

## Preface

“‘In the beginning was the deed.’” (Goethe’s *Faust I*, cited in Wittgenstein, 1969, § 402)

Actually, this preface was written rather at the end than in the beginning of the process of writing this thesis. I found this process to be inspiring, painful, self-actualizing, torturous, sweeping, and disillusioning. These oscillating feelings are probably part of every process of writing a PhD thesis (at least I’m not aware of colleagues who felt completely different about it). At the same time, the process is always characterized by a beginning and an end (otherwise, this book would not be here right now).

The beginnings of this piece of work date back to a phone talk in the summer of 2008 which I have never forgot. A voice then told me that my application had been accepted – or in German: “Gehen Sie davon aus, Sie sind an Board.” I am particularly thankful to Professor Dr. Max J. Ringlstetter who gave me the opportunity to write “something that looks like a dissertation” and his dedicated supervision of this writing process which I found to be very inspiring. I also want to thank Professor Dr. Joachim Genosko for his willingness to serve as co-supervisor.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Walburga Mosburger for the ongoing support with administrative matters – but first and foremost for her personal support throughout the last couple of years. Her continuous dedication is priceless and one of the secrets of the department’s harmonious atmosphere and productivity.

That this piece of work not only has a beginning but has also been carried out to an end is also due to the support of several friends and colleagues whom I don’t want to leave unmentioned here. I want to thank Dr. Christoph Schwarz for his friendship during all these years and for his help with creating the final draft of this dissertation. It is not only on the soccer field that he knows when to tackle and to provide valuable corrections to the course of the game. I would also like to thank Dr. Sebastian Rauber whose contentual contribution to our conference paper for the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Process Symposium gave me the opportunity to enjoy the summer of 2011 in sunny Greece in great company. I am very indebted to Dr. Tilo Polster and his extraordinary sense of

humor which made some of the less pleasant moments of writing this thesis much more tolerable. I want to thank the whole LSR team for the collegiality and cooperation, particularly Dr. Christian Gebhardt and Dr. Simone Kansy. Last but not least I want to thank the former department head at betapharm, Dr. Thomas Endreß, for encouraging me to pursue a PhD degree after all.

I feel honored that I was given the privilege of visiting the Center for Process Studies in early 2011 and conducting research in its unique library. I am particularly indebted to Dr. John Quiring who acted as my supervisor and primary contact during my stay in Claremont, CA. I will never forget the cordial reception by Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr. and the lunch we had together. At the time of writing this preface, CPS is celebrating Dr. Cobb's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I hope it's a great one and I'm sure that his intellectual curiosity and openness will inspire many more scholars interested in process thought and related areas. The financial support that allowed me to travel to the US in the first place was provided by the German Academic Exchange Foundation (DAAD) which I appreciate very much. The fact that I was able to fund my PhD project to its ultimate end is due to a generous 12-month scholarship that the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung provided me with. It is not only the financial support of my PhD work for which I have to thank this wonderful group of people in Hamburg, Germany. Moreover, I am particularly thankful for the discussions and the comments that I received at numerous conferences and workshops which allowed me to present my work and challenge my own course of thinking.

Key to successfully finishing a PhD thesis is having an environment which provides the candidate with the necessary freedom and support. My family and friends created such an environment for me. This piece of work is dedicated to them.

All the people mentioned in this preface significantly contributed to me eventually finishing this PhD thesis and thus bringing the process to an end. For me personally, this means that a new beginning is now to come. I am looking forward to further shared beginnings and deeds in the future.

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Strategy Tools as Symbolic Objects in Managerial  
Language Games

Toward a Radical Constructivist Process Perspective

Djurić, D.

2015, XVII, 238 p. 16 illus., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-658-09664-9