 1969, no. 204), this is not to be taken as a theoretical statement – as Schmidt seems to be claiming in §16 (quoted above). We need to ask ourselves what kind of acting was it that allowed us to learn our use of language – to learn our creative use of words in providing subtle descriptions of particular situations in ways that do justice to their uniqueness – in the first place?

« 13 » Clearly, we cannot have learned it by those around us offering what Schimdt calls "positings" (§22). While such a possibility might be available to us as intellectually active adults, as young infants we lack such well-defined forms of knowledge. If we are later to gain this kind of "knowledge" of the "things" around us, we must first be able to recognize them and move around in relation to them in our everyday practices as the "things" they "are," that is, as the "things" they are taken to be by the others around us – such practical recognitions cannot be taught us at this stage by presenting us, linguistically, with *positings* requiring us to be selective by making "more or less conscious decisions" (§25). For the ability to say explicitly, "This is of type A (but not of Type B or X)," requires our already having come to know, *implicitly in our bodily activities*, what A-ness, B-ness, and X-ness is. This capacity to orient towards the "what-ness of things" in our surroundings in the same manner as those around us, and to *judge* that this is indeed an A and not a B or X, is something we acquire in the course of our spontaneous involvements with these others. It is something our parents teach us, spontaneously, in the course of their being attentive to what they sense as our "needs," the unsatisfied tensions they can perceive us as feeling in the incipient intentions they can see us as *trying* to execute, as they feed, comfort, play, and otherwise actively interact with us. It is our

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"tryings" (and "failings") that are important to them at this stage in our development, not our achievements (see the discussion above of Ryle's distinction between "task-verbs" and "achievement-verbs").

« 14 » Thus I cannot agree with the overall *theoretical* and *problem-solving* thrust of the resolution that Schmidt proposes, for I cannot see the resolution desired as being achieved by "changing arguments" (§§6–16). Not only do I prefer a more *practice relevant* kind of resolution – as an aspect of a long-term commitment to work with practitioners in both psychotherapy and in organizations – but I think that this is the only kind of resolution possible. Further, although I agree with Schmidt that the shift to a process orientation is required (see Shotter 2010), I think that the nature of the re-orientation he proposes – *a re-orientation in terms of a reconceptualization* – is nowhere near radical enough. As I see it, a difficulty of orientation is not a *problem* that can be solved by thinking differently. As I see it, his statement in (§32) – that an "orientation to processes" allows us to resolve previous troubling problems – still leaves us with yet another indeterminacy requiring resolution: what in practice does an "orientation to processes" look like, sound like, feel like, and so on: how can it actually be expressed? And how can such an orientation be acquired? Schmidt seems to assume that it can be acquired simply by our choosing to adopt it if one is persuaded by a convincing argument for doing so; I think not.

« 15 » The kind of reorientation we need, I think, is a focus on the *just-happening* events occurring within the *spontaneously* responsive involvements of growing and living forms, both with each other and with all the other othernesses in their surroundings – as well as a focus on *their* own particular and unique ways of coming-into-being. Each one requires understanding in its own unique way. While we can come to an understanding of a dead form in terms of objective, explanatory theories representing the sequence of events supposed to have caused it, a quite different form of engaged, responsive understanding becomes available to us *from within* our living involvements with a particular living form (Shotter 2005). The resolution of what is to count as "real" for us in such situations can, it seems to me,

be achieved in different ways in different situations according to the different "ends in view" of the parties involved. However the study of the conditions making such situated resolutions in practice possible cannot, I feel, be helped by the adoption of yet another *theoretical* approach to these issues. Another, much more *in practices* approach is needed; but that is work for another day.

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…And so on and so on and so and so on and so…

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> Upshot · Interested in the practical side of philosophy, I tell a story as an example of the never-ending process of life and add some questions: which stories can we tell that undermine and complement our traditions, emotions, abstract rationality, and mainstream ideologies?

« 1 » Two women live in the same building and they are often together in the flat of one on the third floor. But one day they argue and the other woman leaves the flat. The abandoned woman, now alone in the flat, is furious. In this mental state she goes downstairs and crosses the street in front of the house. Brakes screech; the truck stops in time; the driver shouts at the woman. She apologizes for her absent-mindedness and invites the driver for lunch. They meet several times; they find each other likeable. She invites him to move into her flat. He agrees. But after a while they fall out and the woman breaks up with him. By chance, she meets

her former friend. They discuss their situation frankly. They find each other likeable again. They decide to spend time with each other again in the flat on the third floor

« 2 » This is the plot for a sensitive and rather sentimental movie: *Sommer vorm Balkon (Summer at the Balcony)*. And the last picture of this film is a wonderful impression of *process*: a black screen and endlessly running across screen: "…and so on and so on and so on and so on and so on and so on and so on and so on and so…" Of course, it will not only be an endless repetition because the future bears uncountable influences and new situations to which we have to react and/or that we coproduce. But – as far as we can see – there will be no end. The show must go on, and not only the show: practice. Each observer will start the story from his "point" and each observer can cut it or continue at any point, but nobody knows what the next sentence will be and the story remains endless. Using some common conventions or experiences we could believe – and sometimes we do – that we have come to a mutual agreement or even an understanding of the situation. At that moment it will be enough for practical acting – "normality."

« 3 » In this commentary I am interested in process orientation or processuality. My perspective is the perspective of a teacher of business administration who is engaged in a scientific view on constructions and deconstructions and on the limits of management practice and management science, both with practical and scientific aims.

« 4 » For more or less three decades, an increasing amount of interdisciplinary-oriented authors on business administration and organizational theory have been "process orientation" as a keyword to signalize a contemporary, sophisticated idea of organizational behavior and leadership. In less interdisciplinary-oriented writings, strictly orientated on micro-economics, you may also find this keyword but in the end the conclusions are no more than hints referring to a need for the realization of a model or a proposal to take more time than one normally expects. The explanation attempted is that unexpected influences of competitors, employees, shareholders and stakeholders, climate, law, external incentives, traditions, emotions, conventions,