Changing the social imaginary

THEORY & POLITICS

THEATRE & PEDAGOGY

T.P.1

The theoretical foundation

The projects

The organization

“How to change the global society so that a humane, democratic and sustainable life in dignity becomes possible for everyone on a living planet?”

EDITION T.P.1
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Stockholm, 2020

Edition T.P.1

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1 The idea

A new compass

T.P.1 is dedicated to exploring the idea of being humane (related to the ones of social justice and empathy), and combines practical (arts) education with academic research and research in political activism. It aims to contribute to the needed sustainable transformation of our societies, confronted with the climate and ecological crisis.

Following the question of how to describe a democratic humane “spirit”, one can start from a rather magical phenomenon: what is it that makes societies, works of art, a gaze or an attitude humane? (Traditional western examples are Cervantes Don Quixote, Astrid Lindgren's children's books, Hermione in "Harry Potter", but also works of art like Dicken's novels.) How can a little gesture or a spot of paint evoke a humane dimension in us humans? Why can we be bewitched by these narratives and characters? They seem to represent an idea: the idea of being humane. And this idea seems to be even more important and fundamental, but somehow linked to the ones of justice, freedom, goodness and beauty. If we want to build a global society which tackles the challenge of climate change, artificial intelligence and social inequality and provides the possibilities of a life in dignity for all of us within the planetary boundaries, we need a compass which holds together the educational institutions with the economic and ecological ones; and this could be just the idea of being humane. So the basic thought of this enterprise.
The core element of this compass seems to consist of being able to see through relations of dominance, to play with them and go beyond them towards real democratic relations of exchange and meetings at eye-level. And to understand and be able to establish social and political spaces which allow this exchange and provide the resources. In the end, democracy means: that everyone has equally one vote, one voice; T.P.1 tries to provide a place where these voices can be developed, together.

*Not only T.P.1*

The dream which guided the development of T.P.1 was: there should be a TP in a lot of cities, a place where people can meet, talk, improvise, transform themselves and their community on the one “internal” side, and organise themselves and change the society on the “external” – taking the climate and sustainability crisis seriously, reacting in non-violent direct action and with creativity and solidarity. And eventually, so the dream, there would be an international network of people who are determined to challenge and change the power-relations and to create a convivial way of life. In this way, T.P.1 aims to be a way of freeing the social imagination.

*Education and the democratic institutions*

Most children seem to have a strong basic intuition for this idea “of the humane”. So, the question is: is it possible to develop this dimension through art education, through playing theatre and other kinds of education? And what does it mean to change and thereby democratize the institutions like schools, universities and workplaces with this idea of going beyond
relations of dominance? From this curiosity about the knowledge and the competences, how such humane spaces can be set up, T.P.1 has emerged. And during the last years a new idea about what democracy and human(e)ism is and can and should be has developed, from local drama-groups to a global political movement. If there is a need to change the way we live, think, interact globally within the borders of the planet and within human dignity for all: what can this humane transformation of society look like?

*The “integrity-material”*

This observation is important: There are a lot of fascinating and important research projects and results in the humanities, neuroscience, arts education and drama, but the link to practical action within the school-system and political change, for example within the political economy, is often missing. T.P.1 wants to help to fill in this gap, to change the “mindset” (Göpel 2016), very well conscious about the strong systemic unwillingness of established power-relations to change. So, there is the need to tell another story, to make place for another political imagery, but also to name the structures, ideas and actors which destroy what we call the “integrity-material” which we share (see next chapter). In these humane stories, we seem to be made of this material of integrity, which can be – through neglect, violence and relations of indifference and dominance – hurt or – through sharing, playing etc. – be repaired; a material which links us to nature in its vulnerability, but stands at the same time for the most precious value we know: the magical material of the humane compassionate mind.
The dimensions

The goal is to provide a platform for arts and art education, research and exchange, reflected in publications; leading to specific projects which contribute to the needed transformation of our societies. Here comes a presentation of the different aspects and dimensions of T.P.1 linked to the projects presented in part two of this text.

Dimension 1 - Drama education: Including basic workshops about Alexander technique; theatre-improvisation (Johnstone, Meisner, O’Toole); devising for children’s groups, school classes and lifelong learning: from idea to play and performance, including acting and directing; the phenomenon of being humane.

See “2 The Projects”: Workshops; book with all the workshops.

Dimension 2 - Arts: Including leading theatre-groups, devising plays; experimental theatre group work; writing plays; documentary film linked to activism.

See “2 The projects”: “Lagora”-work; plays.

Dimension 3 - Education: Including communication/improvisation for sustainability-education (ecological, economic, social); holistic teaching through drama for school-classes and Kindergarten; the five dimensions of connectedness in developmental psychology and creativity (Winnicott, Stern, Bowlby).
See “2 The projects”: Workshops; booklet about drama in school.

**Dimension 4 – Research/Theory:** Including theories about a future sustainable society from the standpoint of “humane” and playful contact; theories of imagination; relations between sustainability, imagination, nature and technique. Including also the development of different research-methods (arts-based research).

See “2 The projects”: Books; several articles.

**Dimension 5 – Research/application of dimension 1-4 in activism:** Including interventions in contexts of the transformation of the public democratic institutions (school, university, health sector, cultural and religious institutions) towards a humane democratization. And including the development of transformational movements by applying a research-focus.

See “2 The Projects”: The development of climate and ecological movements; “Ende Gelände”; “Planet-A”. Article on public health and drama; workshop with refugees.

**Dimension 6 – Publication, research communication and public debate:** Including presenting and enabling a link in society between university research and application of the results; educational material; strategy for social change material and so on in forms of books, booklets and articles in newspapers.

See “2 The projects”: Boell-arcticle; Orion-thetare-article and others.
2 Being humane

Has humanism as a mindset and philosophy done its work and do we need an alternative for building a sustainable society in times of “posthumanism”, as the academic world suggests? What is the ethical compass for societies which stay within the planetary boundaries (biodiversity, climate, ...) and provide a life in dignity for all – when the relation to nature, each other, animals and robots change and must change; as we are confronted by a climate and ecological breakdown?

A first step consists in listening to the critique of the classical humanism formulated by feminist, postcolonial, postsocialist and ecological perspectives (De los Reyes 2005): the rise of the modern scientific worldview and the critique of all other authorities (as gods, stories, magic) other than the human mind has often led to a stereotypical male, eurocentric, rationalizing, dominating attitude towards the environment and the other, without sensitivity towards systemic, holistic, interactive, embodied caring experiences and structures.

What could the alternative to this “humanism for a privileged few”, as it is often described, look like? A difference can be made between being human and being humane; the latter is what T.P.1’s work is aimed to explore. To understand this new “humane-ism”, it is important to compare four different concepts of being human(e). The goal is to better understand the “magical matter of the humane mind” through this conceptual and phenomenological enterprise. The search for
“the humane” leads us into the realm beyond the opposite of technique and nature into the world of grassroots movements, children’s literature, but also “high” and vernacular works of thought and art and their relation to new mass-media in times of transformation (Albertus Pictor, Pixar, Dickens).

Four concepts of being human(e)

What is meant by “being humane”? Is it an idea, an attitude, an atmosphere, a gaze? This phenomenon can maybe be better understood by contrasting it to three other concepts of being human; because it reflects and includes – in a “dialectally” transformed way - all these other aspects.

A Being human: Anthropology and “condition humaine”

The humane is not the same as in “la condition humaine” (Nussbaum 1992), all aspects which are specific to us humans: language, self-consciousness, the ability to be an actor, the ability to reflect on our reflections and feelings, to put ourselves into a point of nowhere.

B Being Human: Ethics (empathy, compassion)

The humane also seems to be more than the just humanistic human which in turn can be defined as the social attitude to see the suffering of others and the wish and attempt to help them. The humane is more than just empathy and compassion which
seem to be basic human feelings and attitudes (G. Gredebäck, H. Immordino-Yang 2015).

C Being human: (Im-)moral

The humane is also more than the human as in “it is human to fail” or to sin; like Homer Simpsons character always going for the easiest solution.

D Being humane

But: the humane includes, transformed, all these three aspects of a human life. The examples for the idea of being humane, as Lindgren’s heroes, Don Quijotte etc., have a natural understanding of an ethical compass of empathy and compassion (B): they often fight for social justice and want to help – but they also show sides of the human (C) with its spontaneous, with all the non-ethical impulses, the anarchic (of Karlsson on the roof), the greedy (of Scrooge), the lazy (of Bartleby): they are not just high-status figures which one should admire. And last but not least, the quality of the humane can often be shown by animals or robots in films and books: as if the contrast to the surrounding grey and indifferent human beings makes a quality visible, in a sort of inverted anthropology, which is genuine humane.

This idea of being humane is often linked to the imaginary, to the idea of love, of magic, of relationships which are stronger
and more trustworthy than the normal instrumental style of modern “alienated” life.

A possible definition of the humane as idea, gaze, atmosphere and attitude

There seems to be a dimension which exists in its own right (the humane one) which is even more central than ethics as an attitude or set of rules, because it wakes up a dimension in children which is already there. This norm is in this sense stronger than the ones of inclusiveness, norm-critique or democratization because it not only questions all dominant power-relations but sketches an alternative social quality – relating to each other and the environment beyond status-struggles, in a supportive way. It probably can’t be described just as a skill or competence but is more than an ethical attitude. The very idea of being humane can in this way be described as more fundamental than the one of freedom, goodness, justice, dignity and beauty, serving as a compass whenever these have to be defined.

 Whereas you can find hundreds of meters of literature about the first three phenomena of being human, this last one of being humane seems to be a neglected one. This should be changed. It should land on the schedule and the heart of society, social sciences and of the humanities.

A possible definition of this idea, gaze, attitude or atmosphere of being humane would be: opening a social, playful space and
providing resources so that trustful relations to oneself and others becomes possible; and therefore a development which can result in a better connectedness to oneself and to others — and to the very idea of being humane. The logic of the social space changes, when and where this good connection and well-being of everybody becomes the content of the social aims and tasks. This transforms the idea into a political and aesthetical one, not only an ethical one.
3 Five spaces of connectedness or alienation

The question is now: how can one not only describe, but also produce and create these social spaces which allow this phenomenon of “connectedness”? In which way can we humans be connected or not, tensed or in contact, free or alienated?

As research from different fields of the academic universe show, humans are in an extraordinary way capable of not feeling that we are actually alienated; or, as a tradition of developmental psychology and arts education puts it: already children are able to cut themselves off from their “true self” (to use Donald Winnicott’s concept) as well as from the feelings and ideas, impulses and phantasies connected to it (often to protect this very self), without really understanding what is happening (Broberg 2006).

How are these processes of de-connection possible and what happens when they occur; and how can they be repaired?

What happens to the “integrity-material” which is hurt and damaged when we have to de-connect, but often also protected in the very same disconnection? “This material” is linked to our very natural bodily basis which makes us vulnerable and links us to nature and the biosphere. And it is likewise linked to the spiritual dimension of mutual recognition and love which can be turned into neglect and oppression. But
it seems also to transcend nature and ethics and technique: because it is linked to playing and imagination.

If this concept makes sense, we then can ask the question: how can we transform the existing social and political-economical spaces and interactions into ones which allow the flourishing and reparation of this integrity-material for all, in education, politics, economics, aesthetics? This approach would mean a new way of defining “prosperous human societies” (which is the main topic for Kate Raworth’s economical thoughts); where a connection to one’s self and the selves of the others is possible.

The spaces of (de-)connection (neurophysiological space, body-scheme, synesthetic attunement, playful safe social space and political space):

To study this process of getting or loosing connection within a specific space, it makes sense to split it up into different dimensions which are all interconnected but also separable.

A The space of the own body-scheme: Alexander-technique and the neuropsychological integration of the brain-parts

The actor F. M. Alexander observed the movement-patterns of children and adults and saw – after having lost his own voice by tensing up – that most of us tense ourselves up (often to protect ourselves from feeling our feelings, and having our thoughts) in a way which disconnects us, hurts the body and makes it likely that we damage knees and the back. The tensions in the facial
muscles are in this process linked to the tensions in other parts of the body, and vice versa. At the same time this tensing up makes us loose the contact with our mind and self. But instead of working towards methods on how to train up a better contact, he developed the idea that we do too much – and that what we need to learn, is not-doing, getting rid of habits, connecting ourselves to the directions (that the head is already balancing on top of the spine, for example) which our body-self as a situated one already has within itself – when we feel protected and safe. The way how to get there is by using the imagination (of reminding ourselves of these directions and of the space which we can have in the joints) and by getting feedback and response by a “teacher” which mirrors our body-scheme and helps to lose the balance by getting a new one.

In social spaces as for example schools, universities or homes, where we feel seen, can express ourselves and get recognition, it is more likely that we don’t tense up or can get rid of the tension which we carry around.

The neuropsychologist and neuro-pedagogue Helen Immordino-Yang examined the same phenomenon of connecting by observing children who listen to stories which have an empathic or compassionate hero. What happens (and similar empathic reactions are studied by Gustav Gredebäck at Uppsala university), and what she says has to happen if we want to learn and develop, is that the different parts of our brain integrate, the very old ones (affective-active) and the newer cortex; the subconscious and the conscious so that we can be present as a connected being.
B The intersubjective space: Daniel Stern’s “transmodal synesthetic attunement” and Keith Johnstone meetings beyond status-struggles. How to meet beyond dominance?

But a dis-connection can also happen in the interpersonal space of everyday interactions, for example between parents and their children. The acting teacher Johnstone observed that this happens regularly when we – often unconsciously – exercise dominance, by using “status”-signals; or of course when we don’t listen or use violence. But this can and does happen in a very subtle way; this was the insight of Stern and Johnstone, so that parents don’t realise when they force their children to withdraw themselves. And, conversely, they analysed and described the relations where one gets really into contact, into a contact which strengthens both. For Daniel Stern, this is linked to the synesthetic attunement in the interaction; for Johnstone to the seeing through the mechanism of power-struggle through status-interactions. The ideal for both is an accepting and strengthening meeting beyond dominance; a meeting where one meets not only the personality of someone but the person behind personality-traits, as one might say.

C The social space: Winnicott’s idea of the playful “inbetween”-space; and Bowlby’s/Ainsworth’s idea of the space allowing secure attachment

This interpersonal accepting space is also described in Donald Winnicott’s book “Playing and reality”. We can find a parent´s mirroring and accepting gaze towards her child which literally
opens up a social space which makes it possible for the child to play. Playing seems to be possible only when the child feels the safety of the social space which allows for the expression of feelings, even inconvenient ones, and for the exploration of unknown and even dangerous new areas. In Bowlby’s and Ainsworth’s research they observed that children will change their behavior, even cut themselves off from their self and feelings and movement-impulses, to guarantee the acceptance of the parent or the primordial social context. This results in an insecure attachment and in structures of tensions and personality-trait of not-meeting/connecting – when a child does not get the nearness and safety of the parents without putting on a mask. That’s why mirroring and accepting and helping children out of expressed sorrow and fear, but also the mirroring of happiness is central.

For all social spaces, from school to healthcare, it is therefore so important to make a humane contact possible; for example by making the values and rules explicit which everybody should be able to lean on in these spaces – being sure of being respected, of having a space of integrity.

D The political space: Beyond intersectional critique towards conviviality and global sustainable democracy

Living in a late-capitalist society with its structures of power-struggles and domination structures between rich and poor within one society but especially between the global north and south, all these aspects of the possibility to connect to oneself
and others are linked to just these societal structures. Now we can ask the question in which way these structures allow us to become and stay connected; and if they do not allow it: what different structures would do that – so, we have a critical compass to measure these structures and to strive for change and transformation.

We can learn a lot about the future convivial society from the analysis of the four spaces of connectedness.

It can be a compass for the ecological-economic model we (the planet and us) need: so that other models like Kate Raworth’s Doughnut-economics (2018) or other ecological economics as well as participatory democratic economy models must be adapted and changed so that they fit the criterion of letting the connectedness become reality.

In this way, it could become understandable how feminist, postcolonial, post-socialist and ecological ideas can be united. In an intersectional analysis, it is not enough to criticise and change some structures of dominance within a specific domain like gender, age, ethnicity, but to see the complex forms of domination which are linked to the global socio-ecological-economic structures, abusing nature to enhance the wealth of those who can invest capital.

To follow the Paris Agreement which includes drastic transformation of the carbon societies and the implementation of the aspect of social and historical justice (from the western
richer nations towards the poorer), can now be described using the narrative of creating social, political and economic spaces which make a connectedness possible, to ourselves and the others; and in this way repairing the damaged integrity-material of us all.

For us, living in a globally interacting world, not to be forced to cut the contact to one’s self means to feel safe and be safe within a global society which provides this safety through changed political rules. One aspect of this new global just society could mean that we can meet as global citizens; not only as private persons or as anonymous market-participants, but as global citizens, as equals and as parts of a global political framework: as “one people on one planet”.

T.P.1 wants to play a part on the way to this goal, speaking for a global movement which unites the people who want to follow the Paris Agreement towards a world which is not warming more than 1.5 degrees compared with pre-industrial temperatures, and create the safe social spaces not only in some countries, and not just for some people.

E The integrity-material: the common ground for A, B, C and D

To link all four spaces of “being connected”, we introduce the concept of a common integrity-material which we humans share with each other and which connects us also to all forms of life and the biosphere. This doesn’t mean that we all are mere clumps of atoms and material, or that we are mere agents
as other objects and landscapes are (Latour 2018 and the critique by Malm 2017), but the opposite: that life in its vulnerability shows itself in a very specific form in us.

This focus on a shared integrity-material (instead of just taking about dignity, which is important, as phenomenon and concept, but remains abstract) makes it possible to link questions about future economics with questions about public health and education – because we can study in all of them the way in which they may disrupt or allow connectedness on all levels. This is a field of “knowledge” or “knowing” which should be the ground even for political decisions. Which means that politicians, but also science and academic research could and should take up this kind of knowledge which is not just linked to books and numbers but – as seen with the examples of Stern and Johnstone – to changed interpersonal relations and the ability to see through not only structures but behaviours of dominance. This is the political and pedagogical challenge we face: to tackle the real motives for the ecological and climate breakdown by overcoming the relations of dominance built in into our societies, by creating humane spaces instead.
4 Empathy, compassion – being humane: art, education and politics beyond connectedness and alienation

With all this said: the basic norm, the compass, is not just to become connected within all spaces (neurophysiological space, body-scheme, synesthetic attunement, playful safe social space and political space), but to build the humane spaces in which a connectedness is possible. This includes respect and sensibility for the non-present, not-connected: art has often had an eye for the creatures and human fellows (including ourselves) who are not “at home”, so that one can feel that there is someone you could meet.

In this sense, the dimension of the humane is even more fundamental than the realm of morality. It’s not just about becoming empathic, compassionate; it’s like playing with the states of non-presence, embracing the disconnected, following not only Herman Melvilles character Bartleby “who prefers not to”, but also Charles Dickens description of such characters which are not at home (and Martha Nussbaums interpretation of “David Copperfield”), his greedy, dark characters; because they are – through art – depicted in such a way that the person becomes visible behind deeds and failures. That’s why children’s literature and stories, plays and playing might be can be useful for a humane project. Because the empathic and compassionate is dialectically surpassed by a humane stance, seeing figures who are “beside themselves”, not perfect ethical idols, but humane characters.
How can one portray a human being as being “outside him/herself” while at the same time portraying the person behind this disconnected personality, behind the socially produced alienation? How can one present, represent the alienating forces of the past; and the socially alienating structures which are a burden?

Being humane is more than being empathic or compassionate because it establishes affirming relations beyond status-struggles and dominance, by playing through the states of de-connection. That has consequences on how we approach drama (process drama, forum theatre and so on) and acting, but also ethics and politics.

This happens sometimes in art, that art opens this humane dimension. But that means on the one hand that art is beautiful, but on the other hand that art as a project fails, because it doesn’t change the alienating structures (or it changes them by at least making them visible). One way out of this dilemma, that art holds its protagonists often in alienation, consists of making the forces which create the disconnection visible, to re-read art and artworks and to include them in a different narrative where these alienating forces (in politics, economics, ideology) can be confronted.
5 The goals

1 Providing a platform to explore the spaces of connectedness

A Providing the possibility to learn more about (and to practice) improvising, devising plays, developing process drama and doing Alexander technique – and by doing so, giving the possibility to explore the four spaces of becoming connected to one’s own self and to one another.

B Providing a pedagogical platform to learn more about how to build up a social (Winnicott)space where everybody feels safe to explore their playfulness and humaneness.

C Providing a platform for exploring, articulating and implementing the beyond-dominance norm which could be a compass for the main institutions of democratic societies, and in the long run for a sustainable convivial world. Everybody has a voice and something to say and can become part of exploring the humane. The goal is to connect around the world with the idea of global citizenship and the task of creating a sustainable world.

D Being a hub for knowledge and play, art and political activism which can be a role-model to be copied so that we can build up a network of T.P´s; to become a “lagoratorium “(a democratic agora and a lab): an experimental radical democratic platform for debates, creative work, political development.
2 Being a place for research: knowledge, competence, value and beyond

There is so much money invested in research on AI, biotech and infotech, even regarding the human body, but – as Yuval Harari says – our world and the future generations need to have knowledge about the human mind, about the body as a lived imaginative social part of the self, not only as biological matter, and also about democratic social spaces.

It is important that there is a place where highly specialised knowledge of these areas meets the big questions of a rapidly changing society, in which questions about integrity (of animals, nature, humans and the biosphere) become more and more crucial.

A huge part of our society and even science is focusing on an extremely one-sided part of knowledge: Alphabet/google buys up the best researchers in science who can build nanotechnological biotech-robots combining the infotech-revolution and biotechnology so that we have a real-time overview over our bodies, the organs and their function, our blood pressure and so on in detail. So that we can buy medicines or undergo an operation. It’s a technological, reactive, bio-crafty approach to health and life.

We have another view and in some sense a different, but also a deeper understanding of what happens with us when we get tense up, when our health is affected, when our energy is
blocked or when our voice is freed. We combine cutting-edge science about the body-scheme and neuropsychology with the science of our communicative, interactive and creative body and mind.

And we sketch the consequences for the fields of education, public health, and politics. Children need a different set of skills and knowledge, and different social spaces in which to develop and learn.

3 Transfer between research in humanities/social sciences/arts and society/politics

There is a need for a (communicative and transformational) link between the top research within humanities, social science and artistic research on the one side, and society and politics on the other. As a kind of “think-and-do-tank” we do not only do research and write, but we are also active, give workshops and try to contribute to the sustainable transformation of our societies.

Humanities, social and educational sciences and arts normally are quite bad at doing just this. Science in the sense of natural science, is much better. But it is crucial that policy development and major political decisions concerning educational systems, public health, economics and energy systems are also informed by the humanities, the social sciences and the arts (a point which for example the “environmental humanities”-movement tries to stretch).
4 Intersectional transfer between and beyond cultures and generations within Europe – with a global perspective

From its beginning, T.P.1 tried to work in different countries, different educational systems and with an inter-generational approach (which can produce challenges in the areas of language and organisational frameworks). The reason for this move was and is the interest in the phenomenon of the humane and the “material of integrity” (see previous chapters) and their focus on the question of what is seen as valuable. The political, economic and social relations which decide this are only understandable when seen as a part of a problematic global socio-economic infrastructure. To overcome domination and to get into a realm of sharing and helping to build resources instead of destroying them is linked to the questioning of boundaries and cultural ideologies, and follows the vision of a global citizenship as its goal.

5 For a “humane energy system” – questioning societies’ differentiation of sectors like education, art, art education, leisure/play, health/sports, politics/social engagement

Even if one reads and follows the reasoning of a specific book about a future economic system like Kate Raworth “Dounught-economics” (2018) or Alf Hornborgs “Global magic” (2016), one still needs a picture of the compass or “spirit” for the new global economic system and for the transformational process which leads to it, beyond democracy and justice or equity. The idea is that all concrete action is growing out of a changed big narrative
and a new view of the “spirit” of the un-alienated social relations for which we aim. In this sense, it is crucial to show the possible connection between the sectors of health, education, play, culture and other different sectors of our modern differentiated societies.
Part 2 The projects

Here follows a selection of some of the most important projects which can be seen as an exploration of the ideas described in the text above. During all these years, the basic workshops (presented in the workshop-book) serve as the foundation of all other activities. They include the exploration of relations beyond status-struggle/improvisation (K. Johnstone), the principles of Alexander Technique, the concept of synesthetic attunement (D. Stern), the building of social spaces of trust (D. Winnicott/ M. Ainsworth), and the imagination of humane transformational stories (M. Nussbaum).

2008 Improvisation-groups at Grand-theatre in Uppsala

2009 Lecture about the future of cultural politics, published by Natur&Kultur and Böll-Stiftung

2010 The fundamental workshops (drama and developmental psychology), published as a book (250 pages)

2011 “Action”. Booklet on culture, religion, nature, politics and economics

2012 “Lagoratoriet”: an experimental democratic arena for theatrical research
2013  Drama in school/education: research-grant, booklet and mentor program

2014  Documentary film about the democratic “machinery” and about the politics for a sustainable future, made during the Swedish election campaign (56 min; on vimeo): “Who owns – the greens”?

2014ff. From Acting-teaching and Alexander-technique to political activism: the health and community-dimension of applied theatre

2016  Further education at ACT. Workshop on the concept of “being humane” (forum theatre/lecture)

2017  Applied-Drama workshop with refugees from Syria and Afghanistan

2017/8 Influencing university courses and a B.A. in drama education and civic education (democracy; education; ecological, economic and social sustainability)

2017/8 “Planet A – stop climate change, allow equality and create prosperity”: what would a convivial global democracy-movement look like?

2019  “One people on one planet” – the core of a global movement for sustainability reacting to the climate and ecological crisis
1 Theatre groups for children and improvisation groups for young adults

Place: Uppsala

Time: From 2008 on; weekly

Organisation: T.P.1 in collaboration with Grand-teater Uppsala and Vindhemskyrka, Uppsala

Content: The drama groups integrate the knowledge from experiences of social pedagogy (Sigtuna folkhögskola), children’s theatre (Old town Stockholm), applied theatre work (“Uppsala – the history”/”Krönikespel”) and improvisation work.

Two weekly drama-groups are founded: one for the smaller ones (10-12-year olds) in the location of the Vindhems church, and one for the older ones (15-17) in the Grand theatre. The work is based partly on drama exercises and -games but mainly on devising-methods.
2 The fundamental workshops

Place: All of Sweden

Time: 2008-2010 and ff.

Organisation: Cooperation with

Skara Stift: 80 people between 50-80 years old

Graninge Gård: 30 people, 16-years old

Uppsala domkyrkoförsamling, 15 people, 20-40 years old and a lot of other organisations.

Content: What does it mean to meet beyond relations of dominance? There are workshops about the four spaces of being humane: the bodily (Alexander technique); the interpersonal (Daniel Stern); the social (Johnstone and Buber); and the political (being humane).

The results of all this research work (as reflecting practitioners) are documented in a book (250 pages) with detailed descriptions of the workshops themselves and the thoughts behind them. They present the main thoughts of the leading researchers in developmental psychology, communication and drama (such as Donald Winnicott, Daniel Stern, Keith Johnstone, Fredrik Alexander, Ruth Zaporah etc).
During all the following years, the work with the drama-groups go on and the basic workshops for drama, applied theatre, Alexander technique, communication, creative educational leadership (based on developmental psychology) and social sustainability are improved. Completing the book, there is a reader with the basic texts.
3 About the future of cultural politics

Place: Orionteater, Stockholm


Organisation: Stina Oscarson, artistic director of the Orion-theatre, organises a marathon-lecture about Sweden’s cultural politics and publishes a book for which T.P.1 contributes a chapter.

Content: T.P.1 is from the beginning not only a place for education and art, but also for political activism and social transformation. In a marathon-lecture, hundreds of manifests about a new cultural politics for Sweden are presented by
professional actors on the stage of the known Orion-theatre in the center of Stockholm. The T.P.1-text is published in a collection of texts by the publisher Natur&Kultur (and some parts in a small book, also in Natur&Kultur).

A ten-page-version of the text is published by the Böll-Stiftung in Germany:
4 “Lagoratoriet” – a democratic arena, an experimental theatre, and a creative-reading/writing research group

Place: Stockholm, Vasastan, the old factory

Time: 2011-13; weekly, Wednesday evenings

Organisation: Organised by Josefin Ivarson and David Fopp

Content: “Lagoratoriet” is a combination between a democratic “agora” and a “lab”, and provides a creative space in the middle of Stockholm. The homepage says: “We are a group of people who do research about the question what can happen when drama and movement-improvisation meets phenomenological
philosophy.” This public lab-work combines the research in different fields like philosophy, neuroscience, developmental psychology and psychoanalysis with drama-work (using the voices of researchers like Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jaak Panksepp, Helene Immordino-Yang and Eugene Gendlin).
Program winter/spring 2012-13

Current theme: ”Lived space”
A workshop-series which combines philosophical investigation with drama and movement improvisation to explore basic structures of lived space.

Meetings take place on Wednesdays at 18.30 – 21.30 in a studio in Vasastan, Stockholm. If you are interested in participating in our regular meetings or any of the up-coming events, get in touch with us on info@lagoratoriet.se.

Up-coming events
Evening Workshops, February

February 21, 19.00-21.00: “Film space and theatre space: the quality of opening up”
February 28, 19.00-21.00: “Taking some Merleau-Pontyian thoughts about spatiality into feeling what happens when walking backwards with eyes closed”

Weekend Workshop, March
March 23-24: “Shared intentionality in a setting of play acting”

Past events:
Impro and experienced-based phenomenology open workshops


Presentations
Part 1. “The idea of being humane as aesthetical and political category” (David Fopp) January 12.
Part 2. “Tcheshov, the critic’s gaze and a box” (Hanna Nordqvist) at Dramatiska Högskolan, Stockholm. January 16.
Part 2. “Bunswanger and the Case of Ellen West: Flying, striding and crawling or sky space, earth space and tomb space” (Josefin Iverson) January 19.
5 “Action” – a book about the new rules which are needed to establish a sustainable society (education, health, religion, culture, political economy)

Place: Europe

Time: 2008-12

Organisation: T.P.1 and Edition T.P.1

Content: What does modern Western society define as “valuable”? Is there another way of organising the institutions of education, health care, culture, religion, economics and politics? Working daily with questions about children’s creative development, T.P.1 is confronted with the framework of the main democratic institutions. As a result of the discussions and actions which T.P.1 is involved in during these years, a book takes shape with several essays on these topics, public interventions in form of texts.

As theoretical framework serves Susan George’s idea of a pyramid which stands
on its head: where the financial sector dominates the economy, which dominates the work life which dominates culture which all dominates the relation to each other and the biosphere. Even several classical children books serve as a point of reference: many classic children’s books as “Momo”, “Mary Poppins”, “The Grinch” and “Matilda” can be read as sketches of a critique of society, and as proposals of how transformed society could look like.

Some essays are published in journals, some are used within T.P.1’s daily work. All of them are gathered in a booklet with the title “Actions”. This booklet serves later as the foundation for the book with the title “Another democracy” (2018/9).

The chapter about health and education is published by the “International journal for philosophy and psychosomatics”.

![Image of a book cover](image-url)
6 Drama in school/education – booklet and research

Place: St.Gallen, Switzerland

Time: 2013-4

Organisation: Funded by Walter-und-Verena-Spühl Stiftung

Content: T.P.1 gets a grant by the Walter-und-Verena-Spühl Stiftung to do research for and write educational material for teachers with the aim of using drama in school.

The booklet is structured along the categories: Understanding body, voice and movement; creating social spaces where the imagination can flourish; principles of improvisation; ethics and aesthetics.

Parallel to this publication, a booklet takes form as a research project at Stockholms University about the role of the director in the theatre work with children, published at Stockholms universitys electronic publishing portal.
This can be seen as a scientific foundation for the work done by T.P.1.

Also in the context of the theatre-work with children within the school-context, T.P.1 is invited as research institution/mentor at the school-theatre-festival in St.Gallen, Switzerland, watching and commenting around 20 plays by 20 different schools and classes. The festival is organised by the cultural ministry in close cooperation with the university department for education.
7 Documentary film project (56 min.): “Who owns what – the greens, the power of democracy and the future of sustainable development. About the Swedish election campaign 2010”

Place: Stockholm. You can see the film (56 min) on vimeo.


Organisation: In collaboration with Ölands dokfilmskola (producer: Anna Cnattingius).

Content: The film asks the question how the democratic process works, who can decide on the political direction of a
country, and how the democratic power-machinery works. We as spectators follow the green party in Sweden in the last three months of the election campaign and meet grassroots helpers but also the most influential employees and politicians as well as ideologues. The film tries to hold a critical distance and asks questions about the political foundation of the campaign by interviewing even critical green thinkers outside the party-structures. How to act against the climate crisis and the ecological breakdown – with what kind of politics?
8 Exploring the applied-theatre dimensions: From acting-teaching (education) and Alexander-technique (health) to political activism (community)

Place: Berlin, Stargarderstr. 73

Time: 2012 ff.

Organisation: T.P.1 (now as an association; see “The organisation”) working together with KörperRaum Mitte (drama/health-association).

Content: All of T.P.1’s basic elements (research; publication; art; education and political activism) are combined in applied-theatre projects; at the same time, there is a daily drama-education work going on with regular workshops in Alexander Technique, improvisation and scene work.

A special focus lies in the research and practice in drama in health-related contexts with a weekly working group on Alan Fogel’s fundamental book “Body sense”; and a cooperation with the body-therapy practice of KörperRaum Mitte, presenting Alexander Technique.

In a combination of political activism and research, T.P.1 start with an activist research project about the possibilities of a global
movement for a convivial humane planet. The research consists of 30 semi-structured deep interviews with important organisations (such as Greenpeace, 350.org, Ende Gelände, green and social parties, DeGrowth-movements, Climate-Action and social justice-movements).

During these years, T.P.1 provides even a weekly acting and directing workshop on scenes (from Shakespeare to Arthur Miller and modern playwriting), combining character work with scene analysis, documented in two booklets about “acting” and “directing”.
9 Further education-workshop at ACT and a book about the concept of “being humane”

Place: ACT, Berlin

Time: April and December 2016

Organisation: In collaboration with Maike Plath/ACT e.V.

Content: After having worked for 10 years within the German school system, Maike Plath has developed her own concept of drama education – and has founded a Think-and-do-tank “ACT”, trying to influence not only the way how children and young adults can make and take part in drama/theatre- and film-projects but even to influence the broader school system (documented in the film “"Act! Who am I? / Act! Wer bin ich?” by Rosa von Praunheim, 2018).

T.P.1 provides a one-day workshop for ACT (repeated several times) with the theme of “being and becoming humane”, combining lectures, role-play, forum-play and improvisation. The applied-drama research on the concept of being humane is even reflected in the PhD-publication by David Fopp with chapters on:

- The anthropological foundation of acting/directing/drama
  - The ideology behind acting/directing-methods
  - Empathy and theatre-therapy
Who is allowed to be alive: an analysis of Daldry’s “Billy Elliot”
- The aesthetics of “being humane”
  o Humane-ism beyond feminism, ecologism and socialism
  o Imagination, technique and nature
- The pedagogy and politics of “being humane”
  o Drama in education: an international overview over the textbooks
  o Humane-ism as global democracy-project
10 Applied drama workshop with refugees (from Syria and Afghanistan)

Place: Berlin, Moabit

Time: Jan-April 2017; one-week-workshop, repeated several times

Organisation: T.P.1 works with “Knupfwerk e.V.”, a cultural association in Berlin-Mitte, on the basis of a grant from the German ministry for education.

Content: The centre of the first part of the project is the development of a 15-page project-plan. Its aim is to lead an applied-drama workshop within the participatory democracy outreach-program of the German ministry for education and research “culture makes you strong” – which is accepted and fully financed.

The project consists of a one-week-workshop (which is repeatable and has been repeated six times) for refugees aged 18 to 23, living in Berlin, especially in the centres where they wait for the permission to stay in Europe.

The workshop takes up the theme of losing and finding one’s own private and political voice as well as a collective one. It uses drama methods (improvisation; body-voice work) for creating a spirit of creative collaboration; and creative writing methods to articulate the participants’ situation in the new environment.
11 Influencing university courses and a B.A. in drama education and civic education (democracy; ecological, economic, social sustainability)

Place: Stockholm

Time: 2017/2018

Organisation: Stockholm University

Content: From the year 2017 on, the T.P.1-knowledge becomes a part of ten new university courses. Drama education methods are used to learn about and explore the themes of among others:

- Democracy (7,5 ECTS)
- Ecological, economic and social sustainability (for teacher students) (3)
- Pedagogics and didactics (7,5)
- Acting, directing, creating plays (7,5)
- Devising new plays (4)
- Theory of science and ethics of scientific research (15)
- Research methods (15)
12 “Planet A” – “Stop climate change, allow equality, create prosperity”: how would a convivial global participatory democracy movement look like; and: “Children, economy, democracy”, an applied-theatre project

Place: Stockholm, Berlin

Time: From 2017 on

Organisation: T.P.1, visiting and interviewing different other organisations

Content:

The project “Planet A”

This arts-based and action-research project follows the question – with the need for a humane society in mind – how to make democratic participation and global citizenship for a humane sustainable transformation of our societies possible which takes the climate change crisis seriously. The idea behind it: to organise a humane life for all living beings on the planet, we need to change the educational, economic and institutional framework, in a new global political movement.
The project consists of four different parts: first, T.P.1 follows (and documents with different medium as films, plays etc.) already existing attempts to build international participatory democratic movements which stand for social justice and sustainability; with a six-hour documentation of the foundation of the movement Diem25, a documentation of the Jädersbruk-group in Sweden, and so on. On the other side, T.P.1 develops texts and manifests for such a transformation, published on a special homepage for “Planet A”. Third, T.P.1 devises plays which, in the fictional realm, try to produce a social imagination of such a transition. And forth, T.P.1 gets even more involved in climate/social-justice activism. The texts are gathered on a special website, called “Planet A”.

The project “Children, economy, democracy”

This project started with the idea that there is a huge gap between the interest (and need) on the one hand and the research/educational material for children’s education on the other hand (textbooks, drama-workshops for 12-year olds) concerning the big questions in political economy of our time: what do we produce and consume in which ways; who earns how much; how do we frame and treat natural resources; what is of value when children die in the Mediterranean sea and climate change seems to question the established neoclassical economics. T.P.1 developed a 10-page project-plan for the Swiss National research organisation SNF in which the children’s own creativity and ability to ask questions, to do research and to develop economic concepts builds the centre of the drama-education/applied theatre project. It combines the new scientific ideas for a sustainable system (Kate
Raworth, Kevin Anderson, Johan Rockström etc.) with the children’s own ideas about justice and prosperity. This work is presented during October 2017 at the conference “DiS” (Dramaforskning i Sverige) at Stockholm University.

Both projects resulted in a new 350-pages book (in publication) with the title “Another kind of democracy – towards global citizenship” and contains chapters on a humane transformation concerning education (school, university), religion, political economy, public health and culture.
13 “One people on one planet” – the core of a global movement reacting to the climate and ecological crisis

Place: Stockholm, global

Time: From 2019 on

Content: Learning from the new grassroots movements (FFF, XR), TP1 develops and supports a vision for a unified reaction to the climate and ecological crisis by civil society. A first glimps of it is shown in the organizational engagement during the WeekForFuture in September 2019 with 8 million participants in the biggest climate strike and probably the biggest coordinated global political action in human history.

The basic ideas are then discussed at COP25 in Madrid with tens of NGOs and other grassroots movements, leading to a booklet (see davidfopp.com) and several publications.

The core idea: A global movement for a sustainable future needs

3 pillars:

Emission-budgets on global, national and local levels plus climate action plans for all sectors (energy, transport, food system, building, finance etc.)

A global treaty to keep the fossil fuels in the ground, listening to the UNEP Gap report; stopping all financing of the fossil industry, building back the existing infrastructure
Building a global renewable energy system; financing for the loss and damage especially in the poorer countries, the richer paying their fair share

2 principles:

Social justice and equity/fairness

Intersectional climate justice, getting rid of the structures of dominance (gender, ethnicity, class) and deepening the democratic structures of participation (especially also for the young people)

1 movement:

To change the fossil society into a sustainable one, we need a united civil society, a unified vision of the climate justice NGOs and grassroots movements, short: a new global movement which makes it possible for everyone to stand up for a life in dignity on a living planet for all; with democratic means (including civil disobedience).
Part 3 The Organisation: Structure and history

1 The beginning

2 The development
1 The beginning

In the stormy winter of 2007/2008, T.P.1 was founded in Uppsala, just behind the cathedral and the oldest university in northern Europe.

It coordinated already existing activities in the domain of arts education (for example the experience of leading children theatre groups in Stockholms Old town and in Uppsala), research, political activism and publishing.

With the help of the local accelerator of ideas, “Drivhuset”, T.P.1 got the form of a business in the cultural-educational sector specialized on drama education and community work with a special focus on the aspect of sustainable societal transformation.

From the beginning, T.P.1 focuses on fundamental workshops in communication/improvisation, drama education, acting and devising plays; on research in building a creative social space; and on actions and texts concerning the transformations of the public space and of the democratic institutions.
The first webpage, already combining the topics of “drama education”, “community activism”, “publishing” and “research on imagination/the humane”.
2 The development

T.P.1 has from its beginnings tried to think and act within a European context, with a global perspective. In 2014, T.P.1 becomes an officially registered non-profit association with an international board.

From 2018 on, the focus is even more directed towards the vision of a united global movement and civil society, taking the sorrows and protests by the climate striking children serious, developing educational, political and activist reactions to the ecological and climate crisis.

David Fopp, PhD, is the director of T.P.1 and works since 2017 as assistant professor/senior lecturer for childhood/youth studies and arts education/drama at Stockholm University. After years as a researcher at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, he has taught at the University of Basel and at the Free University of Berlin. He is a climate justice activist, and a founding member of “ScientistsForFuture”.

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Statuten

Artikel 1 Name und Sitz


Artikel 2 Zweck des Vereins

1 Der Verein führt die künstlerische und politische Plattform TPI. Er richtet sich aus am Motto: „Gemeinsam ist Stärker: Julia Meier hat eine Grummi Bosch – muss man die entscheidet – am besten zusammen.

2 Der Verein ist gemeinnützig.

TP 1 Verein TPI „Deine Pädagogik – Deine Politik“

2014-08-10 18:32
Publications
Literature


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Fopp, David (2016): Menschlichkeit als ästhetische, pädagogische und politische Idee. Transcript, Bielefeld


Malm, Andreas (2017): The progress of this storm. Verso, New York


Nussbaum, Martha (1992): Love’s knowledge. OUP, New York
