Investigating Trust in the German Construction Industry:

A Contractor's Autoethnographic Exploration

of Trust and Lévinas

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Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by a specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Gloucestershire.

22nd August 2018

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Abstract

In this work I use autoethnography to explore my business practices in the construction company I own and manage. I draw on postmodern ethics and Lévinas' thoughts to contribute to, first, the pursuit of autoethnography as practitioner research, second, the understanding of trust's nature and role in the light of Lévinas' philosophy and, third, its implications for managerial practice. Lévinas' thought about the relationship between self and Other and his notions of Saying and Said assisted me while reflecting on trust in my business environment.

Writing fieldnotes and reflections about my experiences in business, I show that autoethnography done by an industry practitioner provides unique insights which are not available to outsiders. In particular, insiders are able to deconstruct commonly held assumptions by drawing on their own thoughts and feelings.

Although trust is often seen as serving a purpose, I strongly oppose this view. Trust is a non-calculative mode of interaction since a calculative approach cannot explain trust. I argue that trust belongs to Lévinas' Saying. It is not a conscious decision but a preconscious urge towards the Other which I may rationally control. Lévinas' Saying links trust, responsibility, forgiving, and genuine care for the Other. Trust as Saying supports its recurring nature and explains its elusive nature. Trusting the Other is not a conscious decision but an opening to basic human interaction – conversation and sociality.

Trusting an unknowable Other risks disappointment and hence it demands forgiving – almost pre-emptively. However, it also makes it possible to benefit from the Other in unknowable ways. The uncertainty about the Other requires loosening control and making oneself vulnerable to the trusted. This questions ever-tighter control mechanisms and a culture of accountability that one experiences in business. However, without the courage to trust, one cannot unleash the creative power of trusting cooperation.

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I. Introduction

I'm sitting on the balcony of our holiday flat. We're on vacation. It's beautiful. A crisp October's morning with clear air and an impressive view of the Bavarian Alps. It's around 10 o'clock and we've just finished our breakfast. The kids – still in their pyjamas – make some noise inside and occasionally look through the glass door onto the balcony.

But I am in a completely different world – not as peaceful and relaxed as the scenery might suggest. I got a call from my office telling me that a client did not pay his bills on time. Actually, the payment is already 10 days late, and the week before my vacation we sent the client a reminder threatening that we would stop working unless he pays his bills. Now my site manager wants me to decide whether we stop working on the building site.

I am angry for two reasons. First of all, I'm on holiday, and I don't want to deal with problems like that. And second, I am completely fed up with clients not paying their invoices. We can't do the job for them fast enough, but when it comes to their turn – paying their bills – suddenly they no longer feel any hurry. Even worse, often clients find numerous reasons not to pay their invoices. This infuriates me most.

Only later that day, I received a call from an architect I had worked with for many years. He said he would like to talk to me about a new project. The message that came across is that he would prefer to give me the job because the previous projects went so smoothly. My mood brightened significantly.

These two calls were typical of what I experience in business. The first reflects a breach of trust I have experienced various time in the last few years. The client initially seems to be

happy with the work we are doing. However, as we progress and come closer to finishing the job, payments arrive later. In some cases, the clients do not even pay the last bill. Hence, we often have to litigate them for years without knowing whether we are going to be successful or not. These late payments or not paying at all are a perceived breach of trust and cause me anger and frustration. The second call was quite the opposite. An architect I like called me to do business. We have built up trust working on previous projects and therefore the architect sought to convince his clients to give us the job. In these situations, doing business is enjoyable.

This work explores this tension between the enjoyment of a trusting relationship in business and the anger I feel when my trust seems to be abused. Specifically, I am going to explore the role trust plays in my negotiations.

From an outsider's view, the decisions of business people often seem to be based predominantly on facts and hard evidence. In reality, it is a person with feelings and emotions that has to make these choices and these decisions are often influenced by subjective perceptions.

This is my story and I am therefore going to use the first-person singular throughout this work. Doing otherwise would suggest I was in an omniscient, neutral, privileged position, which I am not. This is a subjective, personal, at time biased, but always honest and sincere account of my research. At best, it should come across to the reader as an authentic, honest and credible representation of my research. (Ellis, 2004, p. 560; Richardson, 1990)

I run my own construction business which I started in 1999 with the help of my father and with 10 employees. Today, after some turbulent years in business, my company employs around 40 people. Most of my employees are bricklayers and carpenters as concrete and brickwork construction is the main part of most of our work. Our projects are quite diverse – ranging from the foundation for a carport to a 7-storey urban building to a stable for a couple of hundred cows.

Prior to starting my business, I completed a three-year vocational training as a carpenter, a four-year civil engineering degree and an industrial engineering degree. I therefore assumed I had considerable practical and theoretical knowledge about the construction business. However, most of the time my technical knowledge is less important than my human interaction. This includes managing my staff and dealing with suppliers, clients, and their architects and design teams – i.e. negotiating with people.

Recently, I met an engineer on a building site to discuss some technical details and enjoyed using my engineering knowledge. The technical training helps me a lot in my daily work. However, even during our discussion about technical details we touched on personal and social issues. He reminded me that when we want to make some changes to the design we need to get the other stakeholders on board – employer, architect, engineers etc. We agreed that the solution we proposed was the best available – seen from an engineer's perspective. Yet, other stakeholders might see the solution differently and therefore prefer another alternative.

At this moment, the negotiating began – at least in my head. Could I get them on board? What would they prefer? What could be a compromise? Would I run into dangers making a proposal? All these questions hummed around in my head.

Sometimes it is easy to reach a solution that I hardly recognise that I am negotiating. On other occasions, it takes some listening, responding and a well-presented argument to find a solution. And sometimes, the differences are so severe that I cannot resolve a conflict without going to court. It can be great fun to negotiate, but it can also be emotionally demanding. Although I enjoy the engineering part of my job, I find dealing with people even more interesting. I realise how little I know about it and how much I can gain from knowing just a little more.

Over my years in business, I have gained some experience in negotiating with my business partners. But I am often still perplexed by situations in which I find myself.

Researching in this area provides me with the opportunity to gain greater knowledge. Given my personal interest in this work, I will focus on my negotiation with clients, architects, engineers, suppliers, and other business partners.

The term ‘negotiation’ does not only refer to face-to-face negotiations. I also include telephone calls, emails, letters, etc. In other words, all means of communication with another person are forms of negotiating. In this piece, I am interested in medium or long-term negotiations. My interest in these sort of negotiations stems predominantly from the nature of my business relationships. Construction projects usually run for at least a couple of weeks and often months or even years. Moreover, architects work with me on different projects and with different clients. Some clients return and commission us for successive projects. That is why it matters to me and my business whether my clients and their managers place trust in my staff and me. Again, in this study, I am going to investigate how trust and my negotiation practice influences each other – in particular, how and why trust develops and what forms it takes.

Playing field

I research my own environment which is readily accessible and provides a unique insider perspective. I take an autoethnography approach and record my own experiences. This means I write notes about the negotiations I take part in and try to record my thoughts and feelings before and after these negotiations. At the same time, I seek to relate these experiences to the work of others to develop a deeper understanding of trust development, its surrounding processes and most importantly about myself and my own conduct. In this sense, this work is not only an autoethnography but also action research for myself (Ellis, 1999).

My approach has similarities to that of Le Gall and Langley (2015) as it is abductive rather than deductive or inductive. I do not review the literature in clear-cut research stages

but work constantly with the literature and in the field – as is typical in autoethnography. In this way, I develop my understanding of the subject and the methods and their implication while doing research. This can be understood as a cyclical process (Grosse, 2014). Reading about trust helps to gain new understanding of my experiences in business and this new understanding influences my writing and leads to ever new questions to be addressed by my reading. Learning about autoethnography works in a similar way. Reading about it and doing it is a bi-directionally fertilising process. Inevitably, my understanding of subject and method develop in parallel and have strong interdependencies (Grosse, 2015a). This has significant implications for my research. The more I learn about a topic e.g. trust, the more I start to understand my experiences. For example, at the beginning of my research journey, I used the word ‘trust’ much less consciously and would readily use it to refer to incidents of mere reliance. I would not do that anymore.

To show this development, I am going to unfold my experiences as text written as fieldnotes. I will add reflections from a methodological, subject-related perspective, and personal perspective. The way I write this work is remotely related to a layered text. The layered text is the literary device where the writer reflects on experiences from different perspectives rather than a straightforward development (Rambo Ronai, 1995). I try to demonstrate development in my thinking by adding reflections – methodological, theoretical, and practical into the text. My use of layering is different from the approach Rambo Ronai took insofar as my reflective perspectives are signposted with subheadings and on a macro level. However, I take from her the underlying idea of hermeneutically developing an idea by the use of different perspectives.

The Long-Distance-Runner

The long distance running that I have done since I was ten years old may be the trigger for my pursuit of autoethnography. When I was still living in socialist East Germany, I

participated in regional championships and did quite well – second and third place in the 3000m hurdles. I was still training when I left school at the age of 17 and began a vocational training as carpenter However, the physical labour of my work made it hard to make progress in sports. This changed, when I took up compulsory army service in 1993 in Berchtesgaden. This is a mountain resort in the Alps and was an ideal place for sporting activities. There was time, support and much appreciation for physical fitness. I have to admit, I loved to run out senior officers and poke a little fun at them. A year later, I began to study civil engineering and kept up my running. Dessau, the small town in East Germany with huge open landscape parks and rivers, was again quite well suited for long runs. However, this changed again when I moved to Berlin in 1998 I was still studying – now industrial engineering - because I thought I would need some management education. The city was not so pleasant for running, as I used to run in the open landscape. Now, I had to familiarise with smaller parks and stadiums.

When I started my business, I went once a week to my parent's place – a small village an hour's drive south of Berlin. I started the business when I still had to study for another year. My father used to work for a company which ran into insolvency. My father and I hired a couple of workers from this company and bought a plot of land from it. While I finished studying, my father did most of the work in the business. His role changed a year later when I fully occupied my position as owner/CEO, although he still helped and advised where he could.

At that time, long distance running became central to my life again. Running a business, especially during the crisis in the German construction industry in late 90s and early 2000s put huge pressure on me. I used the running as compensation for the stress in business. After an hour in the park, stadium or in the forest, all the pressure had dissolved.

One evening when I went running to the stadium near my Berlin flat, I met Theo. Theo is a decade older than I am but we ran at a similar pace. We often met for a run and trained

together as I used to live just around the corner from his flat. A while into training with him I started running half and later full marathons, and I have been running marathons ever since.

Yet serious marathon training is very different from just running half an hour twice a week. I met Theo on Saturday mornings and drove to a lake near Berlin to run 25, 30 and sometimes even 35 km. During these long runs, we talked a lot. And that is perhaps the beginning of my autoethnography endeavour. I struggled at the time with the demands stemming from running a business. Theo listened, advised and helped me a lot. He had studied philosophy and worked for years as a social worker. However, at some point, he suggested I should seek professional advice. He gave me some contacts, and from that time on I have taken coaching sessions almost every month.

These sessions revolve around my professional practice. Often my coach urges me to reflexively approach the issues we discuss and asks me to explain the positions of others involved in the situation we discuss. Frequently, we engage in little role plays - he plays me, and I play someone else. I think I learned more about myself in these sessions than about others.

I believe, these coaching sessions paved the way for me doing autoethnography. I was introduced to the way of thinking which is essential in ethnography in general but especially in autoethnography. Given that I met my coach through Theo and met Theo through running, I consider long distance running as a special key to autoethnography.

In which direction do I run?

In chapter II, I explore the field of ethnography and aim to locate autoethnography within this realm. I discuss the origins of autoethnography, its different branches and what contributions it can make to knowledge. I then try to make the case for autoethnography within trust research and construction management research. I discuss ethnographic studies in both areas and will show that autoethnographies are almost absent despite the valuable

insights they could offer. I then outline my use of an autoethnographic approach for my research and the difficulties and issues I face, especially as I do it in my own business.

In chapter III, my focus lies on trust research. I show how the word ‘trust’ is used in everyday language and what we commonly refer to with it. I then concentrate on trust between people as distinguished from related concepts. I discuss the philosophical underpinning of trust and demonstrate the limits of trust research. In particular, I show that rational explanations of trust fail to account for the phenomena. This lack of rational explanation leads me to Lévinas.

In chapter IV, I introduce the ideas of Emmanuel Lévinas. Although, I provide some biographical data, my main focus is on his concepts of Same and Other as well as Saying and Said. I seek to locate trust within these concepts and try to address the rational shortcoming of previous trust research. Furthermore, I relate Lévinas’ ideas and trust to my experiences in business. Here, the autoethnographic material slowly comes into play and begins to fertilise my thinking about trust.

In chapter V, I reflect on my experiences in business. I seek to make the connections between Lévinas’ and my business practice stronger and more interconnected. Essentially, I try to draw a richer picture of my business practice and of how I think about it in the light of reading Lévinas. I show how responsibility, care, forgiveness, and trust are not only related but heavily interwoven and inextricably connected.

In chapter VI, I seek to develop my thinking. It is not so much advice for what to do next as for a slight but impactful way of thinking differently. It is a hermeneutic development of my thought. Yet these small changes in thinking are the ones that make me much more conscious about things that go on around me and at the same time much more relaxed. It is valuing the alterity of the Other and becoming aware of the lack of control about the ecosystem I am living in, as well as being ready to forgive and to trust, that contributes to this consciousness and relaxation.

In chapter VII, I reflect on the papers I have written and presented at conferences while working on this thesis. In so doing I can demonstrate how my thinking developed over the course of these 6 years.

In the closing thoughts I summarize what this work offers to managerial practice in the construction sector. I also review my contributions to autoethnographic methodology and trust research. Finally, I close this work with some thoughts about my own professional practice.

II. From Ethnography to Autoethnography

Brief Background

The following section provides an explanation of autoethnography and where I situate my approach within this field. This section draws strongly on previous work in which I explored this topic (Grosse, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2018; Grosse & Rose, 2016).

Firstly, I will sketch what ethnography is. My emphasis is on what ethnographers do and what kind of knowledge they may acquire. Then, I seek to show how others used ethnographic methods in construction management and trust research and indicate how autoethnography may contribute to the field of construction management and trust research. I will differentiate between different strands within this methodological field followed by an exploration of how I am going to employ autoethnography in this study.

Ethnography

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 2), ethnography has no "standard, well-defined meaning". I use the term in the sense of studying culture, such as a foreign country (e.g.; Geertz, 1972), a distinct social group (e.g.; Rambo Ronai, 1992), an organizational setting like a construction site management (e.g.; Sage, 2013) or even very personal stories embedded in social relations (e.g.; Ellis & Bochner, 1992). The possible fields of study are endless. More recently, ethnographic methods have gained importance in the field of management research (Denny & Sunderland, 2014).

Ethnographers study these cultures (or parts of them) using participation and observation. The ethnographer seeks to become part of that culture by taking part in its daily activities. This may turn out to be quite demanding task (e.g.; Sage, 2013). Marshall and Bresnen (2013), for instance, struggled to follow the actions that were going on at the building site of their study.

The researcher then takes extensive notes about her or his observations of events and conversations with the people studied. The ethnographer usually just makes brief jottings in the field - perhaps single words, which they later develop into longer fieldnotes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Although there are advantages of writing fieldnotes as soon as possible after or even while participating, the ethnographer has to make a trade-off between participating and writing. Emerson et al. (2011) emphasise the advantages and pitfalls of both approaches. Some decide to participate for an extended period and write afterwards because they do not want to interrupt the course of action by starting to write. Others may rather write during the event because memory is always fading. Either way, ethnographers write descriptions of the events they participate in and these descriptions form the basis for exploring the culture under study (e.g.; Emerson et al., 2011; van Maanen, 2011).

It is debatable whether material derived from observation or conversations (i.e. interviews) is more or less truthful. Some think the discussion is misleading because talking is also acting and events are not necessarily meaningful by themselves. Events obtain their meaning as participants talk about them (Atkinson & Coffey, 2001). The interview (or conversation) about the event "constitutes the site of meaning construction." (Sherman Heyl, 2001, p. 379). One could connect this discussion to the notions of "espoused theory" and "theory in use" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p. 561) – the rationale they claim to follow and which they actually follow. However, this is less relevant to my autoethnography, since I am the person acting and addressing meaning to my action.

Some call their material 'data.' However, I am cautious about this term as it suggests hard data like measurements. Fieldnotes are only one representation of the events. They are subjective recordings of the experiences of the ethnographer written at one point in the process of doing ethnography. The ethnographer then revises and reinterprets these fieldnotes. Hence, I refrain from talking about 'data' and prefer to call my fieldnotes and reflections 'material'.

It is very important to understand the process the ethnographer goes through during their research. Marshall and Bresnen (2013) describe themselves as interloper, spy, and consultant and assess the impact of these shifting identities on their research. These shifting identities have implication on what the researcher sees and how she or he understands the seen. Fieldnotes are never objective accounts of field experiences (van Maanen, 2011) and so I am reluctant to call them data. They are the material I created and with which I work.

Some may regard the 'unfinished', ever-evolving nature of fieldnotes as a weakness of ethnographic research. This criticism often comes from the positivist camp because ethnographers cannot provide a definitive answer to a question but only offer new interpretations of a phenomenon. Such new interpretations then serve as a springboard for further work. However, I consider the incompleteness of ethnographic research as its greatest value. It represents a more honest version of the social world I live in since my social environment is ever evolving and evades closure. As Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005) argue, it is a matter of shifting perspectives which make us see different things.

Therefore, ethnographers have to investigate the field and their own thoughts about their field of study from different points of view. In other words, "a good ethnographer immerses her- or himself in […] deep learning situations [...] where what is learned goes beyond what could be said in an interview and can only be known by being there, as events unfold" (Pink, Tutt, Dainty, & Gibb, 2010, p. 658).

In the last two decades, ethnographers have tended to apply ethnography in a more constructionist/interpretivist manner (e.g. the different volumes of Denzin and Lincoln (e.g.; 2005)). Nevertheless, ethnographers' texts range from realist to impressionist accounts (van Maanen, 2011). The realist tales tend to seek closure (van Maanen, 2011). Realist ethnographers attempt to write the researcher out of the text; as if the story is told from a neutral point of view and the researcher saw the things as they were (van Maanen, 2011). I consider an understanding of ethnography to always be an unfinished account of

experiences. It goes in line with Wolcott's observation that "first hand experiences" in the field are "both the starting point and the filter through which everything else is screened as we make sense of all that we have observed." (Wolcott, 1999, pp. 50-51) This sense-making and interpretation is ever-evolving and cannot be finished (Iser, 2000). Therefore, the ethnographer seeks more for patterns in the observed events (Wolcott, 2004) than for absolute law-like rules.

Autoethnography

"[T]here is always an autobiographical dimension to all ethnography" (Crapanzano, 1977, p. 72) and "[i]n a sense, all ethnography, is self-ethnography" (Goldschmidt, 1977, p. 294). They refer to what van Maanen later terms, "confessional and impressionist tales" – writings about the personal experiences of the researcher doing ethnography (2011). The writers above refer to cases where the ethnographer studies others in their environment and in these tales reflects on the process of doing research. However, I go further. I investigate my own native environment and focus on my experiences in my business context. This is autoethnography.

The autoethnographer explores the social setting which the researcher is already part of. The researcher uses the opportunities already at hand (Riemer, 1977). Therefore, getting access and participating does not pose an obstacle, because the researcher is already there and accepted as part of the culture to be studied. It is the researcher's own environment or "[m]y own story-that's what I am involved in" (Ellis, 2004, p. 128). This is problematic for the researcher, especially when it comes to ethical questions regarding personal relations. I will come back to this point later.

Part-time researchers like me are often unable to fully enter another setting because of their first occupation. Practitioners working full-time do not have the option to quit their job to immerse themselves somewhere else – they have to make a living (Anderson, 2006). Hence, autoethnography is probably the only option they have for doing ethnography.

Heider (1975) coined the term ‘autoethnography’ although he used it in a somewhat different sense – he is a researcher capturing native’s descriptions of what they do. Some years later, although admitting having heard it years before in a lecture, Hayano (1979) used the term in its current interpretation for the first time in a research paper. He played cards himself and studied professional card players (Hayano, 1983). He researched his “people”’ (Wolcott, 1999, p. 170). In doing so, he was already inside and knew the people and culture he researched. This understanding of autoethnography is common today.

Hayano considers the deep immersion and the insights gained as the advantages of autoethnography (Hayano, 1979). The subsequent understanding “could not have possibly taken place in any way other than full, complete long-term submersion, even communion, on the part of the ethnographer.” (Hayano, 1983, p. 155) It is important to perform the same or similar roles as the people studied (Hayano, 1983). However, he understands autoethnography to be the study of the group the researcher is already part of, rather than the study of the research’s self. Therefore, he argues “studies [...] which analyse one's own life through the procedures of ethnography are not only autoethnographic but also self-ethnographic […].” (Hayano, 1979, p. 103) But the self – as one sees in studies of native anthropologists (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984) - always plays a central role in studying one’s own culture and hence in autoethnography. Therefore, my understanding of the term is somewhat different.

I locate autoethnography as one branch within the field of ethnography. Autoethnography is an ‘umbrella term” for writings “with an ethnographic sensibility about [the researcher’s] own cultural milieu”, the exploration of personal experiences, and the study of “doing ethnography” (Reed-Danahay, 2009, pp. 30-31). Yet, one must acknowledge the difficulty to precisely define the term autoethnography and its use (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

One can approach autoethnography another way. Reed-Danahay (1997, p. 2) emphasises the term’s “double sense – referring either to the ethnography of one's own group or to

autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest." Hence, she attempts to "break down the distinction between autobiography and ethnography" and regards autoethnography in the midst of three writing genres: "native anthropology", "ethnic autobiography" and "autobiographical ethnography" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 2). Within this triangle, one may locate many different applications and names for doing autoethnography. I found the best collection of them in Ellis and Bochner (2000).

I tend towards the interpretation of "autobiographical ethnography" - emphasising my personal experiences and researching my own self. I understand autoethnography as "a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context." (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 9). Hence, I see myself as one of the ethnographers who will deliberately use "narrative accounts of their own lives to make a point." (Wolcott, 1999, p. 174) This is my story, and my personal understandings are central to this work. I therefore want to ensure that the "reader cannot fault the first-person orientation or personal nature" of my account (Wolcott, 1999, p. 175). That raises the question of whether "[t]he voice of the insider is assumed to be more true than that of the outsider" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, pp. 2-3).

I think this question is misleading. It is a subjective picture that I am painting as I conduct an interview with myself, report the events I lived through, and recount the conversations I had. Hence, the previous distinction I made between observation and talking about the event is blurred [see 'Ethnography' p. 16]. The only thing I have to offer is my interpretation of events and how I came to think so.

The autoethnographer's interactions and concurrent and subsequent thoughts, feelings and emotions are central to understand personal experiences (Ellis, 1999). A "professional researcher[…]" will "incorporate own personal narratives" in their research (Reed-Danahay, 2001, p. 407). In doing "[r]esearching and writing from the lived, inside moments of experience allows autoethnographers to cultivate an 'epistemology of insiderness,' of being able to describe an experience in a way that an 'outside' researcher never could." (Reinharz,

1992, p. 260 (cited in Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p. 31)). For me, it is one way of seeing – not better or worse than any other. As Hayano (1979) said, it is unique and perhaps insightful.

One might also ask the extent to which an insider might be or become native (Narayan, 1993). Through the process of research, I become less native. However, autoethnographers can offer "insights into social phenomena that we *cannot* observe directly, because the experiences occur in their own time, uninterrupted by the researcher's presence." (Adams, Holman Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p. 32 (emphasis in the original))

In the following two sections, I locate the ethnography approach within the construction management and trust research field seek to show what the insider approach may contribute to these two fields of research.

Autoethnography in Construction Management Research

Chan and Räisänen (2009, p. 909) spotted that "[d]eep ethnographic studies in the field of construction management are relatively rare." However, recently ethnography has gained some momentum and importance, as demonstrated by the edited work of Pink, Tutt, and Dainty (2013) and an upcoming edition of Construction Management and Economics on ethnography. Ethnographic studies deal with a variety of research subjects within the construction industry. For example, the spatial and temporal nature of construction work, health and safety issues, management practices, and the challenges for ethnographer in the field (Pink et al., 2013).

Yet, autoethnographic studies are rare in construction management research. I am only aware of two autoethnographic PhD studies underway (Cummins, Graham, Thomas, & Lucey, 2016; Whaley, 2016). In other fields such as sociology and communication research, autoethnography is a well-established method (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Some works in construction management research highlight the researcher's role e.g. Löwstedt (2014). He looks at what he can see and how his personality influences the research. However, he

went to the ‘foreign’ setting of a building site for his research. Similarly, Thiel (2005, 2010) went to building sites he was already familiar with, but he did so for research purposes. Kanjanabootra included reflections on his time as a manager in a wider ethnographic study (Kanjanabootra & Corbitt, 2016). All are, therefore, examples of autoethnographic elements in otherwise classic ethnographies (Crapanzano, 1977).

I have chosen to research on my home soil where I already am – in my own business. I take a closer look at my business environment and at how and why I act in my role as a business owner. Verkerk (2005) did similar work in a business context. He wrote about his personal experiences as a manager in different plants, but to my knowledge, this kind of work is not available for the construction industry.

Autoethnographic studies on management practice in the construction industry are almost non-existent. One may speculate about the reasons for this absence. Access, willingness and ability to expose oneself might be reasons. But the emergent nature of qualitative social research, which is unfamiliar to engineers and managers, might also be a deterrent. I could not anticipate what I would discover in my research because ethnographic research is emergent. I had to get used to this sort of research. For a detailed discussion of my approach and its contribution to construction management research I refer to my paper [see ‘Appendix J – An insider’s point of view (Grosse, 2018)’ p. 384]

Autoethnography in Trust Research

A significant part of research literature on trust is based on quantitative approaches. Some conceptualisation of trust is often required in quantitative research. This often results in a model of different variables. Researchers then build a research design and try to measure variables of this model. Most quantitative researchers use questionnaires in different forms but other methods such as experiments are also seen.

However, I see some linguistic, methodological, and philosophical limitations of quantitative studies on trust. For instance, to Smallbone and Lyon (2002, p. 21) “empirical

studies of the concept of trust always face linguistic difficulties". What do people actually mean when they say they trust someone? This is a difficult concept even for scholars to define (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). How then can it be adequately conveyed in a questionnaire?

Tillmar (2012, p. 102) argues: "Trust is a social phenomenon that is hard to measure adequately." One only needs to ask friends what the word trust means to them to see the difficulty. Not one of my friends has been able to answer this question without ambiguity. For Smallbone and Lyon (2002, p. 24) this amounts to the notion that "[q]uantitative data on trust is difficult to collect […]".

Welter and Alex (2015, p. 75) argue in the same vein, that "[t]rust, in particular, its understanding and interpretation, is also a socially constructed and context-dependent phenomenon, which renders its measurement and empirical analysis difficult." They go on to argue that "trust is a context-bound phenomenon influenced by cultural traditions and settings" (Welter & Alex, 2015, p. 78). It is therefore one of autoethnography's strength to explore the context of trust relations.

Another methodological concern is that measurement of trust needs predefined concepts otherwise measurement is pointless. The problem with research that starts off with such concepts is that the researcher puts all results into "tidy and [often] unexamined conceptual boxes" (Kabat-Zinn, 2002, p. 69). This leads to the following problem: "you may decide to use a different definition; but once you subscribe to [one] definition, you have to live up to it in your methods." (Lyon, Möllering, & Saunders, 2015, p. 3). Hence, the adopted concept of trust greatly limits what a researcher is able to find. In other words, when one looks for a relation between trust and ethnicity, all the data may be related according to this relation but might miss the promising links to other factors, such as education, gender, etc. Only what is considered in the model or actively provisioned by it is reflected in the results. But to my

understanding, confounding influences of trust relations in our social world are so complex that it is difficult to build such a model.

Exploring the research setting with what Kabat-Zinn (2002) called a "don't know mind" will be helpful here. We are often quick to give labels for our experiences but the labelling is the very act of categorising, of putting our experiences too quickly into conceptual boxes (Weick, 2006). However, it is worthwhile to look beyond these existing concepts. When we interpret our experiences through a new lens, "this action can generate a world not previously thought of" (Weick, 2006, p. 1731).

Therefore, more qualitative research on trust is needed because it explicitly seeks new perspectives on the phenomena. The need for more qualitative studies has been identified in trust research over recent years (e.g.; Lyon et al., 2015; Möllering, 2006, 2012; Möllering, Bachmann, & Lee, 2004). Roy Lewicki emphasises that "anthropology has a lot to contribute to understanding broader trust constructs, and [that trust researchers] need to learn more about methods from anthropology." (Gillespie, 2017, p. 14)

Although qualitative methods are the means to explore phenomena from a new perspective, they do not safeguard against the danger of reifying existing conceptual boxes. Of course, one needs to know what to look for – the sense of significance identified by Emerson et al. (2011), but there is always the risk of missing important aspects when looking at phenomena from an particular angle. It is important to be aware of the concepts used and to question the underlying assumptions reflectively.

Möllering et al. (2004, p. 560) emphasise that an aim of qualitative studies should be to "perform collective 'reality checks' on concepts." This is to explore the "tidy and unexamined conceptual boxes" discussed by Kabat-Zinn (2002). This inevitably leads to deeper questions about trust – the need to explore it in more depth and to look for its origins.

There is a substantive body of research available on trust but I know of only a few ethnographers researching trust (e.g.; Tillmar, 2012; Verkerk, 2005) and am not aware of

any autoethnographic work. Autoethnography offers the possibility to explore personal experiences in great depth – the feelings, emotions, and thoughts and the context and personal history in which they appear. I readily access my thoughts and feelings and look for underlying reasons and causes. I reflexively explore the inner processes that happen during an event (Grosse, 2016a) and in doing so, I develop my understanding of the concept of trust.

By researching my own environment over an extended period of time, I address "a lack of dynamic orientation in researching trust processes, the changing nature of trust, and the reasons for (not) trusting one another in business relationships" (Welter & Alex, 2015, p. 79). But this dynamic orientation raises two questions: where will my research journey lead? and what will I learn?

To state from the outset where my research journey will take me is somewhat odd for an ethnographer as ethnography and especially autoethnography are emergent research designs. I started with a vague idea of researching negotiation. I use the term to refer to my daily interaction with others in my business. This includes face-to-face meetings (e.g.; Grosse, 2015b), but also phone calls, letter, emails etc. (e.g.; Grosse, 2016a). In fact, almost every act of communication amounts to some form of negotiation.

My observations are made about negotiations and these negotiations are the stages in which trust appears. But from the outset the fieldnotes revealed that the negotiations I am involved in are not one-off events. I met the same people again and again and we negotiated repeatedly. I learned that trust played a crucial role in these negotiations. Hence, my focus shifted away from negotiation to the notion of trust.

Knowledge

What can ethnographers know? I am tempted to answer this question with “something” and “almost nothing.”

> *We are part of a larger scheme of things than we cannot understand. We cannot describe it in the way in which external objects or the characters of other people can be described, by isolating them from the historical 'flow' in which they have their being, and from the 'submerged', unfathomed portions of themselves [...]; for we ourselves live in this whole and by it, and are wise only in the measure to which we make our peace with it. (Berlin, 2013, p. 79)*

From the field of history, Berlin makes the point that we only know very little. However, he makes it clear that we can explore human interaction in great depth but need to be aware of the context in which our knowledge is embedded (Berlin, 2013).

What do I mean by "almost nothing"? The fieldnotes I collect are my qualitative "data". I am reluctant to regard it as hard data as I write the fieldnotes as a recollection of past events – some very recent, some even years ago. Loss and change of memory play a significant role when one seeks to assess the quality of these fieldnotes and how they reflect the actual event. These notes are my subjective accounts and others might have experienced the event completely differently. I only see a tiny bit of what is going on in the first place (Berlin, 2013). This very limited scope of my perception makes me say that I know almost nothing.

I also base my knowledge on my experience and compare it to what I find in the literature. A quantitative researcher would say my sample size equals one, so I cannot claim validity, reliability, or generalisability. I can never know how others understand their experiences. Hence, what I know is "almost nothing" compared to the possible range of perceptions and interpretations of the events I write about.

However, I do know "something" when it comes to the depth of knowing about my experiences. Ethnographies are not about general unchallengeable knowledge but about a particular understanding of the field of study – a culture, a group, a social practice, an event. It is this depth I am aiming for.

I seek to gain depth predominantly by digging deep into my experiences. I aim to explore what I think and feel and why I think and feel this. Why did I act or react in a situation as I did? What was the cause of this action or reaction? Is there more behind the reason than I initially thought. The depth comes with the answers to the question since the answers lead to new questions and further delving into the questions. It is reflexivity which I seek to use to understand my experiences better. In this sense, I may know "something" and perhaps something special (Grosse, 2016a, 2018).

I draw on the idea of critical reflection to develop my reflexive skills because in my understanding, reflexivity and critical reflection have much in common. To clarify what I mean by reflexivity I need to distinguish it from simple reflection. Reflecting is contemplating past, present, or future. This cause-effect-relation is the way I was taught while studying for my engineering degree. I can say without any emotional involvement how much iron reinforcement a concrete beam requires to bear the loads it is designed to withstand. I can look at the equation from a distance and solve it. It does not matter to the beam and to the equation who I am or what I think; I can completely distance myself from this question and the possible answer.

However, I cannot remain distant from human interactions and in particular my own endeavour. I become part of the equation. My contemplation of my action reflects my own action, what I do, what I think and who I am. Thus, in recognising the impact of my action, I see myself through the other (Chiseri-Strater, 1996). The consequence of this thinking is that there is no unbiased observation. I bring 'something' with me (experiences, attitudes, assumptions) and this 'something' shapes what I see. But as soon as I realise part of this 'something', it begins to change. I approach further observation and interpretations with a different 'something'. It is an ongoing hermeneutic process which constantly moves from the whole to the particular and back again. Within each circular movement, the

interpretations of the whole and the particular shift and there is no final interpretation to expect (Iser, 2000).

> *A neutral, simple social reality that can be depicted or interpreted does not exist. Researchers must actively work with language and texts that have an ambiguous relation to signification and meanings – manifesting their local, contextual and arbitrary nature. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 200)*

Moreover, the environment I explore is evolving and changing all the time. What I learn today about a person in my business environment is subject to change. For instance, a supplier might be desperate to win a contract today, but tomorrow he might be bought out and the whole power balance between us would change. So, I must be wary of what I claim to know about my surroundings. But the more complex issue is what happens to me.

As I learn about my environment including myself and others, I as the knower change. The container in which the knowledge is stored changes during the process of learning. As Iser (2000) explains, by learning about the particular I understand the whole differently and subsequently understand its parts differently. These circular learning processes cannot be brought to an end (Moon, 2006).

I therefore rely on critical reflection or reflexivity to constantly challenge and fertilise my learning processes. There are slight differences between critical reflection and reflexivity. Critical reflection always follows some political agenda – it aims at social change (Bohman, 2016) – whereas reflexivity in a postmodern understanding is deconstruction (Cunliffe, 2003).

This deconstruction and the suspension of concepts leads to a vacuum. It seems as if there is nothing left to hold on, which often feels disturbing. However, as Derrida (1992) points out, after each suspension of a concept – i.e. questioning assumptions – the void left is immediately filled with responsibility in a pre-conceptual sense. Derrida (1992, p. 20) draws

on Plato's Republic and terms it a "responsibility before the very concept of responsibility that regulates the justice and appropriateness (justesse) of our behaviour, of our theoretical, practical, and ethico-political decisions."

Postmodernism refers to the ethics of the 'good beyond' concept (Bauman, 1993) or as the 'Good beyond essence' (Lévinas, 1974b). This implies that as soon as concepts emerge they should be challenged (Lévinas, 1974b). Caputo neatly demonstrates this in his example of an accident (2000, p. 111). Every new event asks for a new explanation. Hence, reflexivity cannot lead to an endpoint. Even if critical reflection aims for social change, it has no logical end (Moon, 2006). Hence, I can understand a bit more about my experiences, but they will always escape full comprehension. There is always the possibility of going deeper into an experience and the perspectives I could apply are unlimited. Berlin summarises my view of what I think I am able to know and what I am aiming for in my research.

> *"It is a view of reality which makes all clear, logical and scientific constructions - the well-defined, symmetrical patterns of human reason - seem smooth, thin, empty, 'abstract' and totally ineffective as means either of description or of analysis of anything that lives, or has lived." (Berlin, 2013, p. 69)*

The permanent challenge of interpretation and the unfinished nature of my writing and understanding reflects the deconstructive power of my experiences. This deconstruction is inherent in my management practice and surfaces through reflection. It manifests itself in a reflexivity on practice, in practice and of practice. For a longer discussion of their working, I refer to my paper in Construction Management and Economics [see 'Appendix J – An insider's point of view (Grosse, 2018)' p. 384]

My Way of Doing Autoethnography

Two months into the research program, I realised I only had a few options to research negotiation. I wanted to research real word settings and sought to relate my research closely to my managerial practice. Ethnographic research provides these features. One might argue that other forms of research would also have these two features, such as study research or action research.

However, because I run my own construction business – here the 'auto' comes into play – I frequently participate in negotiations with architects, engineers, suppliers, and clients and so exploring these negotiations autoethnographically was the most feasible option. I did not attempt to change anything from the outset of my research and so action research was not an option and I was not interested in one particular case so case study research was also not an option. It may be said that action research and autoethnography are closely related (Grosse & Rose, 2016). In some respects, as Ellis (1999, p. 677) puts it, I do 'action research for the individual'.

Taking notes on these negotiations is my personal opportunity (Riemer, 1977). I would argue that this is opportunistic research. As Anderson (2006) notes, when running a business, it is not feasible to go anywhere else. I am supposed to research in my own backyard (Wolcott, 1999). But the same logic applies to many full-time academics doing ethnographic research (or anything else). They do not have the opportunity to do research from inside a company and so their options are limited in a different way. They often only have the option to approach the research from the outside. This does not render either approach better or worse. Both have their own value and limitation.

Ethnographers write fieldnotes, whether or not they are autoethnographers. In my case, these notes contain a record of the negotiations and what I thought and felt regarding them. I often use a voice recorder to take first notes after the event while driving. Later in the

evening, I sit down and write more extensive descriptions of my experiences and reflections on them.

Writing in the evening

It's nine in the evening; I just took the kids, Anna and Bertram, to bed. They struggled to fall asleep. They sometimes do if they watch too much 'video' as Bertram likes to call the cartoons they watch on Netflix. I go briefly to the kitchen; Charo asks whether I would like some wine. I decline, at least for the moment and tell her that I'll go to my desk to write a bit.

I was angry today because I had a meeting that didn't go the way I had wanted it to. I felt like writing about it. I hoped for some relief, for letting off some steam, for some clarity. It usually works very well.

***

One of my staff members and I met a potential client and his engineer to discuss the offer we sent him a couple of weeks ago. We were early and so waited for some 5 minutes on the sidewalk in front of the engineer's office. The client who I had met once before on the building site, picked us up and guided us to the office, which was actually a bit difficult to find - in the third courtyard behind a side entrance.

When we met first, we had a walk through the old house that is going to be changed. It is an old five-storey building. On each floor, some 20 square meters should be added, and an additional storey should be built on top. We walked through the house and went through the design in order to discuss what our job should be. The client later sent me the design and asked whether we could make him an offer.

Of course we could, but usually, a quantity surveyor develops a bill of quantities from the design. But here they asked us to do it. So, we did the job of the quantity survey, which is worth approximately 2.000 Euros, calculated our offer and sent it to the client. But we only sent him the verbal description for each part of the work and what each part costs in sum. What we did not do was supply him with the actual quantities and the prices per unit. In other words, we told him only which sum he might have to pay for the steel, but not how much steel we thought was necessary nor what a kilogram of steel costs. Hence, we did the job of the quantity surveyor in order to calculate a reliable offer, but we did not supply him with a bill of quantities. In another case, I had done that only to find out the client or the architect took it and forwarded it to a competitor. In the end, we did not get the job and, therefore, got no reward for producing the bill of quantities. I wanted to avoid a similar scenario here.

When the meeting began, the first thing, the engineer complained about was not knowing what was in our offer because she could not see the quantities or their respective prices. I told them about my experiences and that I was not willing to hand it over without getting rewarded for it. I proposed some agreement that in case we didn't get the job we would get paid for measuring the quantities. This wasn't discussed at length, and the talk went on.

However, the engineer did not miss any opportunity to complain about the lack of quantities in our offer, although I gave her the reason for not providing the bill of quantities. Actually, I thought she did not listen to us at all. At some point, I was fed up by that and told her that I thought doing the quantity surveyor's job is what she's supposed to do rather than me. And that

given that it is some sort of concession on our side doing it, she may not be in the position to complain about it at all. Later I renewed my offer to hand it over in exchange for some agreement to pay us, but the client refused to accept. I immediately asked myself whether it was their aim to get it for free like the others.

During the talk, we dealt with issues of how the construction process could and should work, which materials and techniques might be used and what our offer should contain. Some of our proposals differed from what the engineer had designed in the first place. This is not uncommon because engineers see things differently from construction companies. But here she was constantly defensive. She fought for her original design in a fierce manner that looked unusual to me.

Listening to some of her arguments, doubts about her competence loomed. There were some mistakes in the drawings, there were some misconceptions about how things should be built, I had a different understanding of functions like, for instance, how noise insulation could be safeguarded. I mentioned my concerns, but I didn't insist on them because otherwise, the situation might have escalated. At the end of the meeting, we agreed to meet again at the building site in order to examine and measure some things that should come into our offer.

When we left, we went to a coffee shop next door, and I told my calculator how upset I was about the engineer. Actually, he had done the surveying work and had even more reason to be angry.

***

After around an hour, I wrote down my experience and felt a bit relieved. In the meantime, I wrote an email to my calculator detailing a

> *misconception of the engineer and expressing my frustration with the meeting. Then I went back to the kitchen, the kids were already asleep, Charo was reading something, and we had a glass of Spanish Garnacha.*

That is the way I collect most of my fieldnotes. I sit down in the evenings and write about events that bothered me. When I feel strongly that something might be important but I do not understand what was going on, then I write about it. Emerson et al. (2011) talk about a sense of significance which the ethnographer develops over time. I think, in autoethnography, strong feelings are an indicator of events that have significance for me. It is similar to Ellis' (2004) note-taking about her experiences living with a terminally ill and dying partner. At the time of writing, she did not know what use the notes would become. It is also what van Maanen (2011) calls ‘confessions’. He talks about field-workers who went to strange places and then reflected on their experiences. I did not go anywhere else to study an unfamiliar group or foreign culture but explored my own environment, experiences and myself. For me, there is no such thing as becoming familiar with the setting (van Maanen, 2011). It is more about the struggle of being an insider and passionate about my business and maintaining a dispassionate view of daily affairs in writing analytically about them (van Maanen, 2011).

But there is also a risk. I write about things that bother me but the mundane events might also have significance. I do not recognise them because I take them for granted. For instance, without smoothly running business interactions, caring partners, and responsible staff members my work would have no enjoyment - just struggle and fight. These events are unnoticed, because they are not bothering or disturbing but are probably no less significant.

I draw a subjective picture of my world but I seek to transform this subjectivity. I constantly try to reinterpret the reading of my experiences anew (Iser, 2000). I know that I cannot unlearn things and can only add new learning and reinterpretation to what is already

learned. However, my knowing is strongly influenced by my emotionality since this is one of the filters I constantly apply to my perception of the world.

In this work, I draw on experiences predominantly from the last four years. However, I may also use memories from earlier – prior to starting my business in 1999. For reasons of confidentiality, I do not provide an exact date of the events but rather an approximate period. Hence, the reader can locate the events in my development, yet the persons involved are safeguarded.

The fieldnote above contains the description of the actual event and also some hints of my feeling and emotions. Rereading it, I ask myself what I felt and why these feeling occurred. This is sociological introspection - "understanding the lived experience of emotions" (Ellis, 1991, p. 26). Hence, I investigate the "fusion of private and social" (Ellis, 1991, p. 26).

Some proponents of ethnography are critical of ethnographies in which the author takes centre stage (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Wolcott, 1999). Anderson (2006) proposes analytic autoethnography as an alternative to evocative autoethnographies as proposed by for instance Ellis (1999) but also Bochner and Ellis (2016); Ellis (1999). Anderson and later Charmaz (2006) made a case for the analytic form of autoethnography which puts more focus on observation than on the author. They do not ask for a "silent authorship" (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996), however, to them the author should step into the background paving the ways to place autoethnography within the realm of realist ethnography.

However, I believe it is difficult to maintain an ethnographic distance which allows for such positioning as I am far too involved in my daily business. It is difficult for ethnographers to claim to write a realist tale about others (van Maanen, 2011) but even more difficult, if not impossible, for autoethnographers like me. Since I am both the researcher and the subject I cannot step aside, as suggested by e.g. Wolcott (1999). Rather I follow Holman Jones, Adams, and Ellis (2013, p. 34) emphasising the value of autoethnography as

"[c]entring the work inside personal experience, autoethnographers not only have an investment in the experience they study but can also articulate aspects of cultural life traditional research methods leave out or could not access." I like to emphasise the insider's view. It is explicitly not my aim to step aside but to locate myself within my ecosystem. Then the reader does not get lured into thinking she or he reads a realist tale but understands that this is my subjective view.

However, as with Anderson, Charmaz, and Mitchell (Anderson, 2006; Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996), my claims are the product of a subject observation and are, therefore, problematic. I am a trained carpenter, business owner, father, civil engineer, and was brought up in socialist East Germany, to name only a few features that form my personality. I am therefore unable to give a realist account, yet I can constantly challenge what I am saying and writing. Some may regard writing about myself as 'self-indulgence' but dealing with myself is necessary for the reader to connect to what I am living through and what it means to me and subsequently to the reader (Sparkes, 2002). As an example, I return to the story about the bill of quantities. Thinking about my anger the following inner dialogue unfolded.

> *So why were you angry?*
>
> *Look they gave us just the drawing and a description of the project, and we put quite a bit of effort into surveying the quantities. The first thing they did was to complain. We did her work, the client should pay for it, but she did not, and we worked hard and now we do not even get a 'thank you' - no we got blamed for not handing over our work for free … come on do they think we are complete idiots?*
>
> *But that is a very emotional reaction. You could have refused to do the surveyors job, couldn't you?*

Yes, that's true. But if another contractor had done the quantities they might have sent it to a couple of competitors. But that's what I sought to avoid.

Well, then what are you complaining about?

It's the way they urged me to give it to them. The underlying assumption that they can get it for free, this sort of openly seeking to exploit my good will. They knew how much this work cost. They knew that they saved money. I think they knew very well, why we did not give it to them. It's perhaps thinking that we are naïve enough to give it to them.

But you did it before. Maybe that's what made you angry?

Well, perhaps I am not angry about them rather about myself. Actually, last year I did exactly that and the architect back then just took our bill of quantities, copied into their form and sent it out to our competitor.

Then the anger was directed to the architect from last year, wasn't it?

Yes, in part, but also to the client and the engineer since they sought to do the same thing.

How can you know?

Well, a colleague told me that I should be careful with him in this regard.

Ah, so you're assuming that?

Yes, but the reaction when they did not get the documents as they wanted them was the revealing part. It was more how they acted at the very moment as what they actually said. Of course, they could not evaluate our offer in depth, but the anger I saw in them seems to have little to do with that. It was unauthentic, far more than what fitted the reason they gave us. Therefore, I assumed that the real reason had to be something else.

But, aren't you jumping too fast to some conclusion?

Yes, perhaps. But I had to make up my mind. I am supposed to act on what I know. I am under pressure to make decisions.

Writing up this dialogue is an important process. Writing as a means of exploring thinking plays an important role for qualitative researchers. Sartre states: "I would write out what I had been thinking about beforehand but the essential moment was that of writing itself" (Sartre, 1975, p. 5). It is the very writing process that makes me think. As I move my fingers over the keyboard, I fix the thought and take the elusiveness from the thought. I am then able to analyse, scrutinise, and develop it. In this example, I sought to investigate my underlying thinking and reasons. Writing becomes my "method of inquiry." (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005)

Moreover, writing this dialogue provides the possibility to step into two roles and play with the space between them. To Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 90) some intellectual 'distance' is essential "[f]or it is in the space created by this distance that the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done. Without that distance, without such analytical space, the ethnography can be little more than autobiographical account of personal conversion." This distance is then the liminal space (Iser, 2000) created by translating experiences into theory.

But the notion of distance can also imply a conception of realist ethnography. It suggests that the researcher might be a neutral observer. But I wonder whether there is an answer to

Wolcott's quest if one might "become so involved as to make observation itself virtually impossible?" (1999, p. 48). I believe that it is impossible to avoid or escape involvement or subjectivity. It is essential to constantly step back and see what this involvement does to the sense-making process. It must become a deconstructive exercise, as mentioned earlier in this chapter [see also 'Appendix J – An insider's point of view (Grosse, 2018)' p. 384]. One must be constantly aware that "[t]he investigator would always be implicated in the product."(Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 35)

Since the researcher is always part of the product – the ethnography, he is always subject to certain personal constraints. I fulfil a dual role of researcher and practitioner. Therefore, I am now going to look closer at the ethical considerations that guide my research practice.

Researching and Running My Own Business –Ethical Considerations

After all, one cannot be a self on one's own. (Brennan, 2012, p. 40)

I am deeply embedded in my social relationships – with my staff, my clients, my suppliers, and a number of others around me. Hence the autoethnography is not only about me, but also the people I interact with. The goal of my research is to investigate trust developments in real-world settings and my business environment offers me a great opportunity to do this. But my practice as a business owner does not belong to me alone - it always involves others (Ellis, 2009).

There are common interests between the businessman and researcher, for instance, understanding the meaning and explanations of certain phenomena. But there are also differences. The businessman's priority is to maintain good business relations, but the researcher's is to gain insights and understanding. Occasionally these differences cause tension.

To understand these emerging dilemmas, I investigate the different interests affected by my study. Adopting their inherent perspectives highlights the conflict. In the end, I need to reconcile these interests which will inevitably be a trade-off between them.

The Researcher's Concerns:

My interest as a researcher is to observe my environment in as unbiased a state as possible. However, my learning process and the transformations that happen to me mediate and influence what I can see and how I act. Hence, in ethnographic research, the unbiased research setting is impossible to achieve but I seek to depict my environment as neutrally as possible.

One issue that may be a significant influence to participants' behaviour is to disclose that I am doing research on trust and negotiation – this would cause a great deal of reactivity (Saunders, 2012). When I meet people for the first time and start to build a relationship with them, to disclose my research agenda upfront would alienate them – it would be impractical and tactless (Tullis, 2013). In some cases, it may even result in a cancellation of the business relationship.

Approaching people later in the process to ask for consent seems much more feasible. Once a trusting relationship is built, the information about the research will not change the past experience but might influence participants' and my interpretation of the events.

Past experiences will inevitably influence future negotiations and are a valuable source for reflection. Gaining retrospective consent will do little to affect the experiences. Hence, at first sight, retrospective consent seems to work for methodological concerns.

But where on the spectrum – between informing participants that research is happening and checking every word that is written about them – do I situate my consent request? (Spicker, 2011) Just informing them about the overall nature of my project might suggest further questions but revealing every word written might upset or hurt them or even cause them to object to certain parts of my writing (Ellis, 2009).

This can influence what I write. Therefore, it might be best to follow Ellis' (2009) advice to write first for me and later imagine my participants as the audience. Moon (2006) notes similar effects of the anticipated audience when reflecting on journal writing for oneself or for external examination. Hence, I can only decide if and how much to disclose once I have written my fieldnotes and made some initial analysis.

Furthermore, the relationships I want to include in my study range from complete trust to bitter conflict and so a one-fits-all-approach will not work. I therefore need to take the specific context into account to conduct research ethically.

Participant's Interests:

My business partners and employees have a right to privacy and self-determination. In most cases, I will be able to obscure their identity by using pseudonyms, changing identifying details, collapsing characters, fictionalising, etc. (Ellis, 2009; Tullis, 2013). In some cases, it is very difficult to obscure a person's identity, e.g. those very close to me, such as my father, certain employees and intimate business partners. When it is impossible or impractical to obscure their identity, it is necessary to gain their informed consent and discuss in detail what I am going to write about them and let them read it beforehand. This might lead to parts of the writing being altered or another perspective added or left out (Ellis, 2009).

The choice seems to be either to reach consent or write them out of the fieldnotes but it is not that simple. People close to me might have difficulty objecting to my writing because of our relationship (Tolich, 2010). My father, for instance, wants me to be successful with my thesis; hence, he might find it hard to object to anything I write about him. In this case written consent might fail its intended purpose completely (Ellis, 2009). The situation is similar for some employees and business partners as they are not in an equal power position. They might expect disadvantages if they do not agree to consent. In these cases, I deliberately frame the story so that these people do not appear.

Informed consent might be interpreted in different ways. One might say that informing participants that research is underway is enough; others might call for complete disclosure of all collected and written material (Spicker, 2011). But complete disclosure is seldom possible, hence all research has some covert elements (Spicker, 2011).

Furthermore, the concept of informed consent is highly questionable when – as in my case – dealing with people unfamiliar with social research methodology. Introducing and explaining my research is often followed by a question like "Auto-… what?" People around me simply do not know what ethnography is, let alone autoethnography. How then could they decide what implications my writings could have on them? Hence, in some cases, I cannot obscure the identity of a person and so I seek to frame the story so that they do not appear at all. Although this is an alteration of my experiences, this little 'dishonesty' is justified for the sake of participants' protection (Ellis, 2009; Tullis, 2013).

The guiding principle here is not to hurt the participants (Spicker, 2011; Tullis, 2013). I avoid hurting participants if I make them unidentifiable in my thesis. This means every reader, including the participants themselves. Reading an unfavourable or uncomfortable passage about oneself could cause a lot of unease or pain even if nobody other than the participant is able to identify them (Ellis, 2009). Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005, p. 966) alert us by saying: "Writing stories sensitise us to the potential consequences of all of our writings by bringing home - inside our home and workplaces - the ethics of representation."

Consequently, I need to be very careful when deciding what I will write. It requires constant reflective and thoughtful role-taking as a means to anticipate the impact of my text (Ellis, 2009). Therefore, Ellis (2009) emphasises that fieldnotes might be edited up until publication to safeguard participants, but also the researcher. As an ethnographer, I am able to take "a situated and pragmatic ethical decision" about the content of my writing (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005, p. 966).

For example, when I want to write about a participant who is easily identifiable and acts in a way that seems irrational or is difficult to explain, I should not publish this event even if the participant had given consent to publication in advance. However, the event might find access to my study in a fictionalised way to safeguard the participant's anonymity. In this way, I can safeguard the participants' well-being but use and interpret my experience. Hence, we now need to look at the researcher's – the author's – interests.

Author's Interest

Here two of my roles interact. I am the business owner and researcher. As a business owner, I want my business relations to be not at all or only minimally negatively influenced by my research. However, I want to learn about my research topic as much as possible, since that will help me to cope with my daily business better. In this sense, autoethnography is action research for myself (Ellis, 2009). As a researcher, I want to stay as close as possible to the guideline of ethical practice in autoethnography (Tullis, 2013).

This poses a dilemma for me. The guidelines urge me to gain informed consent (Ellis, 2009; *Research Ethics: A Handbook of Principles and Procedures*, 2008; Tullis, 2013) which will inevitably influence my business relationships.

I talked to some of my business partners about my research project and the reactions were in general positive. Most were sincerely interested in my research. We discussed their negotiation experiences and what role trust plays for them. However, they often asked what I will do when I finish my PhD and whether I plan to leave the business. I assured them that this is not my plan and that I aim to work as part-time lecturer or researcher. But still, these questions left them scrutinising the long-term prospect of our business relationship. Hence, my relationship with my employees could be harmed by disclosing my research agenda.

It is similar to doing research in general. People often see the downsides. Researching, reading, writing, and thinking requires time. I cannot dedicate this amount of time to business purposes. However beneficial my new knowledge for my business might become, I need to

spend a lot of time and effort to acquire it beforehand. I need to take the necessary time from business projects. Hence, I may pay less attention to my custumers' concerns. I often feel as if I run my business only by the notion of 'good enough' for the time being but not 'good enough' for the long term.

Another concern is what will I be able to reveal by researching my business partners? I could think of situations when business partners are afraid of what the results of my research might be. They might suspect that I will manipulate them for my benefit and their disadvantage. I may counter that by full disclosure. When they understand how I make sense of my experience they might lose their fear. However, I still run the risk of being unable to convince them that their fear is unfounded.

My employees are haunted by similar concerns. There was a rumour in my office about what happens once the PhD is finished. Some suspected that I may leave and close my company. This is a very bleak outlook for most employees. To counter such thinking is quite tricky and hard work. I need to engage in research and put a lot of effort into it but I also need to display a commitment to my business to convince my employees and partners of my sustained interest in maintaining it.

Furthermore, some of my employees may feel somehow coerced into participating in my research. However, the benefits of this endeavour are predominantly mine – deeper knowledge, Ph.D., new career options etc. They may benefit from my knowledge when I put it into practice; however, that is quite far in the future. Compared to the risks (inherent in being a research subject and dependent employee) the possible benefits appear rather limited.

Some of my business partners and most of my employees have not had the opportunity to enrol in a university or other higher education institution. Therefore, they will inevitably have a different perspective on research. Some might regard my research as merely a hobby - something for academics in their ivory towers but not for someone who has both feet on

the ground. In these cases, I need to be careful whether and how much of my research project I disclose.

I need to draw the attention to the more personal interests for me. Writing autoethnographic work always requires self-disclosure. But to what extent do I want to disclose my emotions to others? How much vulnerability do I want to display? These are questions that cannot be answered upfront. It is part of the investigation to learn about emotions and vulnerabilities and only when the investigation proceeds can I begin to answer them.

I want others to know what I felt in a particular situation, however, the situations and the feelings I want them to know about need to be thoughtfully selected. This cannot be done beforehand, since the very process of thinking through these situations, "figuring out what to do, how to live, and what [my] struggles mean", and composing text about them is the research process of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 111). Unless the meaning of an experience is investigated, I cannot make any decision about whether and how to write about it. For Ellis "[t]he turn to autoethnography in qualitative research is connected with a shift from viewing our observations of others as nonproblematic to a concern about power, praxis, and the writing process." (Ellis, 2008, pp. 2-3) Therefore, Ellis (2009, p. 317) claims, when it is properly done, autoethnography is 'ethical practice' in itself. Her claim seems bold but awareness of the problems is a necessary step to take when attempting to research ethically.

Summary

In this chapter, I have briefly introduced ethnography in general and autoethnography in particular. I emphasised that autoethnography can contribute by drawing a local, personal, contextual, and subjective picture of the culture the researcher explores - in my case a view from a business owner in the German construction industry.

Although there is a growing interest in ethnographic research in the construction industry, autoethnography is lacking in construction management research. Autoethnographies are, to my knowledge, almost non-existent in construction management and can, therefore, provide a rich insider's picture of the world of a business owner. My contribution may offer material for the thoughts of others in the industry (Grosse, 2016a, 2018). Trust research is dominated by quantitative research and there is a significant body of qualitative studies available, as well as some ethnographies. But autoethnographies explicitly dealing with trust are very rare. Hence, the view from the inside might provide some new perspectives on trust.

I use the example of how I collect fieldnotes and how I interpret my experiences to make a case for an evocative autoethnography; an interpretation and use of autoethnography criticised by some and promoted by others. This insider's view requires numerous decisions about what, how and about whom to write. Therefore, I sought to highlight some ethical considerations and questions regarding my autoethnographic research. My dual role as business owner and researcher contains supplementing and contradicting interests. To reconcile the interests of researcher, participants and business owner is a major task. For me, the dominant tension lies in trying not to hurt anybody but to be as honest and authentic within the fieldnotes I present.

The subject and the focus of my research has major implications for my research practice. Hence, after each reiteration on the research focus, some sort of fine-tuning regarding the methodology is necessary. In the next chapter, I will explore conceptual issues of trust in more depth. I am especially interested in the question of to what extent rationality can explain trust between people.

Some Final Reflections

Throughout the writing of this chapter, I asked myself: Why am I writing this? Does the reader already know this? Of course, the reader knows. But there are different possible

understandings of autoethnography (Charmaz, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Hence, it was important to me to make clear how I understand and apply autoethnography. I feel a tension between analytic and evocative autoethnography. I think I tend more to the evocative camp promoted by Bochner and Ellis (2016). However, at the same time, I feel an urge to analyse my experience and to make my work sound scientific.

This tension will surface again in the third chapter when I explore Lévinas' thought. There are parallels between analytic/evocative and Lévinas' notion of rational/pre-rational. I think the power of Ellis' stories and the way she makes readers feel and empathise is strongly related to the pre-rational or non-rational part of our selves. However, both the rational and non-rational always come together – as I will show when dealing with Lévinas' thought. Hence, we cannot separate analytical and evocative ethnography completely. Autoethnographies move along a continuum between both forms (Grosse, 2018) and one is well-advised to refrain from emphasising one over the other since there is no single right way to do autoethnography. (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2013).

The earlier hints to Lévinas were minor but are developed in the next chapter about the rational and non-rational elements of trust and fully explored when I look at Lévinas' thinking. Edward Trezise made me aware of how Derrida (1967, p. 398) saw Lévinas' thought: as "the infinite insistence of waves on a beach: return and repetition, always, of the same wave against the same shore, in which, however, as each return recapitulates itself, it also infinitely renews and enriches itself." Through our conversations I adopted the metaphor of the wave; sometimes the waves are small and calm and at other times they are huge and powerful and hit the shore with noise and power, but they always trickle through the little stones and get everywhere.

III. Trust

In this section I give a brief overview of how I conceptualise trust. I emphasise the fact that trust only occurs in the absence of complete knowledge and therefore always involves some form of risk or uncertainty. The incompleteness of our knowledge about the person we trust leads me to question whether trust can solely be explained in terms of knowledge, reason, and ontology.

However, one must be cautious when searching for clarification of a concept in ethnographic research. Although, the researcher should have some knowledge of the research field and some problems in mind (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), to interpret the meaning of 'trust' too narrowly may inhibit me from seeing the wider picture. This can result in a sort of tunnel vision, i.e. only seeing what I am expecting to see. Although, too broad a view also has its dangers. It is essential to observe my experiences in a focused manner to develop a sense of significance (Emerson et al., 2011). Hence, I go on to outline how I use the term trust. This interpretation should give this work some direction. However, I leave it open to later revision and refinement.

First, I explore the everyday usage of 'trust' and then I look into the treatment of trust and its related concepts in philosophy. Subsequently, I draw on other human science disciplines such as sociology, law and management since trust is a concept used across a wide range of disciplines. This view is supported by the Journal of Trust Research as it defines itself as "an inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural journal". Therefore, I think, my interdisciplinary approach to conceptualising trust is justified.

I go on to look at the different viewpoints on a trust relationship from the trustors, the trusted and the third party to the relationship between trustor and trusted. I look for the roots of the risk involved in a trust relationship. Here, I emphasise the role of control over and knowledge of the Other. Our limited knowledge of the Other – of the trusted – inevitably

requires us to trust and demonstrates the limits of rationality in trust relationships. It is the failure of rationality to explain trust that led me to explore Lévinas' thought.

What does it mean 'to trust'?

"Trust is as elusive in philosophy as it can be in practice."(Bailey, 2006, p. 1)

The question, 'What does it mean 'to trust'?' might take a lifetime to answer. However, I seek to shed some light on it. In our daily lives, we hear the word 'trust' or 'to trust' quite often. We discuss whether to trust the government, our public services, certain brands or companies, people close to us, or a stranger on the street. Here, I would like to focus on interpersonal trust. What do we actually mean when we say 'I trust this person'? Sometimes even scholars (Sitkin & Roth, 1993) – use the term 'trust' when they mean something else. Often trust is not clearly distinguished from related concepts (e.g., reliance) and from its reasons (knowledge, familiarity, routine) and consequences (e.g., cooperation) (Rousseau et al., 1998). The meaning of trust can also depend on what the trusted is entrusted with. Sometimes it is only one limited task, and on others a close friend is trusted with almost everything. But it is also important to distinguish between general trust in people and society (e.g. people on the street), in more specific groups (e.g. colleagues) and in one particular person (Pettit, 1995). I concentrate on trust as it is used in the sense of an expectation of another person.

Dictionaries list the origins or 'trust' and related words (Merriam-Webster Dictionaries, 2016a; Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a). 'Trust' is akin to the Old Norse word traust which shows some similarities to its German translation 'Vertrauen' (noun) and 'vertrauen' or 'trauen' (verb). According to Merriam-Webster trust is "akin to Old English trēowe faithful." This leads us to the common theme of defining trust as a belief. The noun 'trust' is defined in the Oxford dictionary as follows:

"Firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something:"

(Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a)

I deal with 'trust' regarding human relationships as this work is not concerned with 'trust' as a form of legalistic construction to manage equities, which is also mentioned in the dictionary.

Merriam-Webster's definition of the noun shows great similarity:

"belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc."

(Merriam-Webster Dictionaries, 2016a)

Merriam-Webster says 'to trust' is:

: to believe that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc.

: to have confidence in (someone or something)

: to believe that something is true or correct

: to hope or expect that something is true or will happen

(Merriam-Webster Dictionaries, 2016a)

The Oxford Dictionary uses different words, but the overall definition is very similar.

1. Believe in the reliability, truth, or ability of:

1.1 (trust someone with) Allow someone to have, use, or look after (someone or something of importance or value) with confidence:

1.2 (trust someone/thing to) Commit someone or something to the safekeeping of:

1.3 [with clause] Have confidence; hope (used as a polite formula in conversation):

1.4 [no object] Have faith or confidence:

1.5 [no object] (trust to) Place reliance on (luck, fate, or chance):

(Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a)

What we find in all the definitions is the notion of belief, confidence or hope. This belief, confidence or hope in the truthfulness, honesty, or goodness of the other, the trusted. Trust in our common language use always shows some ambiguity; something we do not know for certain, but we hope, expect or believe will happen. We say we trust other people to care for our plants while we are on vacation, we trust in the network operator to provide a stable network connection, and we trust our cars not to break while we are driving. Hence, trust always involves some insecurity or risk. And the trust is directed towards the Other's reliability, truthfulness, and ability. Although, it is not uncommon to use trust in relation to physical objects, for instance, machines or vehicles, I would limit trust's use to human individuals or groups. Using the word trust in relation to physical objects is somewhat misleading, since these objects are, of course, very distinct from human beings.

As we have seen above, trust is a belief that involves risk. It is directed towards actions of the trusted. The expected actions of the other leads us to some precondition as they are the ability to fulfil, honesty in account, goodwill and responsibility. In particular, through honesty and goodwill, the trusted can betray the trusting party. This opens the way to distinguish trust from related concepts. The ability to betray is the feature missing in physical objects that do not allow us to call our belief in their functioning genuine trust.

The common use of language, e.g. reflected in dictionary definitions, allows for the use of 'trust' in relation to physical objects and I will return to our relationship to physical objects when dealing with the act of betrayal. However, in this study, when I talk about 'trust' or 'to trust' I speak solely about personal relations. To me, to trust is distinct from the actions I may make based on the belief or expectation involved.

Peeling the Onion

The following incident contains a lot of features of interpersonal trust.

During Vacation

Late last year a client for whom we worked a couple of times called me and asked whether I could come to his house in the upcoming days. We met there, and he showed me what he was planning to build and which part of the work we should do. He asked me to estimate the cost and to send him an offer. After a few days, I sent him my price and listed what I was planning to do. But then we did not hear from each other for months.

In August he called me and told me that he was going on vacation with his family for two weeks and asked whether we could do the job during that time. He said he would leave the keys to his house in a sealed envelope with his assistant. We should pick the keys up there and finish the work during his holidays. He added, "Please, don't leave the keys with my staff. I don't want them to have access to my private home."

Annette Baier (1986) wrote that to trust means to hand over discretionary power over things that are valued. Looking at this example, I would argue, that this client trusted my employees and me. He gave my employees control over his home which I suspect had some value for him. He believed that my staff and I would take care of his belongings. I or any of my workers could have easily damaged or even stolen his belongings. Without being able to control us fully he put himself, or at least his house, at risk.

He did so because he expected my staff to do the work properly and to take care of his and his family's house – in other words, he expected us not to abuse our powers (Baier, 1986). He seemed to confidently believe that we would act in his best interest. The notion of confidence in expectations and the acceptance of vulnerability to the action of the trusted are shared across a variety of disciplines (Rousseau et al., 1998).

Furthermore, the action he took (giving us the keys) based on his trust, made it possible for us to do the work in the most convenient way for him – when he and his family were on

vacation. So, they did not have to suffer the noise and dirt that far too often comes with construction work. Hence, his trust made things possible that could not be reached without it – trust unleashed a creative power (Barbalet, 2009).

Trust, Control and Reliance

The client in this example could not control us when he was away on vacation. Furthermore, he had no one else to control us. This resonates with O'Neill's (2002a) statement: "At some point, we just have to trust." Even if we have a long chain of guards and guards' guards at the end of this chain, we have to trust a person – a person with discretionary power over our things of value. So, trust means that the person trusting is not in full control. There is always the possibility for the trusted of not fulfilling the expectation.

This is not only the case when I trust a person or group of people but also when I say, 'I trust the computer to work". Annette Baier (1986) distinguishes between trust and reliance. I can completely rely on a computer or any other technical device. She argues that it is difficult to trust a computer, since the computer does not make decisions on its own and so is not capable of betrayal. It might stop reacting to my ever more frequent and desperate mouse clicks and keyboard hits, but it is not the computer's own decision not to react, rather a defect within the hardware or software. Although I must admit it sometimes looks to me as if the computer is tricking me deliberately, my engineering knowledge tells me it is not the case. This machine has no bad intentions, but neither does it have good intentions.

I rely on the computer to function but I do not hand it discretionary power. Therefore, it is not in the position to betray me (Baier, 1986). I may have expected the computer to work properly, but there is no room for personal disappointment or feeling of betrayal. To Peperzak (2013, p. 42) applied "force or constraint reduces the other person to an instrument, a machine, or will-less property." The trusted must be in the position to "responsibly accept my request." (Peperzak, 2013, p. 42) It is the freedom of the trusted that distinguishes trust from other concepts. It is the other's freedom to accept the responsibility for the task I entrust

him or her with and the freedom to choose how to fulfil the given task; these two freedoms are unique to a trust relationship. If the other has no choice whether or how to fulfil the task, the other is just controlled and not trusted by me. When I control the other, there is no need to believe in their goodwill and it is does not matter whether I trust them.

In the example above, the client believed in our goodwill. Any abuse of our power would have resulted in deep disappointment on his side. He would have felt betrayed because we made him believe that we would take care of his house and his belongings.

Trust in a technical device or more generally in a physical object is quite often directed to the person or group of people or organisation behind it. I may say that I trust the food to be good in a certain restaurant, but I actually trust the chef to cook something delicious and the rest of the staff to do a proper job. I cannot trust the food itself. The same is true for my beloved VW. I trust the carmaker to build reliable cars – although not as eco-friendly as they previously promised – and my mechanic to maintain the car properly. Hence, my trust is not in the car but the people behind it. The car is metaphorically the vehicle for my trust.

My car is a good example as I do not personally know anybody at the plant in Mexico where it was made and yet I trust them. Hence, trust is also possible without the trusted knowing that another trusts her. To Peperzak (2013) it is essential that the trusted is not forced to act in certain ways but acts "out of her own responsibility." (2013, p. 34) So trusting can be one-sided – without another knowing about nor reciprocating my trust (Peperzak, 2013). I do not need anybody in the VW company to trust me. Therefore, as well as being betrayed personally by the trusted, she can also unknowingly disappoint me.

In my example above, I knew about the trust the client put in me, but this is not necessary. I do not need to know that the other trusts me to make the other's trust possible. It is the possibility of betrayal that makes the trust possible. This possibility manifests itself not only in the personal relationship but also in whether I act responsibly or not. It is my own responsibility to drive carefully and to respect traffic lights, irrespective of whether I am

aware that others act on trusting in my responsible behaviour. I can only assume that they do so. It is the same with the VW plant workers in Mexico. They do not know me but they know that there are a lot of Golf drivers trusting them.

To people with some discretionary powers, the ability to betray (Baier, 1986) or disappoint is unique. Like machines, people without such powers are unable to betray or disappoint someone. If I can fully control a person with a task, this person cannot betray me as they would not hold any discretionary power. Controlled by me, this person would just fulfil the tasks given to them. I would reduce this person to being no more than a tool for me, but not one that I need to trust. In this case I merely rely on this person (Bailey, 2006).

But there is never complete control or guarantee. "[T]rust is needed precisely because all guarantees are incomplete." (O'Neill, 2002a) We cannot actually control each and everything. "[…] So, trust cannot presuppose or require a watertight guarantee of others' performance and cannot rationally be withheld just because we lack guarantees. Where we have guarantees or proofs, we don't need to trust" (O'Neill, 2002a). Hence, I have to hand over some power over things I value to another trusted person. This person has the freedom to act in ways I regard as positive or negative but I expect them to act benevolently to me (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995) - to be good-willing (Baier, 1986). Therefore, I use the expression 'to act on trust' for handing over power over things I value with the expectation of the other person to act in my best interest.

To expect a person to act in my best interest, I need to be convinced or at least confidently believe that they have the necessary abilities to fulfil the task. Hence, my acting on trust is always particular and seldom general. For instance, I go to my dentist so that he does the right things to keep my teeth healthy. However, I will not consult him about any problem regarding my laptop. This example is rather crude but observing myself, I apply fine-grained distinctions between what I entrust to a particular person in particular circumstances.

In the example above, the client entrusted us only with the keys to his house to do the work he ordered us to do and not to take care of more general things (Baier, 1986). Through our repeated interaction he came to understand what kind of jobs we could accomplish and what kind of jobs he had better not place with us. Hence, he formed some understanding of our abilities as a company but also of me in particular as person. He sought to understand what kind of person I am.

Benefits and Risks of Trust

> *"But a complete absence of trust would prevent him even from getting up in the morning." (Luhmann, 1973; 1975, p. 3)*

If we think about the various situations in which we trust one another, we may wonder whether there are instances of social life that would be possible without trust. I struggle to find one. Interacting with any other person we need at least a minimal level of trust – otherwise, we must fear getting violently attacked. But we still go out in the street, meet other people and engage in social life. As Luhmann says – we get up in the morning. Without trust, social life would be rendered impossible. The ability to engage in social action is perhaps the most basic benefit of trust.

Aurelius (1992) makes a similar argument when claiming that humans are made to cooperate. However, introducing Theory X and Theory Y, McGregor and Cutcher-Gershenfeld (2006) demonstrate that some run their businesses on the assumption that people are lazy and need to be incentivised if not coerced to work. Yet, they too believe that cooperation is the better way to run a business.

The form of trust Luhmann, Aurelius, and McGregor refer to is directed towards a general pattern of social behaviour rather than the observance of routines. When we pick up our coffee in the coffee shop, we rarely assess thoroughly whether the barista is trustworthy or

not. We assume her to be trustworthy out of some routine (Möllering, 2006). Checking each person we interact with would make our lives far too complicated – we could not cope with this amount of investigation (Luhmann, 1973; 1975). Basic interactions, such as buying food, crossing the street or doing our daily job, would not be possible without minimal trust. This is the sort of trust in which others are rarely aware of being trusted. As the trusting person I assume that you as trusted fulfil your responsibility. If the trusted does not do so, I feel betrayed.

The recent food scandals (e.g. the horse meat scandal that made the news in 2013) remind us how little we question our routines but also how vulnerable we are to misconduct. Perhaps our assumption that everybody does their job properly is so deeply rooted that we take it almost as a matter of fact, regarding the risk as being close to non-existent. When such a deep-rooted assumption starts to falter through such scandals, we realise how much we trust, how little we control and how dependent our daily life is on trust.

But these everyday interactions are only one aspect of the benefits of trust. When we look at more specific interaction trust has to offer a lot. When we leave our kids with the babysitter to go to a concert or have dinner out, it is not a routine action that touches the very basis of our social life. We would be able to survive without the help of a babysitter, but we enrich our life by handing over the care of our kids for a few hours to them. In fact, this piece of writing would not have been written without the help of babysitters caring for our two children.

But in trusting, I hand over the responsibility for a task to another person. I count on this person to accomplish the task through their own responsibility (Peperzak, 2013).

> *In a sense, I leave you alone with that task, which, as yours is somehow an extension or replacement of my own task. You have become an extension of me, and I am with you as long as you are working on the task." (Peperzak, 2013, p. 34)*

Our babysitter is then the replacement of my partner and me for the time we cannot care for the children. It is similar in the example of the client from the beginning of this chapter. Since he gave us access to his house when he and his family were away on vacation, the family did not have to suffer from noise and dust and any other inconvenience. Of course, he could have stayed at home and controlled us the whole time we were working on his house, but the family benefitted enormously from trusting us and, as a consequence, they were able to go on vacation. Hence, trust makes things possible which were impossible without it.

On a slightly different level, trust is very important in a society of divided labour. For example, I cannot fix my car. If a tyre of my car is broken, I do not need to go to the garage immediately but when it comes to more complicated jobs I need the help of others. And in many instances, I cannot sufficiently control whether or not the job is done right. To drive my car, I need to trust the mechanic in my garage. Lacking the specialised skills to accomplish a job or task is very wide-spread in our lives from sophisticated medical care to preparing a bouquet of flowers.

It is difficult to distinguish between the basic interactions which are necessary to lead our lives and the instances where our trust just enriches our lives. I need the car to do my job. Without a car, running my business would be hardly possible. Hence, I have no choice but to trust others or just hope that they abide by traffic regulation to the extent that they do not threaten my life or health.

However, according to Luhmann, to call my action trusting I need to be in the position to choose. “Trust is only involved when the trusting expectation makes a difference to a decision; otherwise what we have is simply hope.” (Luhmann, 1973; 1975, p. 24). To him, trust requires one who acts on trust – to hand over discretionary powers - and another who can more or less freely choose one course of action over another – using these discretionary powers. Hence, trust presupposes freedom in both parties. But I am often not in the position

to choose to trust or not. I just could not live without trusting. Therefore, I think this distinction between hope and trust is problematic since whether I have a choice to participate in traffic depends on your point of view. In some situations, I might be able to refrain from driving, but not in all situations. I may have a choice in any one situation but if I always chose not to drive it would make it impossible to do my job.

Hence, if as Luhmann (1973; 1975) argues, I need to trust to get out of bed in the morning, it is difficult to say I have a choice - I have to get up to live. Therefore, there is no choice but to trust. Luhmann's distinction between trust and hope is, therefore, difficult to maintain. Consequently, I would rather say trust involves hope in the form of a belief in the trusted person. I hope others will act in ways beneficial to me.

In a later work, Luhmann (1988) distinguishes between trust and confidence. For him, confidence relates to situations of impending danger where the actor is confident that the expected outcome will be realised. But the actor in these situations does not have a choice to act differently. To Luhmann, trust, requires an active choice by the actor and therefore leads to risk-taking. The trustor can avoid risk by choosing another action (Luhmann, 1988). I think that it is very difficult to imagine situations where the actor has no choice. In other words, one must "refrain from action [to] run no risk."(Luhmann, 1988, p. 100) But inaction can be considered as action too and "inaction is often risky." (Giddens, 1990, p. 32) For instance, not seeing the doctor might be far riskier than actually going to the clinic. Hence, I believe it is more helpful to consider trust as "a particular type of confidence" – trust is having confidence in the other – as to distinguish both from one another (Giddens, 1990, p. 32).

Since we have no choice but to trust, we need to look at its downsides. Through cooperation, both parties can realise mutual benefits, but it can be more beneficial to one party just to exploit the other's trusting attempt to cooperate.

This is shown in the following example:

Delays

> *What had happened? I had several meetings with a client and the project manager that were marked by ongoing conflict. The building process was three weeks behind schedule because some drawings were delivered late and others were still not done. In one of these meetings, which was exceptionally cooperative, we agreed on some changes to the design in order to meet the approaching deadlines. Our work went on, and we met the deadlines. However, in a later meeting, both the architect and the client blamed me for not delivering the quality originally agreed upon. I reminded them that we had deliberately altered the design in the above-mentioned meeting, and hence the quality, in order to finish the work on time. Now, I learned that the whole responsibility had been shifted to me with no acknowledgement of the fact that this had all transpired following the architect's delay in delivering the drawings on time. This was ultimately his responsibility and not mine. (Grosse, 2015a, p. 3)*

In this example trust first makes betrayal possible. We need to be aware of the possibility that others act opportunistically for a variety of reasons. They may actually betray us. We start a cooperative effort, but they might just exploit their favourable position and ultimately exploit us.

But risk-taking is an inevitable part of our lives; often these risks result from some form of trust in more general terms – as participating in traffic – or in more particular situations – as signing a certain contract. Without taking these risks and without trusting we would be paralysed. An absence of trust "reduces the range of possibilities for rational action." (Luhmann, 1988, p. 104) But that does not mean that to act on trust is always the right choice.

We may feel betrayed when another person acts other than how we expected. But that alone is not sufficient for feeling betrayed. I need to consider the non-fulfilment of my

expectation as an act of moral misconduct. It needs this moral dimension. I must feel morally justified to hold my expectation, and I must regard the action of the other as morally unjustified. In the example above, I did not see any reason for what I considered their opportunistic behaviour other than morally inferior selfishness. But that is my take on the events and very likely not theirs. They probably felt justified to act in the way they did.

But in another situation, when I am able to step into another's shoes and see why she acted in the way she did, I might come to the conclusion that I may have acted in the same way and it becomes difficult for me to regard her behaviour as a breach of trust. If I still think it is a breach, I may be able to forgive it since in her situation I would have acted in the same way.

We may be wrong acting on our trust in others not only because they deliberately try to betray us, but also because they might not be in the position to fulfil the task as I expected. At the same time, I may be wrong to regard their actions as breach of trust as they might have acted in my best interest, but I am unable to see it. Hence, we need to look closer at the reasons why I am trusting.

Trust is an ingredient for cooperation, but this is not always an entirely good thing. Cooperation might serve unfavourable ends (Gambetta, 1988). For instance, if two of my contractual partners trust each other and decide to cooperate with each other to trick and betray me, I would not appreciate their cooperation, as in the case above, where I understood their cooperation was aimed at exploiting me. Taking a societal standpoint, we may not appreciate seeing a group of criminals trust each other and so be able to jointly organise and commit crimes (Gambetta, 1988). But the concerns regarding wider society are not the scope of my study.

Reasons to Trust

When acting trustingly, one makes some sort of risk assessment. Risk understood as "weak inductive knowledge" is "virtually always" balanced against trusting (Giddens, 1990,

p. 35). Hence in this sense, our knowledge determines whether or not we act on trust. We address the likelihood of certain outcomes of our action according to the perceived strength of our knowledge of the person we are about to trust and the particular situation. In other words, we weigh how likely and beneficial one course of action is against another course of action or inaction. Therefore, I will explore which role knowledge play in relation to trust.

There are instances in which we trust without any consideration, such as when we assume the coffee in a coffee shop to be safe. We take it for granted that many things are the way we expect them to be. We do this although we have no specific knowledge about the coffee shop or perhaps coffee shops in general. We believe the likelihood of any harm to us is very, very low and we are frequently proven right. If there were substantial threats involved someone would notice and alert us. It would be a catastrophe if a restaurant was found to be serving out of date and therefore poisonous food. The restaurant would lose its reputation and subsequently customer's trust. Customers would no longer rely on the assumption that almost all restaurants sell not necessarily tasty but at least not poisonous food.

This assumption is also a routine, and we trust by routines (Möllering, 2006). Our previous experiences make us believe that others – groups or individuals– act as we have experienced before. We do not assess whether they have particular reason to do so but assume that they will follow a standard pattern of action.

The lines are blurred between these two reasons to act on trust. It is difficult to determine whether a repeated interaction with a certain person or group led us to routinely trust them in any new interaction or whether we just assumed the risk to be very low from the outset. Furthermore, I struggle to distinguish whether I routinely trust the French fries to be good because I often visit different restaurants of the same fast food chain or whether my trust is guided just by a thoughtless assumption that this particular restaurant run by a particular franchise taker will satisfy my expectations.

These chain restaurants create some form of familiarity. They look similar, offer the same food in the same way and it costs almost the same all over the country. I know from previous visits how the food tastes and that it has been okay so far. Out of my familiarity, I place my trust in any restaurant in this chain which creates this sense of familiarity (Luhmann, 1988).

But when we are given evidence to believe otherwise, we withdraw our trust; we do not stick to our initial belief. By default, we believe in the proper conduct of the restaurant staff but one incident of bad food might make us suspicious of even very careful restaurants. When the food smells bad, we will send it back. If a pedestrian gets the green light to cross the street this person may not run into a speeding car. If there are signs to doubt our assumptions, we seldom hesitate to reject them.

This sense of familiarity also applies to my business partners. There are some partners I just interact with on the basis of previous experience. I do not doubt whether they are able and willing to do what I am asking them for but just believe they would do what we agree on. But this applies only to standard tasks. When I order the usual amount and type of concrete to a building site, I do not spent much thought about it. But if I want some special concrete then I may spend some more time investigating whether the supplier could deliver in this circumstance. I seek to gain more knowledge about the person I am going to interact with and investigate further into this person's abilities. In the end, I want to know what kind of person I am dealing with.

Understanding the Other

Although what the other actually says is an important part of our relationship, when I talk about 'understanding the other' it is not about literally understanding the words the other is uttering; I am talking about the other as a person. I try to answer questions as to what kind of abilities this person has, how he thinks, what his values are and on what points we differ. It is seeking to know the other holistically.

To illustrate the processes that happened during this investigation, I draw from some fieldnotes presented at the ACROM conference in Lincoln [see ‘Appendix C – Trust and Construction Projects (Grosse, 2015b)’ p. 302]

The Engineer I

We made major alterations on a residential, mid-19th-century building. The house was owned by a family. The architect had close connections to that family. He negotiated our contract on the family’s behalf and also commissioned the other contractors, including the engineering firm. One of the goals in renovating the building was to enhance the load capacity of the foundation. The project engineer suggested deepening the foundations through the designated underpinnings. I thought a sole plate would suffice, at only a fraction of the cost. When I got the design from the civil engineer, I told the architect in charge of the project that I had a cheaper solution in mind and asked if I should propose it to the engineer. He supported my proposal.

[…]

I called the engineer briefly and explained my proposal. We agreed to meet at the building site. We started analysing the situation, and he explained to me how he arrived at his proposed solution. I tried to explain my approach to solving the underlying geotechnical problem. During the negotiation, I explained my proposal in detail it to him and suggested a design and what the construction details should look like. Simply put, he wanted to make the foundation deeper, and I wanted to make it wider. Both solutions would lead to increased load capacity. We discussed the pros and cons of both solutions. At some point, I struggled to explain my proposal sufficiently so that the engineer could understand it. However, we agreed to incorporate my

> *proposal into the design. After some days of reflection and work, he arrived at nearly the same solution that I had. (Grosse, 2015b, pp. 1283-1284)*

The fieldnote suggests that this was merely a technical discussion but that is only part of the story. I could have made and sent drawings and sufficient explanations of my solution to the engineer, but I knew it would not have worked. He may have found some objections to it or perhaps my drawing and explanations would not have been as clear as I thought. And I knew I could make my point far better when I met him in person.

By meeting him, I could find out what kind of person he was and could adapt to his reaction. If one strategy of convincing him about my proposal would not work, I could easily switch to another. For this purpose, the personal exchange is far more flexible.

On reflection, I can identify another dimension; I consciously or subconsciously wanted to learn more about the person I was going to deal with during the next couple of months. It is one thing to learn about a person via email and telephone, but it is quite distinct from meeting in person. This personal meeting opened a number of communication channels not available through the telephone or via email.

During the meeting, we talked about the technical solution. But our conversation drifted away from that to cover topics as our experience as students in engineering and what we do in our spare time. For me, these talks about other topics than some specific technical solution provide the material from which I begin to form a picture of that person. I learn through these discussions about how others think, what kind of values they hold, and what is important to them.

When I seek to understand the Other, I seek to gather as much information about him as possible. The gathered information helps me to assess his abilities, and so provides a rationale for trusting him. It often starts with the simple question of whether he is able and willing to do what I expect him to do. Thinking about my ‘assessment’ I begin to doubt

whether it is about trust. This understanding and knowing the Other is a knowing to dominate and control the Other but not knowing for the Other's sake (Said, 2003). Hence this knowing is not related to trust but to control.

Trust and Reflexivity

However, this simple assessment of whether the person is able and willing is often of limited use. One has to dig deeper. We have to understand in what kind of constraints and dependencies the Other we ought to trust finds himself. This was brought home to me after the second meeting with the engineer and now also his boss [see 'Appendix C – Trust and Construction Projects (Grosse, 2015b)' p. 302].

> *The Engineer II*
>
> *Later, when the construction process progressed, I had another negotiation about a possible technical solution for a special detail at this building site. This time, his boss was also present. We talked, sketched, calculated, and discussed for nearly two hours how to reinforce an old structure. The discussion unfolded around how it should be in theory and what is possible to apply in practice. However, this time the discussion was predominantly between his boss and me – the junior engineer was almost sidelined.*
>
> *The two engineers defended what the solution should ideally be, whereas I emphasised that their 'ideal' solution would cause more (collateral) damage than benefits. In the end, we agreed on a solution somewhere in the middle. However, what the engineer later designed and circulated differed significantly from what I perceived as the outcome of our meeting. At first sight, I thought, 'That's not what we came up with! I did not agree to this solution - not at all. How could he claim that this is the outcome of our*

> *discussion?' I felt betrayed. In my eyes, he was now lying about our meeting. Furthermore, I regarded this solution as a bad one.*
>
> *Apart from my emotional reaction, I considered my judgement in trust to be misguided. At first, I did not understand what had happened. I was tempted to call him and let off steam. But I did not do this, because I knew that that usually just makes such a situation worse. […]*
>
> *Only the next day - in a calmer mood - I understood that he might have been under pressure by his boss - who may have favoured the proposal he presented. (Grosse, 2015b, pp. 1285-1286)*

I miss an important point if I regard the main aim of the meeting as convincing the Other about my proposal, as I did in the first meeting. It is far more important to learn about the Other. Who is he and how does he think? I began to explore this in the first meeting but in the second meeting I learned that the engineer acted in his own environment of which I am only a tiny part. His boss played a far bigger role than I did. He is the one who hired him and paid his salary (Grosse, 2015b).

To better understand the engineer's trustworthiness, I needed to understand his situation and see the world from his perspective (Pillow, 2003). It is very much a reflexive assessment of the Other's world. In the process of understanding the Other, I need to adopt the Other's perspective on the world. I need to understand the constraints, the history, the options, and opportunities of the Other. Taking the Other's perspective enabled me to see what he was able to deliver and more importantly what not. This puts me in a better position to judge whether or not to trust and with what to trust this person (Grosse, 2015b).

This also opens the way for me to change my action. I can seek to see myself through the Other's eyes. "Turning in upon ourselves as researchers makes us look subjectively and reflexively at how we are positioned." (Chiseri-Strater, 1996, p. 119) The same is true for me as an investigator seeking to understand the engineer. I began to see how my assumptions

about power and my own position, freedom to act and make decisions influenced my understanding of the engineer. Taking his view offers a distinct perspective on my actions and the consequences of these actions. (Grosse, 2015b)

But I act in a limitless complex social environment. I only need to take a look around my professional environment to see the constraints I face. I have to consider my members of staff, clients, suppliers, architects and engineers, public servants, to name only a few. It is impossible to gather complete information about the trustworthiness of another person (Möllering, 2006).

In this complex social environment I can see that all the people around me have certain expectations of me – how I should act, how I should behave, how I should communicate etc. I might manage to reconcile some of these expectations, however, some of them are conflicting to the point that I can only fulfil one for the price of not fulfilling another.

When another person decides not to meet another's expectation, I may perceive it as a breach of trust. However, I could have anticipated it by investigating the other person's context more thoroughly (Grosse, 2015b). Hence, it has to do with both understanding the other person and their context. The very question of whether we trust somebody appropriately might be answered by a reflexive approach to our assessments (Grosse, 2015b).

However, the assessment is never going to be perfect since I am unable to perceive everything and moreover I am incapable of understanding everything that goes on around me (Berlin, 2013). The world is simply too complex for me to comprehend it fully. To Luhmann (1973; 1975, p. 20) "[t]he complexity of the future world is reduced by the act of trust."

I may fail in my assessment of the Other, whether she or he has the necessary abilities, skills resources, and the very freedom to act as I trust the Other. Often, I trust others to do things I cannot do – I am in principle able to do these things but not at that moment, or I am

not able to do them (e.g. fix the engine of my beloved VW Golf). In the latter case, my assessment becomes even more problematic because I may be unable to judge whether the Other did a good job or not. My physician, my lawyer, the engineer from the example above, my bricklayers – all do things I cannot do. They have the specialist knowledge I rely on and therefore they have a special idea of what is in my best interest. I cannot say whether they are right or wrong.

When I trust you, I am convinced that you act in my best interest. But who knows what is in my best interest? How can you know what is in my best interest and do I actually know what that is? I do not believe that I always know what is best for me. So, I can entrust you with a particular task or just a single action you should perform on my behalf. But I can also hand over some extensive discretionary powers to you to let you decide which course of action you take and decide about the possible outcomes. In the end, in a more or less broad range of options, I assume you know better what is best for me.

For example, I am often a bit hungry in the afternoons and I may ask you to get me a chocolate bar and a coffee. You could do exactly what I told you and satisfy my wish or you could come back with an apple, a banana and a bottle of water. I could not really argue that you were not acting in my best interest. Fruit and water are far healthier than chocolate and coffee. I could, however, argue that you went too far and your decision exceeded the powers I had given to you. To make this thought even clearer, consider a situation where a smoker asks a friend to get him a pack of cigarettes, but the friend turns up with some chewing gum accompanied by the message that chewing is better for his health than smoking. I have got a vivid picture of the argument that might unfold between the two afterwards. Yet, the friend could rightly claim to have acted in the smoker's best interest by not buying cigarettes.

When we trust, we hand over powers to act on our behalf and the range in which the action of the trusted varies can be quite broad. It might be that I just want another person to get me the chocolate bar I am longing for. But, in another case I hope that the Other decides

on my behalf about issues about which I do not know enough, and I am not able or willing to decide for myself. In other words, I believe that this person knows better what is best for me. My physician is perhaps one of the best examples of this.

And yet there are cases in which I think I know what is best for me and the Other might be equally convinced to know better than I do what is best for me. This shows that the trusting party does not exactly know what she or he can expect from the trusted, but at the same time the trusted lives with the insecurity of whether the way she or he deals on behalf of the trustor is what the trusting precisely expected. So, both the trustor and the trusted need to deal with incomplete knowledge about the trust relation. This lack of knowledge is, again, a condition for trust to occur but also a source of possible disappointment. The trustor can be disappointed by the perceived misconduct of the trusted, and the trusted can feel rejected by the trustor. Baier (1986, p. 238) makes the point drawing on Luhmann (1973; 1975) "If a trust relationship is to continue, some tact and willingness to forgive on the part of the truster and some willingness on the part of the trusted both to be forgiven and to forgive unfair criticisms, seem essential."

I explore the issue of forgiveness later. But it is here that some humility, especially on the part of the trusting party, is very important. I am supposed to ask myself again and again, how I can judge when I know so little

Incomplete Knowledge

It is the very nature of trust there is a lack of knowledge about the Other. Otherwise we would not need to trust.

> *Mark I*
>
> *I got this draft contract from the architect – Mark. We had never worked together before. I read it and on each page I had up to five corrections to make – either to cut something completely, change it significantly or at least*

soften some clauses. Actually, I saw in some passages real traps built into the contract.

However, when I proposed the changes and explained the reasons for my demand, I faced little or no opposition. Almost everything got changed in the way I wanted it to be changed.

I was a bit surprised by that. Often, we face fierce discussion about such changes, but not here. Was he already aware of the unacceptability of their draft or had he used some form he once came across without spending too much thought about it?

I didn't know whether Mark actually tried to fool me or whether this was just a mixture of laziness, little thought, and not caring whatsoever. Both could be the case, and I couldn't find out.

In my negotiation with Mark, I got contradictory messages. I could have understood the contract as an attempt to trick me. In some sense, an expression of the attitude 'What can I get away with?' But whether this was the case was not clear. There were other messages. One member of staff said, 'he could be the good buddy guy, but I'm not sure.' For me both interpretations were possible. And I am not sure which one I considered the most likely.

It is often quite difficult, as Möllering (2006) says, to acquire knowledge about the trustworthiness of others. Moreover, my world is constantly changing. I actually only know a small part of the world that surrounds me (Berlin, 2013). Because I only have limited abilities to perceive and understand, I am unable to see the whole picture. What I actually see is only a small part of the whole (Berlin, 2013). Or it is part of the whole and important links are missing, so, the picture I get is incoherent. Yet I doubt I could develop a coherent picture of the whole. Hence, I come up with contradictory indicators of trustworthiness (Möllering, 2006).

By gaining new knowledge about the other person, I reinterpret the previous events. Hence my understanding of the other person is shifting. There is a constant reinterpretation of the Other's actions. Sometimes my interpretation is stable and changes only a little, but then it might change abruptly or be overthrown altogether. Yet still, it is an ongoing hermeneutic circle with permanent perturbations (Iser, 2000).

My attitude and behaviour towards the Other is of course influenced by my shifting interpretation of this person's actions. This in turn feeds back to the Other's perception of me and their subsequent interpretation. Now the Other's actions are influenced by what this person makes of my behaviour. It is a constant back and forth between us two and the environment we act in.

Nothing is fixed and everything is in flow with permanent new input. For the people I interact with I am part of the changing environment and vice versa. Hence, we change, and our understanding of the Others must inevitably change as well (Iser, 2000). Therefore, my assessment of the trustworthiness of the Other must be dynamic (Möllering, 2006) and constantly updated. In this way, I might be able to resolve some contradictions about the trustworthiness of the Other but by no means all of them.

Given the changing nature of our understanding of the Other, I am doomed to make imperfect assessments of the trustworthiness of the partners I interact with (Grosse, 2015b), and I am well aware of this.

> *Mark II*
>
> *Although, we significantly amended the contract in our favour and hence gained more control; we were well aware of the fact that we could have overseen something, or the client might try to cheat us anyway.*
>
> *That thought was brought home to me when the client did not pay his bills in time. We sent him reminders and finally stopped working. Then he apologised and paid, and we continued the work.*

Mark told me then the client is very busy and sometimes does not care too much about this project, because he's got several other projects of more importance for him. However, he said, the client is an honest guy and has always paid his bills in the end.

Well, I thought. Finally, he paid what Mark told him to pay. So that could be the case. But it could well be that he only paid because we built up the pressure.

But at this point, I didn't stop working with this architect. I must have trusted him at least a bit otherwise I could not have continued doing business with him. I made the decision to act on trust but I could have chosen otherwise. However, I cannot refrain from trusting indefinitely. I cannot do business without trusting anybody. Doing business with someone requires trusting this person to some extent. More generally, I cannot refrain from trusting. Otherwise I would be unable to live the life I live (Baier, 1986). The very basis of human interaction – of even the smallest piece of cooperation – would be absent (Bailey, 2006). So, I place my trust in others on the very basis of this imperfect knowledge. Moreover, if I had perfect knowledge, I would not need to trust. Again if I had watertight guarantees, trust would be redundant (O'Neill, 2002a). Trust needs some ambiguity as without uncertainty I would act on granted knowledge and trust would not be needed any more. "The person who knows completely need not trust" (Simmel, 1908, p. 318). The interesting question is why do I trust and how do I deal with this uncertainty? Knowledge is always incomplete. Therefore, I wonder; Is knowledge of the Other necessary to trust another person? Some say so, but there is a reason to doubt that. I do already trust others without knowing them.

Luhmann (1973; 1975, p. 20), argues that trust "needs history as a reliable background" and one cannot trust "without all previous experiences." He hints that "trust goes beyond the information it receives and risks defining the future." Hence, trust is not purely rational. It goes beyond rationality. The element I would like to investigate is the non-rational

component of trust. Möllering (2006) calls this suspension of rationality ‘leap of faith’. But what are the processes in this leap of faith?

The Non-Rational

> *Trust is, however, something other than a reasonable assumption on which to decide correctly, and for this reason models for calculating correct decisions miss the point of trust. (Luhmann, 1973; 1975, p. 88)*

As we have seen above, trust emerges in situations of limited control and cannot be controlled. For instance, Sitkin and Roth (1993) have shown that legalistic remedies are largely ineffective in rebuilding trust. In other words, as O’Neil says, more control does not lead to more trust. In most cases these remedies to cure lack of trust come as control mechanisms. However, a common reaction to declining trust is even more control which has the effect of even less trust (O'Neill, 2002b). To Farrell (2009), institutions are such control mechanisms. He uses the term ‘institutions’ to refer to laws, contracts, and similar legal documents and calls them in reference to Cook, Hardin, and Levi (2007) ‘midlevel social phenomena’. Farrell says, in order to restore trust institutions e.g. contracts and similar documents, these institutions become more and more fine-grained and specific. This resonates with O’Neil’s observation that even more control is exerted.

Farrell references Hart’s (1958) notion of the core of a law (where the law applies directly), what the law is actually written for and the penumbra of the law (the shadow of it), where it can be used as reference or translated to but where it does not apply directly. In the core of a law, trust is not needed and hence absent but in the penumbra – in the vague shadow of the law - trust is important and evident (Farrell, 2009). One may argue that even in the core of a law, some sort of trust is necessary, at least in a common interpretation of the law and/or the law enforcement. However, he seeks to clarify that trust declines when control

expands. Control in the form of the institution has an effect contrary to the intention of increasing trust. Stronger institutions lead to larger cores of these institutions and smaller penumbras (Farrell, 2009). Hence, there is less room for trust to flourish.

Again, there is no absolute. There is no total control over things (Baier, 1986) nor a complete hand over of power. There is no possibility to avoid wrongdoing completely by deterrence nor complete trust (Bailey, 2006). Furthermore, "all rules have a penumbra of uncertainty where the judge must choose between alternatives" (Hart, 2012, p. 12). This also applies to our expectations of another person. At some point, our expectations as part of our trusting have a penumbra of uncertainty (Farrell, 2009). At this point, the trusted – the judge – must make a decision which might not meet our expectation. It is helpful to regard the trusted as the judge. The trusted is equipped with the discretion about the things the trusting party values. I will use this notion again later when connecting my thoughts of trust to Derrida's work (1992). Derrida positions the judge as balancing between general law and individual case. The judge should follow the general law but has to consider the individual circumstances of the case the judge has to decide. Therefore, a judge has to strike a balance between general law and individual case. Hence, the control of the law is always limited.

With close reflection of O'Neill's thoughts, Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 395) argue, that "trust would not be needed if action could be undertaken with complete certainty and no risk". In turn when there is no certainty trust is always needed, since complete control or watertight guarantees are out of reach (Baier, 1986; O'Neill, 2002a). The extent to which trust is needed differs significantly since the penumbra of expectations differs in size (Farrell, 2009) and depth. The limits of certainty, the limits of our knowledge are the limits of rationality too.

The notion of the non-rational in trust is not new. Simmel (1907, p. 179) notes," in the case […] of trust in someone, there is an additional element which is hard to describe: it is most clearly embodied in religious faith". To trust someone "may rest upon particular

reasons but is not explained by them". Trust "contains a further element of social-psychological, quasireligious faith." (Simmel, 1907, p. 179) The non-rational element of trust has been addressed by different authors afterwards (e.g.; Giddens, 1990; Möllering, 2006).

> *Mark III*
>
> *Later, during this project, we argued again about late payments and Mark insisted again on his claim that the client would be honest. In the end, he sent this message to my phone: 'Look all you said doesn't change the fact that he will pay everything. Now trust me and concentrate on the job'.*

But as we know, one "cannot trust at will" (Baier, 1986, p. 244). One cannot rationally choose to trust. I can act the way I choose, but I cannot reason and choose to trust. Trust is a response in a different mode as reasoning. Although Frederiksen argues that "[i]t makes more sense to consider calculativeness as the opposite of trust" (2014, p. 41) I am cautious to call it the opposite and would rather consider it as something other than calculativness.

Trust – Being with the Other

Trust, to Giddens (1990, p. 33) is "in a certain sense blind trust." Similar to Luhmann (1973; 1975) Peperzak (2013, pp. 24-25).argues that "[t]rusting someone thus involves more than a necessary or inevitable result of the correct evaluation." I believe that we accumulate knowledge or seek to gain control as much as we can but at some point, we do not make any more progress. At that very point, we would actually be paralysed if we could not trust. To Möllering (2006), suspending our rational calculation and taking the 'leap of faith' we escape the paralysis by trusting the other (Möllering, 2006). We find a very similar notion regarding the 'knowing the other' in Said's 'Orientalism' (2003). He distinguishes between knowing the other to control, dominate and appropriate the other on the one hand and on the

other hand knowing as a form of appreciation of the other – in her or his otherness. It is the latter form of knowing which looks promising because it leaves the area of controlling. Therefore, I argue trust should be considered outside of the realm of calculation, but not necessarily the opposite of it.

Frederiksen (2014, p. 35) cites Løgstrup who considers "trust as a fundamental category of social life and realigne[d] trusting and calculativeness as different modes of engaging". So, completely different thinking about trust seems necessary. We cannot go on and seek reasons for trust.

Peperzak advises abandoning the "drive to an all-encompassing objectification" to emphasise "the most basic human interaction, dialogue, and conversation […] because *they form and maintain the core of all sociality*." (Peperzak, 2013, p. 36, emphasis in the original)

"Persistence in scientific 'objectivity' would reduce the encounter [with the other person] to a phenomenon in which none of the confronted subjects personally encounters the Other." (Peperzak, 2013, p. 38). This is the clearest link Peperzak makes to the work of Emmanuel Lévinas.

According to Lévinas (1961, 1974b), all our rationality derives from our encounters with others. We first experience others before we start to make sense of our world and before we become rationally thinking beings. Hence, all our rationality is a result of subjective sensing of our environment and in particular of the people that we encounter in the course of our life. The very notion of what we are – the self – depends on "all the persons, things, institutions, circumstances, and events that make us dependent during each phase of our existence." (Peperzak, 2013, p. 79) We are, to Lévinas, limitlessly indebted to the Others because we depend on them to be ourselves.

In the next chapter, I explore Lévinas' thought in more depth. His philosophy deals with the most basic categories of human existence – being and being's other. One might argue that this is too far-fetched in order to deal with trust. However, I think that a final explanation

of why we trust is missing. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine the very basics of human existence to see what they can offer to our understanding of trust. Perhaps, I look at trust in this way in order "to criticise, to transform, to open [my way of trusting] to its own future" (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 6)

Methodological Remarks

As outlined above, I am exploring the emotions and thought that are related to trust. I am particularly interested in how I rationalise trust and what is not rational within my trust. For example: in *Trust and Construction Projects* (Grosse, 2015b) I sought to understand my emotional reaction.

> *"I thought, 'That's not what we came up with! I did not agree to this solution - not at all. How could he claim that this was the outcome of our discussion?' I felt betrayed. In my eyes, he was now lying about our meeting.*
> *[see 'Appendix C – Trust and Construction Projects (Grosse, 2015b)' p. 302]*

I can access my own emotions and thoughts first hand. What I feel, and think is – as far as I am honest with myself – readily accessible. I do not need to check whether an interviewee tells me what he or she is actually feeling or thinking. It is up to my ability to acknowledge what I feel and think and then to express these feelings and thoughts. Being honest about my own feelings and thinking and writing about them is difficult enough. However, autoethnography offers me insights that are difficult to gain using other methods (e.g., ethnography focussing on others or interview research).

One can understand each step from experience to the written research document as translation. For example, an interviewee has an experience and translates it into his own cognition. Then he translates it again from cognition to the words he uses to describe it in the interview. And it goes on - the interviewer listens and transcribes the interview more or

less verbatim into her transcription. Comparing this and similar research methods to autoethnography the number of translations from the actual experience to my writing are reduced. As autoethnographer, I reduce the number of translations to just one – my feeling to my realisation of these feelings – I try to write (describe) directly what I felt.

Furthermore, as an autoethnographer, it is far more feasible for me to go back and forth. In some sense, I am the interviewee to myself as a researcher. Hence, if something needs further investigation the 'interviewee-self' is always readily available to the 'researcher-self'. And more importantly, the 'interviewee-self's' feelings and thoughts are present to the 'researcher-self'. There is no way to omit these feelings and thoughts. It is up to the researcher whether to draw on them and use these feelings and thoughts for further analysis. It is then that critical reflection that is most important to un-earth feelings and thoughts which are uncomfortable to myself (Pillow, 2003).

As in the fieldnote before, I felt betrayed. But the next day I could see things differently and be honest with myself I had to acknowledge how strong emotions influenced my judgement. I could then revise my thinking and see it differently.

> *Only the next day - in a calmer mood - I understood that he might have been under pressure from his boss - who may have favoured the proposal he presented [see 'Appendix C – Trust and Construction Projects (Grosse, 2015b)' p. 302]*

I think this sort of insight is far more difficult to achieve with other research methods. Therefore, autoethnography offers unique insights into emotions and thought processes related to trust. However, I have to admit that I am only talking about myself. The depth of investigation I may achieve only relates to me.

> *"Regardless of methodology, all researchers of humans should understand that we are not (static) rocks or telephones, rather, we are dynamic, unpredictable, and ever-changing beings. […] We might be able to make informed, educated guesses about human behaviour, and there might be significant, knowable social constraints […] but to know, with full certainty, what others will do, say, or think is impossible." (Holman Jones et al., 2013, p. 26)*

But although I follow the qualitative path in my approach, I need to be careful not to drift into dogmatism. I now believe that the qualitative approach – autoethnography – is the most appropriate. However, I am not sure whether this will be the case in a couple of years' time. As I learned from a recent conversation with a colleague, fashions are changing, and mindsets are changing too. Hence, dogmatism in either direction, perhaps in all walks of life, is dangerous, because we are excluding the other. But we need the other to learn from the other.

However, it is perhaps necessary to take this approach – autoethnography as self-exploration – to the extreme to see where its limits are. I argue that trust is something other than rationality – fundamentally different and in a totally contrasting position. Therefore, I take my exploring and thinking to the extreme – reflecting about myself and my experiences in the light of Lévinas' thought.

Some Reflection on my Business Practice

I run my business and I would like to be in control of it. But as I have described above, I never will. There is no absolute control, there is always trust. Bizarrely, I am in charge of my business to a large extent because I trust others, not because I control them.

I gain power and income because I give away power and control. This turns some basic assumptions on management upside down – scientific management in particular. It is not more control that makes one stronger but what is beyond control that makes one successful.

I cannot help thinking about Hermann Hesse's Siddhartha (1974). Siddhartha was most successful in his pursuits when he ceased to desperately will success. He was best when he let go and adopted a stance of playfulness. Not to be taught principles, having scholarly knowledge is what made him better, but the experience – a playful experience – that Siddartha made helped him to grow and to form a deeper understanding. Perhaps the playfulness Hesse describes has a lot to do with Lévinas' notion of Saying.

These thoughts reveal that my thinking is quite a bit ahead of what I am writing here. In this chapter, I sought to pave the way to Lévinas. It seems logical to come to a point where rationality must be questioned. To me thinking about trust in Lévinas' terms is sensible. But how can I be sure that it is not the other way around? Perhaps because I appreciate Lévinas' thought I just see trust only from this perspective. Is there a way of getting out? Is seeing it from some distance possible? Yes and No. Yes, in the sense that I may take another point of view during a later stage but also no because my reality is my construction I struggle to escape. Hence there is the possibility to see things differently, but I cannot abandon my intellectual history. Thus there is no neutral or distanced view possible.

Summary

In this chapter, I tried defining the concept of trust as I have understood it from my readings in the respective literature. First, I drew on the common use of the word 'trust' that allows for a wide range of applications. However, in this work, I only concentrate on trust between people. Trust to my understanding is an expectation, a belief, or hope directed towards the actions of another or intentions of the person. The trusting party believes the trusted will act benevolently towards him or her. Whether or not an action on this belief may follow is another matter. When I trust, I believe that the other is not abusing the powers I hand over to him or her.

Control, on the contrary, does not need this belief. I would not need to trust if I knew enough or if I could control the other and the situation through enough knowledge. It amounts to complete knowledge about the other. But that is impossible. I must trust because I cannot know enough about the other or control him or her completely. Complete knowledge about the other, even with regard only to a specific task, is impossible. My ability to perceive and to understand is limited as I only see very little of the world around me and therefore can only grasp a small part.

Furthermore, the way I make sense of my environment makes it impossible to come to 'full' understanding. There is a hermeneutic process of interpretation underway. New experiences form new interpretations, and old interpretations are reinforced, altered, or abandoned. It is an ongoing process of interpretation. It cannot by its nature come to closure. The world around me is not static but dynamic and constantly changing. Hence, I might be able to understand the world better, but will never come to complete understanding.

Complete knowledge would be prerequisite of complete control. Hence, to some extent, I need to trust if I want others to fulfil the task for me. The crucial thing is that I cannot avoid a situation where I rely on the help of others, or at least on them not harming me. I cannot know what is best for me in most situations and nor can the Other in whom I trust. Hence the other being benevolent to me might be thinking they act in my best interest. Then my judgement on whether the other's actions are a breach of trust tells less about the other and more about me. I am just judging the other against my expectations.

To my understanding, life would be impossible if I did not believe in other's benevolence. This belief is not a result of a rational calculation. Therefore, I am going to explore the relation between the non-rational and rational and between being and beyond being in Emmanuel Lévinas' thought. Using this exploration, I seek to better understand what trust is and where it comes from.

IV. Emmanuel Lévinas

"[…] we have come into the world to work together, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To work against one another therefore is to oppose Nature, and to be vexed with another or to turn away from him is to tend to antagonism." (Aurelius, 1992, p. 7)

This quote summarises the last chapter, where I show that avoiding trust is impossible. At the same time, the quote is also a good introduction to Lévinas' thought. To him we are not made to live in solitude - we are not self-sufficient. To be myself, I need the Other. Therefore, the Other rather than myself should be my primary concern.

Introduction

In summer 2015, I talked to Edward Trezise, at the time a senior lecturer at my university. He knew that I was doing autoethnography in my business and was interested in trust. During our talk, he mentioned Lévinas and his understanding of responsibility. 'Think about a car accident and the urge you feel to help; that is what I think Lévinas meant by responsibility. This very first urge before you start to think about the consequence of your action that you may cause more harm to the victim, may infect yourself with some disease, etc. Perhaps, trust has some similarities to this pre-rational urge.' This thought did not leave me, and I started to read Emmanuel Lévinas' work.

The 'urge' Edward was talking about is pre-rational. He drew on Caputo's example (Caputo (2000), but he introduced the urge to help and linked it to trust. It is a desire, an inner force, an urge I feel to help the person in this car accident. This urge is not something

I have thought about beforehand. It is already there without me actively choosing it. We have seen in the previous chapter that trust cannot be pinned down to a specific reason or set of reasons. Therefore, I seek to explore whether trust is better understood outside of rationality. I try to relate trust to human interaction before or beyond rationality, ontology or being.

Lévinas' thought is not something easy to digest. He deals with the very basis of being and what is beyond being. Therefore, in the first section of this chapter I sketch Lévinas' thinking. I roughly follow the chronology of his writings using Lévinas' original publication dates and not the dates of the translations.

First, I deal with the concept of alterity and the Other as fundamentally different from me. This goes along with the notion of Same and Other (Lévinas, 1961). Lévinas argues that this leads to an infinite responsibility for and to the Other. This responsibility is the recurring theme throughout Lévinas' writings. He later moves to the notion of ethical language which culminates in response to the Other which he terms as Saying. This Saying, which is every form of giving signs to others, produces the Said (Lévinas, 1974b). In between, I will also draw on some of Derrida's writings because they are influenced by Lévinas, and their influence is, in turn, visible in Lévinas' later work. Towards the end of the chapter, I am going to show that Lévinas thought, as Derrida asserted, can 'make us tremble.' (Derrida, 1967, p. 101)

Although I almost exclusively use the notion of Saying and Said in my further exploration, it is necessary to sketch the development of his thinking. The basic nature of Lévinas' thought is profound, and one can only grasp his ideas after following a similar way of thinking. To me there is no shortcut to understanding Lévinas – it is hard work, yet it is transforming.

In the second section, I explore the notion of trust again. After arguing for a pre-rational conception of trust, I explore trust in light of my understanding of Lévinas' thought.

Pre-Rational Trust

If I look to justify why I trust my friends I would have difficulty finding a specific reason. There is no definitive reason why I trust. I often fail to come up with a reason why I call them friends at all. Of course, they have certain qualities, and abilities, but does that give me a reason to call them friends? If they were, for instance, more or less intelligent, they would not qualify any more or less as a friend. I actually do not think friendship is anything to do with rational choice. My friends are my friends because I feel connected to them not because they have certain personality traits. But how we interact is essential. If a friend does me harm knowingly and deliberately, that will inevitably affect our friendship.

My kids are 5 and 7 years old and give the impression that they choose their friends – 'So and so is my friend now.' (only the next day this kid is not a friend anymore). However, I wonder whether we actively choose our friends. The same applies to trust, which I do not choose to do. In fact, I cannot choose to trust someone – it slips into my consciousness before I make the choice. I may act on my rational thought and avoid making myself vulnerable to the actions of the Other but that might go against my desire to trust. Therefore, to trust is pre-rational.

The notion of pre-rationality is found in different places. Simmel (1907, p. 179) already noted, "in the case […] of trust in someone, there is an additional element which is hard to describe: it is most clearly embodied in religious faith". This non-rational element of trust was subsequently dealt with by different authors (Giddens, 1990; Möllering, 2006)

Recently, Frederiksen (2014, p. 35) drew my attention to Løgstrup (1997) who defines trust as "a fundamental category of social life and realigne[d] trusting and calculativeness as different modes of engaging." Since, according to MacIntyre and Fink, Løgstrup's work shows significant similarities to that of Emmanuel Lévinas (Introduction to: Løgstrup, 1997) I seek to explore the non-rational component of trust from a Lévinasian perspective. Apart from only scantly mentioning Lévinas – Bart Nooteboom interviewed by Möllering (2015)

and Frederiksen and Heinskou (2016), Eikeland and Saevi (2017), and Saevi and Eikeland (2012)– trust researchers have up until now not explored Lévinas' thinking in relation to trust.

But Lévinas has something to offer to our understanding of trust. As I emphasised above, rational explanations of trust fail in their attempt to find the foundation of trust. Some speak of quasi-religious belief (Simmel, 1907) others of a leap of faith (Möllering, 2006). But they agree that trust needs a suspension of rationality. Lévinas' thinking moves between rationality and non-rationality in a fascinating fluctuation between what seems to link trust and calculation. Levinas questions and deconstructs very basic assumptions. He essentially asks where consciousness our sense of being and the way we think come from. I seek to discover what that means for an understanding of trust. Therefore, I explore his thought in order to see whether his thinking helps to understand the roots of trust.

Lévinas' Background

Lévinas is regarded as one of the most influential French philosophers of the 20th century. "Indeed, in many ways, it now looks as if Levinas were the hidden king of twentieth-century French philosophy." (Critchley, 2002, p. 5) Born in 1906 to a Jewish family in Kaunas (Lithuania), he moved in 1923 to France. From 1928-29 he travelled to Freiburg (Germany) to study with Husserl. In an interview, he later said, "I went to Freiburg because of Husserl, but discovered Heidegger" (Critchley & Bernasconi, 2002, p. xvii). The next year, he published his doctoral thesis "The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology". In 1939 he became a French citizen and joined the French army the same year to fight the Germans. Less than a year later he was captured by the Germans and despite being a Jew was not sent to a death camp but detained as a prisoner of war in a labour camp. During that time, he started to work on "Existence and Existents." (Lévinas, 1947a) As Bergo (2015, p. 14) noted, "[t]here is no doubt that the uncertainty about his wife and daughter, not to mention the rumors about the liquidation of the Jews in Lithuania, influenced his work at this time." His

wife and daughter survived the Holocaust hiding in a monastery in Orleans, but ultimately, the Nazis murdered his whole Lithuanian family (Bergo, 2015). Hence the Holocaust and his experience with the totalitarian system of Nazi Germany had a strong influence on his later thought and his understanding of ethics. The Holocaust led him to criticise western philosophy for giving knowledge priority over ethics (Atterton & Calarco, 2005). To Lévinas, ethics come before philosophy.

The primacy of ethics over philosophy is one reason for his break with Heidegger, especially because Heideggerian philosophy allowed for Hitlerism. Another reason is that Heidegger himself supported the Nazis and Lévinas had difficulty forgiving him (Lévinas, 1968; 1977). It is the turn to ethics in Lévinas philosophy that made him so influential in French philosophy during the 1980s and 90s. “The alleged ethical turn of Derrida’s thinking might be viewed simply as a return to Levinas […]” (Critchley, 2002, p. 3). Derrida himself said “Confronted with a thought like Levinas’s, I never have any objection. I am ready to subscribe to everything he says.” (Guibal (Ed.), Breton (Ed), & Herbrechter (Transl.), 2004, p. 64) Whether this statement is to be taken at face value might be up for discussion. However it certainly attests to the closeness of both thinkers. Reading both Lévinas and Derrida is very helpful for my understanding of what responsibility meant to them. The concept of responsibility Lévinas uses results from his understanding of our relation to the Other, the human being next to us, and what role ontology and ethics play in this relation.

How to start?

I would like to quote Simon Critchley upfront. For me, it summarises how to read Lévinas. It may prime the reader for Lévinas’ way of talking, a way of conveying his message:

> *For Levinas, the negative becomes positive. What he's trying to describe is (or better, is mobilized with) an ethical language. A useful way of thinking about*

> *Levinas is not in terms of arguments or verifying propositions but in relation to a certain accumulation of terms, a rhetorical intensification through forms of repetition, invocation, and multiplication. Levinas is a rhapsodic thinker. He's not Freddy Ayer. As Derrida rightly says, Levinas' movement is like a wave on the beach, always the same wave on the beach over and over again with repeated force and intensity. [(Derrida, 1967, p. 124)] Levinas has one point to make and he keeps coining different terms in order to make it. He doesn't explain the language he uses, he doesn't provide definitions of concepts; he just adds another term to a previous term. It's beautiful to dance to, although a little frustrating when you can't hear the music or if you have no sense of rhythm. What Levinas is trying to describe is something that occurs prior to understanding, prior to comprehension, a debt contracted before freedom. It's trauma that can only be traced through its effects, which are only felt après-coup, after the fact, belatedly. (Critchley, 2015, pp. 68-69)*

I use this quote because it describes the way in which Lévinas' thought affects me. Its affect is like waves coming sometimes gently, sometimes forcefully, but incessantly moving the reader. What the waves do to the reader is more important than what the wave actually is. I sometimes sat in the library reading Lévinas and at first did not really understand it. However, after a couple of pages, Lévinas' thought started to move something in my thinking, in a deep way, as if there was some movement underneath the surface rationality. One may compare this thinking to an ongoing hermeneutic. But in Lévinas' thought it goes deeper; it does not just scratch the surface. To me, it often felt as if the very foundation of my thinking started to drift.

Therefore, I cannot come up with a final conclusion and develop it deductively. In the following pages I must describe Lévinas' thought so that the reader understands and perhaps feels how to think in Lévinas' way. The best way to do this is to explore his writing chronologically.

Ethics and responsibility, as I argue above, are of high significance for an understanding of trust. Lévinas relocates these two in the realm of the pre-conscious. Hence, the importance of ethics and responsibility in Lévinas' thought are essential to understanding his contribution to the discussion of trust. But this requires a deeper understanding of Lévinas' thought. As I argue above, trust cannot be explained by pure reason but Levinas offers some answers. I will begin by outlining his thought to show how my interpretation of trust relates to his thinking.

To follow Lévinas' thought it is necessary to understand the relation between the basic concepts of Being and being's Other. To that end I needed to explore the Other and Same, desire and responsibility, Saying and Said. They are so interwoven that I can only explain them in relation to each other. A word of caution: Lévinas' writings are continuous iterations of thoughts and ideas. Therefore, my representation of Lévinas is not straightforward; it also develops and shows a deepening of thinking throughout the writing. I may pick up themes a couple of times and develop them. It is a hermeneutic way of thinking.

Lévinas' encounter with the Other is the central event in the formation of the self. Contrary to Heidegger, we first and foremost feel, sense, or experience the Other before we become aware of our own and the Other's being. This encounter with the Other precedes everything; it is primordial. To Lévinas, we are basically responding to Others who (implicitly) demand something from us. He emphasises that being is to be among and for Others (Lévinas, 1974b) rather than a being in the world and towards death (Heidegger, 1927). Therefore, philosophy has to start with the human encounter (Bergo, 2015).

Put very simply, the Other challenges me and puts me in question because the Other is different. Through our response to the Other and this interruption by the Other, we become aware of our own being. Therefore, I start my exploration with the Other.

Alterity – Same and Other

The Other and Same are the central figures in Lévinas' *Totality and Infinity* (Lévinas, 1961). Here Lévinas draws on Plato who had already introduced these terms into the philosophical debate (Davis, 1996) For Lévinas, the Same is my rational thought. It comprises my own categories and is my understanding of my experiences. The Same is not restricted to similarities; it can also be opposites e.g. light and dark, black and white. This is because they can be displayed in the same category.

The Same is essentially what we know. Lévinas (1964, p. 48) asks suggestively whether "[…] philosophy wants to reabsorb every Other into the Same and to neutralize alterity." The absorption of every Other into the categories of the Same is for Lévinas the biggest problem of western or Greek philosophy. To him, knowledge of the Same is limited and therefore the Other who is infinitely other, cannot be adequately displayed in terms of the Same. One would have to reduce the Other in order to fit him into the limits of the Same. It would mean to subordinate the infinite otherness of the Other to the totality of the Same. To Lévinas, the translation of the Other into the Same is, therefore, a violent act (Lévinas, 1951).

To get to grips with Lévinas' Other one has to understand the very nature of the Other's otherness. So, what is Alterity?

"Absolutely other is the Other." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 39)

By the 'absolutely other' Lévinas refers to the Other as one who "escapes my grasp by an essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal. He is not wholly in sight." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 39) To Lévinas, we seek to understand others by translating their action into the categories of our own. We actually seek to make them the Same. But this endeavour is bound to fail. We may use the same language as the Other, but we are essentially Strangers.

"I, who have no concept in common with the Stranger, am, like him without genus." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 39).

Lévinas distinguishes between the other (in lower case) – which might be incorporated into my own categories, into the Same and the Other (capitalised) – which is impossible to display in the categories of the same (Davis, 1996). One may notice that the use of the capitalised form is not entirely consistent in Lévinas' writings. However, one will always find his concept of the Other and alterity as I try to sketch it here.

To give a rough example of how I began to understand the concept of alterity I thought about my understanding of being a woman. I am a man, and I will never understand what it means to be a woman. Being a woman escapes my comprehension because I do not have a female body, I do not feel like a woman and I am not socialised as a woman. Being a woman essentially escapes my categories. Hence, women will always stay strange to me, and every effort to translate their being foreign into my own categories is bound to fail. I am probably able to form an understanding of being a woman, but it will be a man's understanding of being a woman not that of a woman. Our registers are essentially different, and we cannot overcome this difference.

I could now replace the term "being a woman" with all sort of terms, e.g. "being French," "having another profession," "being a child of other parents." But alterity is not about traits. Regardless of similarities and differences, every other person is the Other, because I am simply not him or her. Hence, he or she is just the Other.

It is this essential otherness that is difficult to grasp. It is here that my example of being a woman becomes flawed. I am a man and being of a different gender is a trait as being of different colour, race, or origin. If I can name a difference, such as gender, I can translate it into or, better, subject it to my categories. Hence this difference is already subjected to my totality. But alterity or the Other must not be subjected to my totality – it cannot be subjected.

Lévinas explained in an interview that “there is something which remains outside, and that is alterity. Alterity is not at all the fact that there is a difference that facing me there is someone who has a different nose than mine, different colour eyes, another character. It is not difference, but alterity. It is alterity, the unencompassable, the transcendent. It is the beginning of transcendence. You are not transcendent by virtue of a certain trait." (Wright, Hughes, & Ainlley, 1988, p. 170) The Other is just not me or in Lévinas’ words “[T]he Other as Other is not only an alter ego; the Other is what I am not” (Lévinas, 1947b, p. 83). In a footnote, Richard A. Cohen comments that Lévinas states that “alterity encountered through negativity is merely a relative, not absolute, alterity.” Therefore, alterity has to be understood outside of ‘negativity, and thus in a truly positive “sense”’(Cohen in Lévinas, 1947b, p. 83). Therefore, my being a woman example does not work.

Hence, alterity is something I cannot comprehend. It is neither possible nor desirable to comprehend the Other in the Other’s alterity. It would essentially mean to ‘kill’ the Other because I strip them of their Otherness. However, it is important to recognise, the Other is neither fundamentally with nor against me. The Other is just the unknown, the stranger (Davis, 1996). But with the resistance of the Other to my categories, one can recognise that the Other exists in another dimension. Therefore, he is not against me nor with me – he is just there, free but in relation to me.

> *"The central difficulty for Levinas is to elaborate a philosophy of the Self and Other in which both are preserved as independent and self-sufficient, but in some sense in relation with one another. This is more difficult than it might appear, since it is in the nature of the relation to bringing the Other into the self´s sphere of familiarity, thus making it intelligible from the perspective of the self and reducing its true otherness." (Davis, 1996, p. 41)*

The act of making the Other intelligible is making him the Same, translating him into my categories. My Same comprises my limited categories, of ‘large’ and ‘small’, ‘sour’ and ‘sweet’, or ‘beautiful’ and ‘ugly’. But the Other is not limited in his otherness; the Other is infinite. Yet, I need to share the meaning of ‘sour’, ‘sweet’, ‘beautiful’, and ‘ugly’ with the Other. I need this “community of speakers who share that name.” (Large, 2015, p. 44) I need some understanding of the Other to avoid solitude.

And here one faces a dilemma; I want to know the Other and to be familiar with him, but I need to preserve his alterity. I cannot make him the Same. Again, the Other “escapes my grasp by an essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal. He is not wholly in my sight” (Lévinas, 1961, p. 39).

The Same is the totality of my knowledge - of my categories. It is my large and small, sour and sweet, beautiful and ugly. These categories are what Weick (2006) calls ‘conceptual boxes’, but they are only a lens to comprehend the Other and however sophisticated these categories might become, I am never able to grasp the Other completely. The categories are always limited, as is my knowledge. The Same is limited too and the Other cannot be subordinated to these categories because it is infinitely other.

The notion of the Other will later assist the exploration of why my understanding of my business partners is always incomplete. I have sought to understand why the engineer I work with acted in ways I regarded as a breach of trust [see ‘Understanding the Other’ p. 64 and ‘Appendix B – Experiences with Auto-Ethnography (Grosse, 2015a)’ p. 289]. However, I failed in my attempt due to my inability to see the whole picture (Berlin, 2013) and that it is an ongoing hermeneutic exploration that cannot be finished (Iser, 2000). ‘Incomplete’ understanding might not be the best word to use here. It suggests that complete knowledge of the Other is possible, if only in theory. But the Other, as infinitely other, escapes my grasp. The possibility of complete understanding would require equality between me and the Other which is not given.

Lévinas' notion of the Other opens a new way of thinking about that relationship. I am in principle unable to grasp the Other because of her or his fundamental otherness – alterity. In this work I show that the Otherness of the Other is challenge and value at the same time.

The Other already exists prior to my own existence (Hand, 2009). From the encounter with the Other, I understand that we share the world (Davis, 1996) and I am not alone. Hence, myself is defined by the encounter with the Other. Prior to all thought, I am obliged to be good to the Other and to take care of him. If I were violent against him, I could not form a relationship with him and hence not become a conscious being. This results in my responsibility "for the Other because my existence as individuated subject is entirely bound up with my relation to him or her." (Davis, 1996, p. 80) Again, I need "the community of speakers" (Large, 2015, p. 44).

Yet the fact that the Other is already there and that I am never alone has another implication. The encounter with the Other precedes the very constitution of the self, of my own being. But before I deal with Ontology, I will briefly explore how the Other presents him- or herself to me – through the Other's face. The encounter with the Other is prior to my own consciousness, thinking, ontology and philosophy. Hence, I need to understand how the Other appears to me – in the form of the face – before I can move on and see what follows from this encounter.

The Face

"The face has turned to me – and this is its very nudity. It is by itself and not by reference to a system." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 75)

The face (le visage) is the device to convey the presentation (not representation) of the Other (Davis, 1996). It might be the Other in person, but can also be any other piece of artwork, communication, etc. that is strange to the self (Atterton & Calarco, 2005). The face

is not bound to a ‘system.' It is, therefore, not subject to categories; it does not fit into them. Hence, it disturbs my Same, because the face puts my Same into question and demonstrates its limits. And, of course, the face urges me to develop my categories.

Here, Lévinas makes clear that the face is what is exposed to me. It is how the Other appears to me and is presented to me. It is the nudity of the face, its exposure and the very truthfulness of the Other – not polished, not hidden, not reserved. The face appears as a naked face, not as a mask (Bauman, 1993). It is the means of communication between the Other and me. The face is more a metaphor than the actual bodily part of the Other. In Lévinas’ writings, the face stands for what the Other presents to me. We are drawn to the Other’s face as we desire to be in contact with it.

Desire

For Lévinas, desire has to be distinguished from need. Needs are the very basic requirements of life e.g. food, shelter, sleep etc. A need is a lack of something that can be filled. We can satisfy our need, but we cannot satisfy our desires. As I said before, I want to be with the Other; I have a desire for him and to be with him. Desires are directed to alterity of the Other (Davis, 1996). Lévinas doubtlessly refers to Plato, “who, in his analysis of pure pleasures, discovered an aspiration that is conditioned by no prior lack.” (Lévinas, 1964, p. 51) The desire is not egoistic, as needs are, it is as self-sufficient as the desire for happiness – it aims at itself. This self-sufficiency is similar to Heidegger’s sufficiency of Dasein: “Dasein is an entity for which, in its Being, that Being is an issue.” (Heidegger, 1927, p. 236) The desire does not aim at satisfaction because it does not aim at a lack of anything.

> *Having recognized its needs as material needs, as capable of being satisfied, the I henceforth turn to what it does not lack. It distinguishes the material from the spiritual, opens to Desire. (Lévinas, 1961, p. 117)*

In the attraction of the Other as Other both the self and the Other are confirmed by desire and not reduced to the same (Davis, 1996). To Lévinas this desire for the Other is the bedrock of our sociality.

> *The desire for the Other (Autrui), sociality, is born in a being that lacks nothing, or, more exactly, it is born over and beyond all that can be lacking or that can satisfy. (Lévinas, 1964, p. 51)*

We desire to be with the Other; we seek, prior to any thought, to sense the Other – the Other's face. However, although satisfying material needs is essential for men to survive, I wonder what would happen to a human being if this person was deprived of all social interaction. This person might survive, but would certainly suffer. A permanent lack of human encounters would lead to severe psychological and physiological problems. In this sense, human interaction becomes a need. Hence, desire must be understood differently. Desire is what is not lacking. It is the urge to the Other only as someone different from me. I do not need him for anything; my health is safeguarded, but I want to sense him and enjoy being with him. Desire is then directed to enjoyment and sensibility.

Sensibility and Enjoyment

Thoughts, to Lévinas, only arise from sensing things. We sense things, and we enjoy them before we start to think.

> *The sensibility we are describing starting with enjoyment of the element does not belong to the order of thought but to that of sentiment [...] (Lévinas, 1961, p. 133)*

He proceeds to explain that sensibility is sufficient to itself: it does not aim at a thought.

> *Sensibility, essentially naïve, suffices to itself. (Lévinas, 1961, p. 135)*

> *Sensibility does not aim at an object, however rudimentary. (Lévinas, 1961, p. 137)*

Sensibility is prior to any thought. It is the very basic encounter with the Other. Sensibility, itself, does not have a direction and does not seek. This sufficiency to itself, we have already seen in desire, we see it here with sensibility, and we are going to find it again in responsibility. Desire and sensibility precede the development of concepts, are primordial and can be conceived as sociality and responsibility.

> *Desire cannot proceed to an end which it would be equal to; in Desire the approach distances, and enjoyment is but the increase of hunger. (Lévinas, 1975, p. 140)*

At this point, I start to wonder whether I should relate desire, sensibility and enjoyment to trust. I ask whether trust is – without regarding it as a means to an end – not a form of desire and enjoyment to act trustingly. I enjoy being trusted regardless of whether there is a material benefit for me in it or not. I also enjoy trusting another person, just for the sake of doing something together.

To be with someone is different from eating. We can eat enough not to be hungry any more, to satisfy this need, but spending time with someone is different. Of course, one might get bored by someone, but it is different from not being hungry. To drink one and a half litres of water per day might be sufficient for an adult to stay healthy and survive, but we seek to be with others for the sake of being with them. And we all know the line: “I can’t get enough of you.” Desire, sensibility, and enjoyment are infinite, and we see later that responsibility is also ever growing and, hence, infinite.

But sensibility and enjoyment form the basis for signification. Both are the bedrock from which consciousness and thought arise. By giving our sensation names and by ascribing words to them, we move them into consciousness.

> *The separation accomplished as enjoyment, that is, as interiority, becomes a consciousness of objects. The things are fixed by the word which gives them, which communicates them and thematises them. […] Over and above enjoyment […] a discourse about the world takes form. (Lévinas, 1961, p. 139)*

That is the point where sensibility and enjoyment become experiences. We begin to make sense of what we feel and enjoy, and we assemble sensibility and enjoyment into experience - experience that constitutes our own being. Therefore, I am able to be and to communicate only because I am able to sense and enjoy.

> *Only a subject that eats can be for the Other, or can signify. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 64)*

Only one who eats can be one who enjoys, and can, therefore, truly offer something to others. “In giving to the Other ethically, there is an obligation to give something of oneself, which means to give one’s own enjoyment.” (Atterton & Calarco, 2005, p. 61) It is perhaps this enjoyment that forms a great deal of my job satisfaction. I work with people - I constantly face Others and as long as I make a living, I can offer something in return. That might be a job for my employees, some assistance for an architect, or good service for my clients.

I could have embarked on a career as a design engineer with far less human interaction involved in my job. But I think the constant exposure and ongoing encounters with Others makes my work so valuable for me. I do not need these interactions, but they contribute a lot to my well-being. It is perhaps because being, working and interacting with Others plays such an important role in my life that I am so drawn to Lévinas.

The notion of giving 'from a full mouth', mentioned earlier, becomes quite important in my treatment of trust. It essentially says that to become a moral self, one needs have satisfied basic needs. This is a recurring theme in business when I have to decide whether to share or to be selfish. It looks as if a person fighting for survival – literally or metaphorically – will act, sometimes must act, egoistically in order to eat. Although, there are already deep connections to trust and my business practice I think I still need to reflect on Lévinas' thought.

Ontology

The Greek philosophical tradition emphasises the supremacy of being, rational thought and ontology. But Lévinas questions ontology's supremacy.

As I have shown above, prior to knowledge and consciousness, one encounters the Other. One is pulled to him and desires to be with him, feeling, sensing, and interacting with him. Through this encounter, one becomes aware of the Other and oneself. One becomes conscious; one begins to know. Therefore, being is not constitutive to itself – it is the Other. One may wonder why being and ontology adopts this primal position in philosophy. Lévinas argues that this position should be reserved for the encounter with the Other. He contradicts Heidegger in the following:

> *"To affirm the priority of Being over existents is to already decide the essence of philosophy; it is to subordinate the relation with someone, who is existent, (the ethical relation) to a relation with the Being of existents, which, impersonal, permits the apprehension, the domination of existents (a relation of knowing) subordinates justice to freedom. […] It would be opposed to justice, which involves obligations with regard to an existent that refuses to give itself, the Other, who in this sense would be an existent par excellence." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 45)*

The encounter with the Other, the Other's face, this calling into question must precede every consciousness, hence, all being and ontology. It is the response to the Other, my responsibility before any rational thought, the ethical moment that must come first. If it were the other way around, humanity, indeed justice, would be subordinated to freedom. A freedom that "comes from obedience to Being, it is not man who possesses freedom; it is freedom that possesses man" (Lévinas, 1961, p. 45). For Lévinas, I first respond to the Other then I begin to understand my own being, I begin to know.

> *"Knowing is only understood in its proper essence when one begins with consciousness, whose specificity is defined with the concept of knowing, a concept of knowing, a concept which presupposes consciousness." (Lévinas, 1975, p. 132)*

Knowing and consciousness need each other. Hence, they must originate somewhere else. Consciousness emerges from the encounter with the Other and leads to knowing and knowing makes one conscious. But since the encounter with the Other precedes all consciousness and therefore knowledge, we have to look closer at the response of the self to the Other. This responding is responsibility prior to consciousness, being and rationality. Facing the Other, being responsible does indeed precede all philosophy. Then, what is responsibility?

Responsibility

> *"The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question my spontaneity, as ethics." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 43)*

The primordial nature of the encounter with the Other relocates responsibility. To Lévinas, responsibility derives from the encounter with the Other. But responsibility is not

to be understood in the Greco-Roman sense as "[s]omebody is responsible for something to somebody […]" (Waldenfels, 1995, p. 40). In this sense, responsibility goes hand in hand with accountability. The responsible has to justify him or herself in front of somebody and give reason for his action. Hence, responsibility in the Greco-Roman sense is subjected to reason. This would presuppose an all-encompassing totality. "This interpretation of the world of words and things, however, presupposes that there is only one order to which our saying and doing can be coordinated or in which it can be incorporated [...]." (Waldenfels, 1995, p. 41) In other words, this sort of responsibility would not allow for the Other. Because of the Other's alterity his "saying or doing" cannot be understood "in a non-ambiguous way." (Waldenfels, 1995, p. 41) Therefore, Lévinas talks about responsible responding – responsible to and for others. To be responsible is to approach the Other with an attitude of care and openness.

But an encounter with the Other demands a response – hence responsibility – before I am able to reason. Therefore, Lévinas locates responsibility beyond being. Responsibility must come first – before reason and before philosophy.

"To be judged [on the grounds of responsibility] thus does not consist in hearing a verdict set forth impersonally and implacably out of universal rules." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 244) The response has to be placed appropriately to the subjective conditions of the encounter.

To Lévinas, responsibility is ethics. It is there before we develop concepts and it lies underneath, below the radar of concepts (Caputo, 2000). Ethics originate in the encounter with the Other or, as Derrida (1992) approaching the issue from the opposite angle describes, when we suspend every concept – in the moment of universal épochè – what is left is ethics - free, unrestrained ethics.

Only a subject, which is sensible and able to enjoy – an 'embodied subject' – can bear responsibility. Yet, sensibility and enjoyment – by its temptation – make it possible for the subject to break with responsibility and act irresponsibly (Atterton & Calarco, 2005). But to

be responsible is not an autonomous decision - it has begun before I was able to make a free decision. Lévinas argues, that since our very existence is dependent on the encounter with Others, we are infinitely indebted to them (Davis, 1996). Since I am only myself because I interact with Others, I am responsible for the others.

> *The responsibility for the Other cannot have begun in my commitment, in my decision. The unlimited responsibility in which I find myself comes from the hither side of my freedom, from a "prior to every memory," an "ulterior to every accomplishment," from the non-present par excellence, the non-original, the an-archical, prior to or beyond essence. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 10)*

This responsibility originates in the ethical encounter with others. It has its origins in ethics prior to ontology, and hence it cannot be restricted by reasoning. So, ethics is 'first philosophy.'

> *Responsibility for the Other, this way of answering without prior commitment, is human fraternity itself, and it is prior to freedom. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 116)*

But this implies that I am not in the position to reject any responsibility. Therefore, I am overwhelmed by demands originating in almost infinite encounters with others. I am unable to respond to each calling and, hence, I end in an overflow of responsibility. Consequently, the more I follow my desire for the Other – and I do so because it is an infinite desire – the more I become responsible for and to the Other.

Lévinas argues, "[t]he infinity of responsibility denotes not its actual immensity, but a responsibility increasing in the measure it is assumed, duties become greater in the measure that they are accomplished." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 244) But I will inevitably arrive at a point when I have to decide which responsibility I will fulfil and which not. My decision about my actions defines myself.

> *"Perhaps the possibility of a point of the universe where such an overflow of responsibility is produced ultimately defines the I." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 245)*

The self is the ultimate coping strategy to make life liveable. We see now that my desire for the Other, sensing him prior to all memory, demands me to treat him responsibly. Yet this primordial responsibility is not limited – there is no concept to limit responsibility. I am unable to live up to my responsibility. I have to choose which action I take and which I do not take. The self decides to whom I act responsibly and the Others urge me to this decision. But the inability to fulfil all responsibilities leaves this nagging sense of inadequacy. I still hear the command of responsibility.

We also find this understanding of infinite responsibility in Derrida's writing, which supports Crichley's (2002) claim that Derrida's turn to ethics is rooted in reading Lévinas.

> *"This responsibility toward memory is a responsibility before the very concept of responsibility that regulates the justice and appropriateness (justesse) of our behavior, of our theoretical, practical ethico-political decisions." (Derrida, 1992, p. 20)*

Derrida refers here to a concept of responsibility – sharply distinguished from accountability. This is very close to Levinas' concept. He sets this in the context of other concepts and continues:

> *This concept of responsibility is inseparable from a whole network of connected concepts (property, intentionality will, freedom, conscience, consciousness, self-consciousness, subject, self, person, community, decision, and so forth) and any deconstruction of this network of concepts in their given or dominant state may seem like a move toward irresponsibility at the very moment that, on the contrary, deconstruction calls for an increase in responsibility. (Derrida, 1992, p. 20)*

Although it looks first as if a deconstruction of concepts might lead to a breakup or meltdown, it is the opposite. Responsibility for him fills the gaps left by the suspension of a concept.

> *But in the moment that an axiom's credibility (crédit) is suspended by deconstruction, in this structurally necessary moment, one can always believe that there is no more room for justice, neither for justice itself nor for theoretical interest directed toward the problems of justice, This moment of suspense, this period of épochè, without which, in fact, deconstruction is not possible, is always full of anxiety, but who will claim to be just by economizing on anxiety? (Derrida, 1992, p. 20)*

The anxiety, he talks about, is the very moment I have to decide which responsibility to fulfil and to whom I am irresponsible - the very moment I define myself. This anxiety, for him, is not motivated by structures or principles, it is as it is for Lévinas, a desire.

> *And this anxiety ridden moment of suspense—which is also the interval of spacing in which transformations, indeed juridico-political revolutions take place—cannot be motivated, cannot find its movement and its impulse (an impulse which itself cannot be suspended) except in the demand for an increase in or supplement to justice, and so in the experience of an inadequation or an incalculable disproportion." (Derrida, 1992, p. 20)*

Derrida demonstrates Lévinas' idea of responsibility approached from the other end. When he suspends concept after concept – i.e. he deconstructs being – what is left is a space free of rules. But the freer the space, the higher the demand for appropriate behaviour - behaviour considering the subjective circumstance. In the end, this responsibility is infinite. I may only deal with a single Other, but since I abolished all rules and concepts, I cannot

share this responsibility. I must divide the responsibility to him by zero – literally or metaphorically. Hence my responsibility is infinite.

It is, therefore, a free decision, because I can judge. But it is also a constrained decision because I am obliged to judge and take the responsibility. This is a marked resemblance to Derrida (1992). Derrida demonstrates that justice cannot be achieved since it either falls short of applying principles, it does not account for the particularity of the case or even worse it applies unjust laws. Hence, I may strive for justice or to respond ethically to others, but I will always fall short of achieving either of the goals.

My conversation with Edward Trezise above, reflected on the urge you feel when you see a car accident - this calling in you to help the victim is the very first moment of humanity (drawing on Caputo, 2000). This is the experience of 'inadequacy.' Not reacting or responding is inadequate – it would be inhuman to respond by starting to calculate. A second later you start to think about the consequences of possible actions. Lévinas and Derrida both try to demonstrate that there is something beyond being. Being is not sufficient to itself it has, as the title of Lévinas' second magnum opus suggests, an 'otherwise' something that cannot be subjected to categories of being but is fundamentally different. This thought is in stark contrast to Greek tradition and Heidegger and Husserl in particular.

The significance lies very much in the notion that ethics comes before ontology – ethics as first philosophy. Every ethical code derived from ontology inevitably contains some pre-conceptual assumptions (Jinks, 1997). Hence, ethics derived from ontology is not free to account for the human interaction in its very uniqueness; it inevitably follows some predetermined law (Derrida, 1992) or is derived after the fact, as in Caputo's accident (2000). Ethics, however, cannot wait for an explanation. The encounter requires it immediately (Caputo, 2000). For Lévinas, humanity and, therefore, an ethical relationship with the Other must be the only reference for an ethical philosophy. Lévinas certainly draws strongly on the Greeks up to Heidegger but he differs significantly in his valuation of ethics over philosophy.

As mentioned above, Lévinas was a Jew who survived the Holocaust. This background helps to explain his efforts to overcome totalitarianism. A philosophy, such as Hitlerism, which is founded on inhuman assumption must be called into question. Heidegger's idea of being sufficient to itself fails to do exactly that. Therefore, philosophy needed a human origin, and for Lévinas that is the Face of the Other – the ethical encounter. To be safeguarded against inhumanity Lévinas emphasises the need to build a philosophy from human interaction – ethics. In other words, when we deconstruct philosophy what is left has to be responsibility – ethics (Derrida, 1992).

> *"This thought calls upon the ethical relationship – a nonviolent relationship to the infinite as infinitely other, to the Other – as the only one capable of opening the space of transcendence of liberation metaphysics." (Derrida, 1967)*

To Lévinas, our consciousness originates from the sensing of the Other. Consciousness precedes being. We can only consciously be ourselves. Sensing the Other signifies and signifying forms my awareness of my own and the demand the Other makes upon me by speaking to me.

But how do these factors relate to trust? The relation between knowledge, our understanding of being, and the human encounter is important. I have shown that our knowledge of the Other, the circumstances, or our knowledge in general, is insufficient reason for trust. There seems to be something that is stronger than knowledge. I think this is the key to a new understanding of trust. One must abandon our quest for objectification (Peperzak, 2013). It is here where Lévinas' thoughts are most helpful. The significance of his thought lies within the primacy of the human encounter over Being. Humanity comes before being, rationality and calculation. As I have shown in the previous chapter, calculation cannot explain trust. It is more helpful to consider trust in the realm of pre-rationality.

Goodness

"Good is Good in itself and not by relation to the need to which it is wanting; it is a luxury with respect to needs. It is precisely in this that it is beyond being." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 103)

In Lévinas' early work, one encounters the notion of the Good in relation to Plato (Lévinas, 1947a) and this concerns Lévinas throughout his work. Perhaps, Lévinas' endeavour throughout is work is best described in the preface to 'Existence and Existents':

"The Platonic formula that situates the Good beyond being serves as the general guideline for this research – but does not make up its content." (Lévinas, 1947a, p. 15)

Reading 'Totality and Infinity', Derrida asks whether the "Platonic sun already enlightens the visible sun" and answers that "Plato's sun does not only enlighten: it engenders. The good is the father of the visible sun which provides living beings with 'creation, growth and nourishment'" (Derrida, 1967, p. 106). It is this sense of creation, growth and nourishment that we find in Lévinas' Saying [next section].

Let me, for the moment, go off at a tangent to show the working of the Platonic sun. Derrida (1992) demonstrated in his essay *'Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"'* how deconstruction functions when investigating justice. He shows that when we dissolve concepts – in other words, go beyond the visible – responsibility, the good, remains. He claims that to achieve justice the judge must follow the law. At the same time, he must take the particularities of the single case into consideration. Hence, his judgment must be free to account for the particular case. The judge enters unchartered territory and sets a new precedent. So, the judgment cannot be both strictly following the law and being free to decide on an unprecedented case. Justice is unachievable as we cannot reconcile both.

In this essay, Derrida further shows that each time we abolish a concept or a law, we ought to fill the free and open space. We must fill this space by taking over responsibility. Each suspension or move in deconstruction épochè requires us to take responsibility.

In other words, when a judge does not follow the law, he is free to make a decision on his own but he must take full responsibility for this decision. Responsibility is not in the sense of accountability and justification but as a sensible response to the case he is about to decide. When one takes this approach to the extreme – when all laws and concepts are suspended - only responsibility without any concept of itself is left. The responsibility ultimately results in the Goodness of the subject.

> *Goodness consists in taking up a position such that the Other counts more than myself. (Lévinas, 1961, p. 247)*

This sentence is a longer version of one of Lévinas' central ideas. In short, it says 'aprés vous'. Not me, not my thinking, not my concerns but yours count more – 'after you'. It is taking responsibility for the Other. The example below sets this in context [See 'Appendix G – Does Lévinas help us to trust? (Grosse, 2017a)' p. 354].

> *<u>The Cracks</u>*
>
> *On a sunny June's morning, I walked through the rather small building site with my foreman. My company had worked on this building site for a couple of weeks already, and we were about to finish our job there. Then my foreman said something like, "we haven't touched this part of the building, but I have to show you." My foreman had already told me about the cracks in the old column, but when I saw them myself, I knew we had to do something about them. The cracks, two of them, were some 50 cm long and almost 1 cm wide. These were huge cracks for a column of 40 by 40 cm. I jokingly said to*

> *my foreman, "the column is not collapsing only because it is used to withstanding the load."*
>
> *I called the architect from the building site to tell him about the cracks. He already knew about them and knew that we had to fix the cracks. He asked for a price, and I told him a rough estimate. Without long hesitation, he told me: 'Do what you think is best.' That was it. (Grosse, 2017a, p. 7)*

This notion of 'I leave it to you' gave me freedom to decide. We had not agreed on anything; rather we abandoned any concept. In Derrida's terms, it was the moment of suspension (1992). 'Do what you think is best' gives me the freedom to choose but it also implies responsibility. I had to fill the gap which was left for me to decide.

I still had to follow some rules or concepts such as what material would be sufficient in strength to bear the load. Hence, I did not act in a void and an amount of arbitration was possible. The element of freedom I was given required me to act responsibly. We had agreed on a price for the work. This was a limitation of my freedom, as building norms and regulations are limitations. We could have either fixed the price very tightly on what there was to do, leaving me less freedom, or we could have left the price open, leaving even more room for me and more responsibility. For Lévinas, there is always rational and pre-rational, being and beyond being.

As soon as the Other – in this case, the architect – abandons a concept, responsibility grows in the same measure. We may look at the phenomenon again from Lévinas' side. The concepts in place suggest that I have no responsibility –in the sense of calculable accountability or legal accountability. Although, the underlying responsibility in Lévinas' sense might be glossed over, it is always there.

We could have easily said that the cracks were 'not our business' but we did not. Nobody could have held us accountable for them. But still, it did not feel right to keep silent. We had to say something. "[T]he response does not primarily refer to something which has said and

done but rather to something which has to be said and done." (Waldenfels, 1995, p. 41) It was a responsibility beyond the concept of accountability. We just had to care for the architect's issues. And furthermore, giving me freedom and leaving this responsibility to my foreman and me was also a defining moment for me as a moral self.

Furthermore, in mentioning the cracks to the architect, I assumed responsibility for them and subsequently on the architect's behalf. I could communicate what I thought was appropriate to do at this moment. In relation to the Other – the architect but also my foreman. I could make a choice and set a precedent in Derrida's terms, therefore defining myself.

Although this is a minor issue, I am trying to make the point that although rational concepts may get in the way of seeing our ultimate responsibility, this ethical response is still there. It may be reduced to the sentence: "you can't do that!" In our case, keeping silent about the cracks in the column. We felt it was our obligation to do something and to say something about it. In other words, I was already responsible without assuming this responsibility (Lévinas, 1961). Ethics come in this very hands-on example before any concept. In retrospect, I wonder whether the architect expected us to act in this way and if he did, what would Lévinas have to say about it?

Either way, one approaches the relation of being and responsibility and one cannot escape primordial responsibility. It always precedes and therefore trumps any concept or philosophy. I think responsibility and trust belong together as they are both pre-conscious. When a person trusts, he counts on the responsible actions of the person he trusts in. To trust is to hand over responsibility or, put in Lévinas' words, to be vulnerable by the Other. This must happen before I know anything about the Other and even before I am conscious of myself. The desire to sense the Other requires trusting – to sense the Other and to be close to him I have to trust him.

But to think of trust this way we have to relocate it. Trust in the sense I am using here is not bound to a concept. It is primordial trust - the trust of a child in its caregiver, the

thoughtless blind trust of a lover, the becoming one with the Other (Peperzak, 2013) by subordinating myself. Trusting is primarily a belief in the Good. It inextricably belongs to responsibility and to a belief in the Other's goodness prior to objectification, reason and being.

Although it looks almost like a reciprocal relationship, I hesitate to call it one. I am responsible to and for the Other without being able to claim anything. "Reciprocity is his affair." (Lévinas, 1982, p. 98) It is the responsibility before any rights or claims as it is with my trust in the Other. It precedes everything. It is already there before I am aware of it – before any obligation of the Other towards me. This is the very sense of trust's vulnerability. If there were a counterclaim, I would limit my vulnerability. Hence, it would not be genuine trust but rather a calculation of risks.

Calculation belongs to the realm of essence or of being, but to Lévinas there is not only being there is also otherwise than being. Therefore, he developed in *'Otherwise than Being'* (Lévinas, 1974b) the notion of Saying and Said.

Saying and Said

Saying and Said are the main theme of '*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence'*. Saying and Said are a further development of desire, Same and Other. In *Totality and Infinity*, the self has a desire towards the Other. Later in '*Otherwise than Being'*, one scarcely finds any reference to desire. Now we are provided with the Saying, which is not a desire for the Other but "to give something of oneself" (Atterton & Calarco, 2005, p. 61) - an address to the Other. It is the calling into question or "an order out of oneself." (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 148)

> *To say is to approach a neighbor, "dealing him signifyingness." Saying is communication, to be sure, but as a condition for all communication, as exposure. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 48)*

There is a slight difference between a desire – a wish to be with the Other – and an order – to give the Other a sign. But this being ordered or pushed to the Other rather than having a desire for or being pulled towards the Other makes its meaning to me more forcefully. A desire pulls me out of my comfortable home, but the order sends me out. There is something in me that pushes me out to the other. I do not feel comfortable at home anymore and I have to approach the Other.

> *The subject in saying approaches a neighbor in expressing itself, in being expelled, in the literal sense of the term, out of any locus, no longer dwelling, not stomping any ground. (Lévinas, 1974b, pp. 48-49)*

This voice orders me to show myself to the Other and say "hello" (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 143), to make me visible to the Other, to make me vulnerable, and to denude myself. "Saying uncovers beyond nudity […] saying is denuding of denuding." (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 49)

Lévinas closely links sensibility, vulnerability, and approaching the Other. It is not only sensing the Other but also giving to the Other. Saying is the ultimate encounter with the Other, prior to all concepts, knowing and being. Whereas, the Said is a further development of the Same.

To Lévinas, being or essence, as he calls it, is displayed and founded in logic and reason. Moreover, language – especially written language – establishes what is. But when there is being, there also has to be a counterpart. "But being must be understood on the basis of *being's other.*" (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 16). Being is in logical terms the most basic category; hence the Other to being cannot be conveyed easily by the use of language because language is already a form of being. Therefore, he distinguishes between Saying and Said.

> *Essence is not only conveyed in the Said, is not only "expressed" in it, but originally – though amphibologically – resounds in it qua essence. There is no essence or entity behind the Said, behind the Logos. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 39)*

The Said is language (often written), but Saying is the elusive momentary action of expressing. Or as Atterton and Calarco (2005, p. 55) distinguish: "language in its expressive or ethical function, called 'saying,' and language in its theoretical or ontological function, the 'Said.' They go on and explain "[b]ut 'saying' is not restricted to verbal or written communication; it also includes the possibility of material giving" (Atterton & Calarco, 2005, p. 55). As Davis (1996, p. 77) puts it: "[f]or Levinas, Saying has its own meaning, quite separate from anything that might be communicated by the Said."

William Large coined it more prosaically in a personal conversation: "Saying is the act of speaking, what linguists call, utterance. The Said is what is spoken about when speaking but is not the speaking itself. Speaking is a relation between two people. It is not the relation between words and things. Levinas critique is that Western philosophy tends to favour the latter over the former. His argument is without the relation of speaking, which is primarily ethical, there would be nothing spoken about. Ontology and knowledge are therefore dependent on ethics, and not the other way around." (email on May, 29th 2018)

> *In the Said, we nonetheless surprise the echo of the saying, whose signification cannot be assembled. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 27)*

In *Totality and Infinity*, Lévinas argues that the Other in his otherness and his infinity cannot be displayed in the totality of the Same. In *Otherwise than being*, he develops this thought further. Saying cannot be displayed in the Said because when we seek to thematise Saying we already betray it because we force it into the structures of the Said. It is very similar to the violence of forcing the Other into the Same. The unfixable nature of Saying is

betrayed when it is thematised. But the Saying leaves its traces in the Said, as the Other is never the Same, is never me, but leaves me impressed, leaves his traces on me.

To me, it is the richness of the saying as the primal human encounter, and its distinctness from the Said, that makes it so valuable to elucidate trust. It is not being and ontology but is related to it. This is very similar to trust because we find the results of trust all over society although we fail to explain it rationally.

For instance, when I say something in a meeting, it might end up in the protocol or minutes as follows: “Henning proposed solution Y to the problem X”. But this is only a representation of what I said, indeed a very crude representation. Even if one wrote down every little detail of what I said or how I made the proposal, it can never be the act itself. It is not my action; I am not present any more and it is only a re-presentation of my action. Hence, the Saying – in the form of a verb – produces the Said in the form of a noun. Interacting, moving, expressing and responding produces facts, results and knowledge.

For example, in writing minutes, my Saying produced something Said (in this case written). So, the writer tried to pin it down and to fix it. It is then that the Said is or exerts control. I am accountable for what ended up in the minutes of that meeting. Hence, it is a way of controlling. In the same way trust is believing in a coordinated course of action. It is not a fact but acting with the Other and for the other. What essentially becomes ontological fact is the outcome of trust. This is the result of our actions but not trust itself.

The architect for whom we repaired the cracks knew the rough price for fixing them, but he believed that we would handle the issue with care. We did not write down anything but the outcomes – the fixed cracks and the invoice we sent – were the actual results of our trust – the traces the saying left on the Said.

The Third Party

The third party is other than the neighbor, but also another neighbor, and also a neighbor of the Other, and not simply his fellow. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 157)

The third party puts the relationship with the Other in a social context. The Third is the one that looks at us. It is yet another Other to me and the Other as well. Through the Third, it becomes evident that I am unable to fulfil all my responsibilities. I cannot serve both at the same time; I am supposed to make a choice. The entry of the Third is very much the 'moment' – although it is a non-event or not an "empirical fact" (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 158) – I become aware of being part of society.

The non-event must be understood again as not limiting my responsibility, and the entry of the Third does not 'constrain' my responsibility 'to a calculus by the "force of things."' (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 158). It is not lifting the burden of responsibility from my shoulder, but it forces me to assemble my impressions, to create a Said, and to make a decision.

At the same time, the Third is always waiting to appear. The Third, although not present creates a trembling - an 'il y a'. Each action I take has an impact beyond the relation to the Other, it has an impact on the Third – whether present or not. In this sense, the Third creates even more responsibility.

In a special sense, I become equal to the Other. We are both limitlessly responsible to the Third. Or as Davis (1996) reminds us, the Third party makes it possible for Lévinas to account for inequality and equality at the same time. Unquestionably, I am unequal to the Other since I am limitlessly responsible to him, but the Third party is also limitless with respect to the Other responsible and therefore equal to me (Davis, 1996). Yet, one should not misunderstand my reading. In the very encounter there is never equality for me to the Other, there is no reciprocity, I am responsible, limitlessly and "reciprocity is [the Other's]

affair." (Lévinas, 1982, p. 98) Here, Lévinas' thought is distinct from Buber's equal 'I-Thou' relation (Schroeder, 2013).

The Third breaks up the solitude of my relationship to the Other. The face to face relationship with the Other does no amount to 'cosy intamacy' – in the sense that it is unique relationship to the Other; it becomes one among apparently infinite relationships to Others (Davis, 1996, p. 52). The Third is, therefore, the foundation of society. To Lévinas society is not a homogenous mass of people but comprises personal relationships between one and his Other and the Third(s). Therefore, one needs to look at this relationship and the role of the Third to understand consciousness and justice.

> *The entry of a third party is the very fact of consciousness, assembling into being, and at the same time in a being, the hour of suspension of being in possibility, the finitude of essence accessible to the abstraction of concepts, to the memory that assembles in presence, the reduction of a being to the possible and the reckoning of possibles, the comparison of incomparables. (Lévinas, 1974b, pp. 157-158)*

For Lévinas, justice is possible through the Third. It is the peculiar equality (in inequality) between me and the Other that is made possible through the Third that opens the possibility of justice. But the Third is not an event, it is rather the possibility – the non-event – the Third that is potentially present in all relationships (Davis, 1996).

The Third does require us to compare the Other and the Third with each other. Therefore, we have to become conscious; we have to limit their respective infinite otherness and make them measurable and finally have to judge. We make a judgment about the responsibility toward whom we seek to fulfil.

> *But justice can be established only if I, always evaded from the concept of ego, always desituated and divested of being, always in non-reciprocable relationship with*

the Other, always for the Other, can become an other like the others. (Lévinas, 1974b, pp. 160-161)

It is this evasion of concepts, this constant back and forth between Saying and Said and lingering between the Other and the Third that makes the Third so important to understanding what trust might be. It is often when the Other does not serve me but a Third that I feel betrayed, left behind and think I have misplaced my trust. Therefore, my relationship to the Other is always situated among third party relationships.

One can easily imagine how the engineer I discussed design solutions with [see 'Trust and Reflexivity' p. 67], and who seemed to me to yield to the power of his boss, has struggled with his dilemma. Should he have acted responsibly towards his boss or me? He apparently 'spoke' or 'answered' first to his boss and not to me. But seeing him in this situation makes a difference. He had to make a calculation as I would have done if I had been in his place. It was not necessarily against me.

[T]o be is to be with the Other (autrui) for or against the third, with the Other (autrui) and the third against omeself; it is to be for justice against a philosophy that does not see beyond being and reduces, by an abuse of language, the Saying to the Said and all meaning to interest. (Lévinas, 1974a, pp. 122-123)

Lévinas locates justice in the triangular relations with the Other and the Third. It is justice regardless of whether the Other and the Third are against me or not. This finds resemblance in Derrida (1992) when he refers to justice to located in-between general principles and the regard of the situation – the responsibility prior to concepts. Justice is not something we can achieve; we can only strive for it.

Judgments and propositions are born in justice, which is putting together, assembling, the being of entities. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 161)

Justice is the process of "putting together". It is not static but should be understood as the intersection between Saying and Said. This understanding shows that it is impossible to achieve since as soon as one arrives at a judgment, justice has already moved on.

> *"It is not that the entry of a third party would be an empirical fact […]. In the proximity of the Other, all the Others than the Other obsess me, and already this obsession cries out for justice, demands measure and knowing, is consciousness." (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 158)*

To summarise the quotes above, the Third forces us into consciousness and consciousness paves the way for judgments - the Third demands judgments. We cannot avoid it as saying and responsibility is already there before any concept. The Third is also there – not necessarily physically, but he is the other Other making demands on us.

Trust is found in this tension between me, the Other and the Third. I have shown in the previous chapter that trust is not to be pinned down to any particular reason or set of reasons. I am reluctant to sketch this as a diagram as this would violently subordinate trust to the realm of the Said. Trust belongs beyond being and so I deliberately avoid fixing it in an image. It must retain its place 'behind the sun' (Derrida, 1967). Therefore, after some methodological contemplation, I continue looking more on the pre-rational side of human interaction.

Methodological Reflections

> *Throughout writing and reading about Lévinas, I had the feeling of waves coming over me. It reminded me all the time of what Edward said - Lévinas comes in these small waves, like when the wind blows towards the sea. These waves are small they don't do much to the beach, they just sprinkle through the pebbles on the beach. But Lévinas also comes as one of these huge*

Atlantic waves that take you and tosses you around, and in the end, you don't know where you are …

That is how I feel quite often reading Lévinas. It is this constant sinking in of his thought this persistence, repeating, and again repeating. By this constant movement I understand, perhaps I believe, what he has to say.

And then there comes this big wave. It is one or two sentences, and it feels like, woohoo! I am overwhelmed. I am taken aback. I must stop, think, and read again.

One such sentence is his quote of Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov: "We are all responsible for all for all men before all, and I more than all the others." (Lévinas, 1982, p. 101)

Me before all others – read again!

But yes, who else. If responsibility is beyond knowledge, then there is only me for the others. I cannot claim anything from anybody, but I cannot let the others down.

Up to this point I have built some scaffolding of Lévinas' thoughts as I understand them. Now, I seek to fill this scaffolding with what I read and think about trust. I have already added some of my experiences to my understanding of Lévinas and now I am going to decorate the scaffolding with more of it – thoughts about trust, Lévinas, and me.

Here, I pick up the thought of 'thinking through writing' again [see 'How to start?' p. 88] It is the "essential moment" (Sartre, 1975, p. 5) of writing a thought down which is one aspect of writing. This is an aspect of writing close to ontological thinking. However, this misses a central theme in Lévinas' thought. Another aspect – and perhaps the more challenging one – needs to be emphasised. As Schroeder (2013, p. 480) puts it, Lévinas "attempts to articulate the inexplicable." It is creating the "waves" Derrida (1967) talks about. It is to convey Lévinas' pre-ontological message by means of text.

The metaphor of scaffolding is somewhat misleading because it suggests a fixed structure to be filled. This is not what Lévinas' thought is about. His project goes deliberately beyond conceptual frameworks. "Levinas recognises that there is no thought before language and outside of it—except by formally and thematically posing the question of the relations between belonging and the opening, the question of closure." (Derrida, 1967, p. 138). Yet, the metaphor might be helpful for the time being. We should be prepared to deconstruct it (or let it deconstruct itself) when the time comes (Derrida, 1988).

When I began to think about reflexivity, one of my first readings was Pillow (2003) and Chiseri-Strater (1996). They emphasise the importance of the Other to be reflexive. Reading Lévinas, I understood the value of the Other for a reflexive methodology much better.

Perhaps, I am supposed to go even further. Is Lévinas' thought deconstruction brought to the edge? Am I able to talk about methodology at all? Edward recently asked, "Can one really reflect on Lévinas' ethics given that they exist before consciousness, which is needed for reflection?" I may reflect on the traces of Lévinas' ethics but not on ethics itself. I may reflect on the awareness of the unknowable. What does this feeling of inadequacy, not being able to grasp or to express and this trembling mean to me?

Writing this I feel the wave coming over me, taking over me, and moving me – Lévinas at his best.

Significance for the Businessman

As I have outlined above, Lévinas does not regard any human act, apart from the primordial encounter with the Other as value-free. Apart from being with the Other, everything has some value for us. I strive, since I sensed the Other, for sensing the Other again and again. I want to be a responsible, social and caring being. For me, that is one of Lévinas' central messages. But it is only a striving or a continuous attempt to act responsibly and on the path to it are numerous obstacles. In principle, they boil down to the decision of

whether I serve one or the other person. This decision - the very impossibility of reconciliation of the different demands - is the daily struggle I face.

It is the question of whether I demand more money from my client or squeeze out more from my supplier, let my workers work harder or shoulder the financial burden myself and pay the bill. I am supposed to keep my business running just for the sake of the people around me. I am responsible for my employees, suppliers, customers, and any other I am interacting with. Although I cannot serve all at once, nor will I achieve a just balance, I am supposed to strive for it. And last, but not least I have to eat myself. I am supposed to keep my business running otherwise, I cannot serve anybody. This is one direction in which Lévinas' notion of responsibility overflows.

Another dimension of overflow is the impact my actions in business have on the others around me. When I ask a supplier for an extra discount, push hard against an architect's demand or make my employees work extra hours, it has an impact beyond what I can see and think of. What does it mean to be a subcontractor when the price is not sufficient to cover his costs? Could I have known that before? And even if not, am I able to help him anyway or is it okay to leave the risk and in this case the damage with him? I cannot say beforehand where my responsibility ends. I am unable to say what ought to be done before I am in the actual situation.

Lévinas' discussion of the disturbance of the Other's face reminds me of this situation. I may be in the position to say, 'I am not accountable for your mistake. It is legally not my business to check your prices in that depth'. However, I suspect what impact my insistence on a contract can have for the Other. It can lead him to severe economic difficulties and may even mean the company goes bankrupt. Is that appropriate or just? In this case, can it be ethical to insist on our contract? Is not the flexible approach to a partner's abilities – as shown by Weir (2011) in Arab countries – a more ethical approach, because it takes the Other into account? This is to me the very disturbance of the Other in his vulnerability.

But when I give it to him, I cannot give it to someone else, let alone care for my own economic survival. When I am generous and supportive, I give away money or time or both. Do my kids value that I made life less hard for someone who made a costly mistake? Now they may miss me even more. It is a dilemma and, therefore, unsolvable. I am constantly faced with it. I must reduce it to my Said to cope with the overflow of responsibility, but I know I am unjust and violent.

Why Lévinas?

For around 10 years I have taken an hour's coaching session almost every month. In these sessions, I deal with my personal problems (I first thought) and dilemmas (I now know). Quite often the coach helps me to turn upon myself. We explore issues and at some point he asks me to tell the story in the words of the other involved. One may understand this as a practitioner's application of Pillow's approach (2003) only she applied it to research practice and not to professional practice. Yet in the end, the only person who is responsible for a change of perspective and subsequently change of action is me.

Reading it this way it looks almost obvious that Lévinas' philosophy was tailored for me. At times during fairly uncomfortable reflections (to use Pillow's words) and disturbing encounters (to use Lévinas' words) I got used to the idea that I am the one to change things. Others might be accountable or responsible but this is their 'affair' (Lévinas, 1982) – I am ultimately responsible before all others. I return to the Brothers Karamazov: "I more than all the others." (Lévinas, 1982, p. 101)

If I had come from a legal background without previous encounters with this sort of reflexivity, I may not have appreciated this way of thinking. Perhaps I am just very lucky to have met Theo, who gave me the hint to seek professional advice with a coach. In my civil engineer's worldview, these thoughts are regarded as strange, if not outright insane. In this world, what counts is what is written or agreed on. If someone is wrong, it is his business and not mine.

However, it would be unjust to generalise in this way as I frequently see people acting differently. Although, this accountability is the hallmark of my industry, there is often a more modest way of dealing with things. People understand their own imperfection and therefore help others when they fail to do the perfect thing. They can be forgiving.

Perhaps it is this view of ethics, as being what is already there before we have concepts, that suggests that Lévinas' thought might be of value for understanding trust. It is this forgiveness and the appreciation of our imperfection which stems from divine subjectivity.

There is a crack in everything, that's where the light gets in. Leonard Cohen (1992)

For me, this crack in our understanding of trust is Möllering's (2006) leap of faith. We assess, but at some point we have to break with the assessment. This is similar to Kierkegaard's break with reflection – faith is not to be justified by objective reason but by "individual choice and inner commitment." (Gardiner, 1998, p. 240) There is no perfect calculation of trust. We have to break with it. If a person looks too perfect – the person is completely able, benevolent and integer, to use the terms of Mayer et al. (1995) we do not trust them. I will not deny the value of their observation but the traits of ability, benevolence, and integrity are not sufficient to trust someone. We do not believe in this person because we miss the human 'crack' on the surface. We do not see any vulnerability.

Pre-rational trust

A number of the concepts related to trust such as control, understanding and knowledge are rooted in rationality and reason. In the chapter before, I show how and why they fail to explain the nature of trust. In this section, I link trust not to the Said, which is reason and knowledge, but to Saying, which belongs to the beyond being. I will therefore explore the

related concepts of responsibility, vulnerability, sensibility and enjoyment, which to Lévinas belong to the realm of the pre-rational. Finally, I return to the role of the Third party.

The frequently cited ABI (ability, benevolence, integrity) model supposes knowledge about the other I am about to trust (Mayer et al., 1995). But is it actually possible to know the Other? I may listen more carefully, may reflect on my perception, be critical about the conceptual boxes (Weick, 2006) I use for the Other, or reflexively think about my influence over the Other, but the Other is still unknowable. To some extent we are able to translate the Other into our own categories as Lévinas translates the Other into the same or the Said. However, the nature of the otherness of the Other – being foreign to myself – does not allow for a complete translation. Hence, the Other will always stay a stranger to me. Consequently, I am unable to understand the Other. Although I may try and employ even more sophisticated strategies to understand the Other, I cannot succeed (Grosse, 2015b). Therefore, some trust is always required.

Knowing the Other

Mark IV

When I visited Mark's office for the first time I thought, he is definitely a showman - the expensive car, the well-furnished office, especially the big screen. What sort of cultural signs are these? Whom does he want to impress? All that costs a lot of money; money he might have earned, hopefully. Does he want to impress his clients? "look I am successful, and you will also be in my company." Or are the clients the ones with a lot of money and he wants to show them that he is one of their group? That he belongs to that group. What does that mean to our relationship? Do I also belong to this group? Should I? I don't think or feel so. I sought to meet him on a different level - on a different playing field.

When we employ reflexivity, we try to reduce the otherness and the unfamiliar in the other person. I seek to step into the shoes of the other to understand him better. What does he think, under which pressures does he act and what are his preferences? The metaphor 'to step into another one's shoes' implies that these shoes are the same size as my own - that they fit me. But that is not a given. I may act, think and feel a bit like the other but there is still a unique otherness in him which cannot be translated into a sameness (Lévinas, 1961).

I could never really understand Mark's taste in cars, clothes, and furniture. I could find some reasons for his choices, but they remained strange to me. In the end, I must admit that I cannot see everything and that I am unable to grasp the whole picture (Berlin, 2013). One may argue that this is just a professional relationship, however, I do not fully know my friends; I only know them as friends. It is a truism that I only know people from a number of very particular perspectives.

My inability to understand everything is only part of the story. Or as Möllering (2006) argues, we have difficulty acquiring knowledge about others, and often this information is inconsistent. It is not only that I struggle to translate what the Other is from one register into another register, thereby seeking to narrow the liminal gap in-between the two registers (Iser, 2000). According to Lévinas, it is not about that gap. Regardless of whether or not I know something about the Other, this person stays a stranger.

For Berlin (2013) it was my inability to see, sense or to comprehend [see also 'Knowledge' p. 26], but Lévinas guides us to the fundamental difference of the Other that is impossible to overcome. There are still parts of the Other that will always remain strange to me. It is the fundamental Otherness of the stranger. The Other will never fit into my limited categories, he infinitely overflows them. Again, the Other "escapes my grasp by an essential dimension, even if I have him at my disposal. He is not wholly in my sight" (Lévinas, 1961, p. 39). It is the Other's essential otherness – alterity – that makes it impossible to see them in full. Therefore, I must revise my earlier writings.

In *Trust and construction projects - An auto-ethnographic exploration* (Grosse, 2015b) [see 'Appendix C' p. 302] I sought to understand the engineer, his pressures, and constraints to make better judgments whether and how to trust him. Ultimately, I was unable to understand him and his action fully. The reason for this incomplete understanding I located in the hermeneutic nature of our world. We see only a part and our understanding is evolving all the time because new insights cause new readings. Now, I have to revise these conclusions. I attempted to make the Other the Same and, therefore, according to Lévinas, to kill him.

This is problematic in two respects. The first problem is related to my understanding of the Other the second to my understanding of trust.

The first problem arose when I sought to translate his otherness into sameness which is never completely possible (Lévinas, 1961). This being Other implies that I must fail to understand the Other completely. It is beyond my abilities to grasp him in his whole complexity and constant flux. Although I may develop and employ ever more sophisticated methods of understanding and knowing, it is our very Otherness that inhibits me – and him as well – to understand one another.

The sophistication of my methods is situated within the Said, my knowing and understanding, as I used the terms in *Trust and Construction Projects* (Grosse, 2015b) reside in the realm of ontology. Therefore, I will fail since I tried to understand the infinite otherness of the Other. But it is impossible to translate Saying into Said as infinity cannot be finitude.

I wonder whether I am just dealing with my self-conception of the Other, or in Iser's (2000) terms - a translation of the Other into the register of the Same. Then what I actually see and comprehend is not the Other but rather my representation of the other in the register of the Same, which cannot and never will be the Other. It is only a re-presentation of the Other and not a presentation of him.

However, on this basis, we seek to control the other. Rousseau et al. (1998) highlight both functions of control in relation to trust. “Control, as manifested in laws and reputational sanctions, acts as a deterrent for opportunism. These mechanisms, however, can serve as a springboard for the creation of trust” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 400). At the same time “institutional controls can also undermine trust” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 400) or as O'Neill (2002b) puts it: through ever more control “we find in fact growing reports of mistrust”. But this ever more fine-grained control inevitably results in more and more inconsistencies in our understanding of the other since it refers to my inaccurate translation of him.

Control operates in the realm of the Said. Control relies on ontology. But the Other and the Other’s presentation to me, his or her Saying escapes the Said. The problem seems to be that by identifying traces of the Saying in the Said, I make myself believe I could control the Other. But in our interaction the Saying is beyond control and so is the Other.

The second problem became evident when thinking about understanding the Other and trust. My efforts to understand the Other and his context (Grosse, 2015b) only give me internal legitimacy to act on the trust I have or to refrain from doing so. It is to assess the likelihood of the desired outcome – whether the Other acts as I would like him to act or does not. This leads to the second problem - that I tried to rationalise trust. As we have seen, trust escapes calculation and cannot be pinned down to one reason or a set of reasons. It is not found in ontology – in the Said – but beyond ontology. Therefore, I am going to explore whether I can relate trust to being’s other and hence separate it from ontology.

The Value of Otherness

It sounds as if we were lost because we have no means to control the Other fully and therefore must live with a permanent uncertainty about the Other’s intentions and actions, but there is immense value in this infinite alterity.

The Other as Other is not only an alter ego; the Other is what I am not (Lévinas, 1947b, p. 83)

Cohen reflects on this sentence in the following footnote: 'For Lévinas this formulation does not necessarily lead to the conclusion […] that alterity is only encountered through negation. […] alterity encountered through negation is merely relative, not absolute, alterity. To grasp alterity outside even negativity, and thus in a truly positive "sense," is perhaps the essence of Lévinas' entire effort.' (Lévinas, 1947b, p. 83)

The Other is neither for nor against me; the Other is disinterested. The Other sees, thinks and acts differently. The Other can see, think and do other things as I could. This is the high value of the Other to me. I can achieve things with him that I could never accomplish alone. This is the creative power of trust that Barbalet (2009) refers to. This creative power is not only the sum of two individuals but what they can achieve together. Trust is not just scaling up our capabilities, it also offers the prospect of synergies. Two can achieve more than the sum of what each can reach alone. This does not imply equality between me and the Other or that I can demand something from her or him.

To Peperzak (2013), for the task at hand, I become part of the Other, and the Other becomes part of me. But this relation cannot be one of sameness nor of equality. We both stay individuals – the Other is not at my disposal. He must not be at my disposal as this would mean stripping him of his otherness, or in Lévinas' words, to kill him.

To benefit from the Other, I am required to let him be fundamentally different and not to make him the Same. Only when I give the other this freedom can I benefit from the Other. One may argue that work relationships are different from the encounter between the Other and me in Lévinas' thought. But I would argue, that similar to Caputo's example (2000), underneath the structures of the work environment there is ethics since we are still human beings. I may distance myself from the Others and only see masks, but as soon as I get closer, I will see the Other's face (Bauman, 1993). This calls for responsible actions.

I return to the story of cracks in the column [see 'The Cracks' p. 109]. The architect was very busy and only came to the building site for a couple of minutes. There were piles of work on his desk, and one meeting followed the other. He could not really afford to develop and overlook the solution, especially because the real extent (the depth and the length) of the cracks only emerged when my bricklayers repaired it. The architect would have had to stay on or come to the building site several times a day. To discuss each step with the architect would have been utterly impractical– for him and us. Therefore, by trusting each other, we could make our work much more comfortable and achieve much more. He could do his work in the office, and my bricklayers were much faster.

But the more significant value surfaces when I think about the different perspectives the Other can provide. I do not, and probably will never see, the world in the way the Other sees it. This is an aspect of the cracks example [see 'The Cracks' p. 109] that I return to again later.

Preconscious Trust

The Other must not be killed or translated into the Same. We cannot subordinate him to rationality but must understand this relationship outside of rationality. We find this already in Løgstrup's "claim that trusting and calculativeness are different modes of engaging" (Løgstrup (1997) cited in Frederiksen, 2014, p. 35).

Zucker (1986) also hints in a similar direction. She conceptualises trust as preconscious expectation. For Simmel (1907, p. 179) "very few relationships would endure if trust were not as strong as, or stronger than, rational proof or personal observation." Then trust has a preconscious nature in common with Lévinas' encounter with the other and the notion of 'Saying.'

Mark V

When I think about my trust of Mark, it's a story of ambivalence. I have the feeling that he is a guy I could go out with for a beer – having fun on a weekend's night. But I am not sure whether he sticks to his word. During the project, I had little evidence to the contrary. He did what he said. My gut told me to trust, but my head said: be careful.

But who governs the head or the gut? Perhaps I only saw what my gut allowed me to see. Or although my head told me to search for something that justifies not trusting I could not find anything.

To Lévinas, the Said is the theoretical and ontological function of interacting (Atterton & Calarco, 2005). We can then relate the Said to reason and knowledge. My assessment of the trustworthiness of the Other (Grosse, 2015b) was then an approach to establish trust by means of the Said. But explaining my trust in terms of the Said became difficult. I merely reduced my risk and so the word 'trustworthiness' becomes slightly odd. I do not follow Möllering (2006) and assess whether the Other is worth my trust, I rather look for a reason to act on my trust. The Other seems to be always worth my trust. I am responsible for my "persecutors," "for [the Other's] fault by me." (Lévinas, 1974b, pp. 111, 118). I have to trust and approach my persecutors. I have to speak to them as they are worth my trust before I can think about it.

Hence, I separate trust as an attitude towards the other from the very action I take. Then it is not about whether the Other is worth my trust but whether it is reasonable and likely to be beneficial to act on trust. However, should one think of trust as ethics in terms of benefits? That is difficult if not altogether misplaced. Because benefits belong to the realm of the Said but not to ethics or the Saying. But relating trust to Saying other than being might help to elucidate how the leap of faith (Möllering, 2006) must be understood. Therefore, I now seek to shed more light on the shortcomings of the Said in helping us build trust.

The ‘Said’ is what is already expressed or communicated in language. It is the written word which is controlled, given or granted. Both the ‘Said’ and the ‘Saying’ are closely related to each other as everything that is written (or otherwise recorded) needs to be expressed in the first place. ‘Saying’ produces the ‘Said’ and dissolves in the very moment of this production, but leaves its traces on the ‘Said’ (Lévinas, 1974b). Trust and control are a closely related pair. They exist close to each other and belong to each other. But both cannot be in the same ‘place’ in one moment. Considering trust and control, I find patterns similar to Saying and Said. Too much control inhibits trust (O'Neill, 2002b). Control (Said) can be too dominant leaving no room for trust (Saying). If the control serves as a springboard it has to leave considerable space to grow trust – a vast penumbra, as Farrell (2009) wrote . To be sure, the above-cited authors show that more control – a form of the Said – is not a source or reason for trust.

When Möllering (2006) speaks of a ‘leap of faith’, are we left with some sort of black box? We accumulate knowledge to a certain degree and at some point we struggle to make any more progress (Grosse, 2015b). At some point we cannot know any more about the other and at that point we suspend our rationality and have to trust (Möllering, 2006). But can we stop thinking? “If one has to philosophize, one has to philosophize; if one does not have to philosophize, one still has to philosophize (to say it and think it). One always has to philosophize.” (Aristotle cited by Derrida, 1967, p. 152) But as we know, one “cannot trust at will” (Baier, 1986, p. 244); i.e. one cannot rationally choose to trust. Trust must then be located in another dimension. Again, when the ground for trust is not found in reason - in Said - we have to look for it in the Saying – in otherwise than being.

We have seen above that Saying is responding to the Other. It is permanently there. As Derrida (1967) describes, it is the wave that constantly hits the shore without pause. It is there before we are aware of it. We therefore do not choose Saying and do not choose to trust. We must look differently at trust. When "being must be understood on the basis of

being's other." (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 16) and when reason cannot sufficiently explain trust then trust needs to be understood in terms of reason's other.

Responsibility

We should step back again and approach the topic from a rational perspective. Machiavelli (1515) argues as follows:

> *While you do them good, they are yours, offering you their blood, property, lives, and children, as I said above, when the need for them is far away; but, when it is close to you, they revolt. And that prince who has founded himself entirely on their words, stripped of other preparation, is ruined […]. And men have less hesitation to offend one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never forsakes you. (Machiavelli, 1515, pp. 66-67)*

When we stick to the Machiavellian conclusion that we should not trust anyone who does not have a self-interest in acting trustworthily, we ought to be prepared to attack the other pre-emptive. Bailey (2006, p. 1) writes, "when I am not confident that others have enough such fear, I should be prepared to pre-empt" their attacks with attacks of my own. That would lead to vicious spirals of distrust (Bailey, 2006). But we do not attack or approach each other with mistrust and suspicion. We walk through our towns and cities without the fear of being attacked and we do not attack others on the basis of Machiavelli's conclusion. Rather we act most of the time benevolently towards others and approach them with responsibility.

> *Responsibility for the other, this way of answering without prior commitment, is human fraternity itself, and it is prior to freedom. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 116)*

Hence, I approach the other with responsibility without having chosen it. This responsibility began before we started reasoning. For Lévinas, to be responsible for the Other is not my decision. I already have a responsibility before I am aware of it. "The self is *sub-jectum*; it is under the weight of the universe, responsible for everything."(Lévinas, 1974b, p. 116). I am not able to escape this responsibility. Hence, I approach the Other peacefully; I do not attack him since my responsibility towards him does not allow that. This means I am supposed to accept vulnerability. As I have explained before, without being able to claim the same from the Other, I have to lay myself bare.

> *The responsibility for the other is an immediacy antecedent to questions, it is proximity. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 157)*

Approaching the Other results in being close to the Other. Being close to the Other whom we do not know and being in proximity to him, we act responsibly to and for the Other. Then acting responsibly is acting on trust. This might be the basis of trust to be received. "[… The] proximity he is describing is not a relationship based on consciousness or knowing." (Hand, 2009, p. 54) Hence, we have to locate responsibility in the realm of saying.

> *Responsibility for the other, in its antecedence to my freedom, its antecedence to the present and to representation, is a passivity more passive than all passivity, an exposure to the other without this exposure being assumed, an exposure without holding back, exposure of exposedness expressing saying. This exposure is the frankness sincerity, veracity of saying. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 15)*

Pettit (1995) shows how displayed trust has a cunning effect on the trustee. When one recognises that one is trusted the person has reason to appear as a trustworthy person to the other and eventual witnesses and to act as expected. However, he speaks of an 'intrinsic desire' for the 'trustor's good opinion' (Pettit, 1995, p. 216) which can also be read as taking

responsibility. In fact, executing discretionary powers is an act of taking responsibility for things handed over (Baier, 1986).

Lévinas points to the pre-conscious nature of responsibility: "There is a paradox in responsibility, in that I am obliged without this obligation having begun in me, as though an order slipped into my consciousness like a thief, smuggled itself in, like an effect of one of Plato's wandering causes" (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 13). This resonates with Baier's observation, that "trusting is rarely begun by making up one's mind to trust, but it often has no definite initiation of any sort[…]" (Baier, 1986, p. 240). Fouché (2006) sees the origins of trust beyond reason. Therefore, in Lévinas' terms, trust is our ethical response.

This clarifies the link between trust and desire and enjoyment [see 'Sensibility and Enjoyment' p. 97]. Pettit (1995) sees a cunning power in recognition of trust placed in me which I might understand as originating in a responsible approach to the Other. Recognizing this I cannot but trust the Other as it is beyond will (Baier, 1986) is elusive (Bailey, 2006),and there is no point in searching for a reason by the trustor. The trustor inevitably suspends rationality and trusts (Möllering, 2006) – he cannot do otherwise.

Vulnerability and Exposure

> *This exposure is the frankness, sincerity, veracity of saying. [...] but saying uncovering itself, that is, denuding itself of its skin, sensibility on the surface of the skin, at the edge of the nerves, offering itself of its even in suffering - and thus wholly sign, signing itself. Substitution, at the limit of being, ends up in saying, in the giving of signs, giving a sign of this giving of signs, expressing oneself. This expression is antecedent to all thematization in the Said. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 15).*

To act on trust makes us literally and metaphorically susceptible to hurt. This notion is common among trust researchers (e.g.; Baier, 1986; Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al.,

1998). To be vulnerable is to be at risk of physical, psychic, or emotional pain but also to suffer from material loss and to experience economic loss or any combination of these.

Lévinas says that the exposure to the Other belongs inextricably to the saying. In addressing the Other, I make myself vulnerable. Therefore, I must have an assumption or belief that the Other will not hurt me and will treat me well. In other words, to say something to the Other, I need to trust this Other.

I have 'already' assumed our pre-conscious responsibility which results in the ethical encounter with the Other – in Saying. I am responsible for the Other – beyond any doubt – the Other is therefore right to trust me by pre-conscious default. However, we trust without being able to actively claim for any form of reciprocity. "But to say that the other has to sacrifice himself to the others would be to preach human sacrifice." (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 126) Again, "that is his [the Other's] affair." (Lévinas, 1982, p. 98) To actively claim reciprocity would require us to locate responsibility in the realm of ontology, as only a fixed concept would allow for such reasoning. In the realm beyond being, concepts lose their validity and this claim would be obsolete.

The Other can merely expect me to fulfil my obligation to him and to act responsibly. However, Lévinas points us to an 'overflow of responsibility' (Lévinas, 1961, p. 245). This means I face the impossibility of fulfilling my obligations. I simply cannot do more. I am limited but responsibility is not. But still, the Other implicitly makes demands.

This understanding of Saying shows that an experienced betrayal can be very painful, because in responsibly approaching the Other, in the act an honest saying, and in trusting as responsible approaching, one lays oneself bare to others.

Vulnerability goes beyond reason and the things valued (Baier, 1986). It hurts and scars the self as I lay myself bare and exposed to the Other. However, I cannot hold the Other accountable for my suffering.

The Third Party

If we had a simple 'I-Thou' relationship the overflow of responsibility would be quite easy - I would do what I can to fulfil my obligations and the other would recognise this. I would actually try to the point of exhaustion. But there is the Third party.

In an interview Lévinas explained:

> *"But, with the appearance of the third, the third must also have a face. If the third is also a face, one must know whom to speak to first. Who is the first face? And in this sense, I am led to compare the faces, to compare two people. Which is a terrible task. It is entirely different from speaking to the face. To compare them is to place them in the same genre." (Wright et al., 1988, p. 174)*

It is the Third party that puts my trust into question. On a practical level, it is a question of whether I act responsibly towards the Other or the Third and whether the person I trust does what I expect or serves someone else – some Third. It is the question of which kind of judgments I make.

I have to decide and execute the 'terrible task' of choosing between two persons. I have to reduce my relationship with the Other into calculation into being and address the relationship with the Third in the same way. I have to be violent and then I make a judgment of which obligation I am going to fulfil.

In *Trust and Construction Projects* (Grosse, 2015b) [see 'Appendix C' p. 302], I sought to reduce my trust in the engineer to a simple calculation. I essentially tried to display the trust I put in him, which is saying, in terms of calculation and which is said. I reduced the infinite of trust to the finite of calculation. This must result in a betrayal of the saying - of trust.

By the time I addressed it to my limited capabilities and the evolving nature of every relation, I still did not account for what is beyond calculation. I believed further

sophistication could solve my trust problem and that trust could be part of the totality of being. I did not recognise that trust is already there before I make sense of the world around me. We have reasons to act in a certain way but they are insufficient:

> *"There may be reasons for what one says or does, but not sufficient reasons; and someone may be calculable in what he says or does, but never totally calculable, in spite of the possibility of imputation." (Waldenfels, 1995, p. 41)*

Trust is an example in point here. We relate it to reason, but ultimately, they miss the point. Trust comes from beyond reason. Trust in my understanding is a form of saying which is infinite. It is a basic human interaction that emerges at the same moment as it disappears. It has an elusive nature and we cannot capture it. We have to imagine trust as the wave hitting the shore (Derrida, 1967, p. 398). Calculation, on the other hand, is easy to determine; it is hard facts, numbers, arguments, knowledge; it is being and said, it is control. Trust is not being. Trust operates outside of being; it is as Frederiksen (2014) argues, a different mode of interaction.

The Third forces us to make these decisions. We can and have to decide because we cannot serve everybody – our responsibility is far too great. But at the same time we see the other making decisions as well. We recognise the Other's shortcomings and we realise that the Other can also not fulfil his obligations. He breaks trust with regard to us and others.

Hence, we can calculate his decisions. We actually seek to predict his way of calculating, but that has little to do with the basic nature of trust, which operates in another dimension. Trust is irreducible to being. There is a constant movement between these two modes of interaction. There is the encounter with the infinite Other which is irreducible to being, which is saying and trust. Then there is the Third which forces us into consciousness and demands us to make sense of the encounter, to compare the other with the third, to reduce both to being and to calculate and to judge.

Summary

Lévinas' contribution to our understanding of trust is simple but far-reaching. Trust is ethics and ethics is first philosophy. Prior to calculation, we trust. Turning Möllering's argument around, we do not suspend rationality or take the leap of faith and trust, but we suspend trust, stop believing in the Good, and start to calculate – start to believe in rationality.

But since our knowledge - the very 'facts' we base our calculation on are born in saying, in subjectivity and in trusting, we only superficially cease to trust. The underlying condition of trust is not to go away.

It is this tension between what Lévinas first called desire and then developed into the force, that pushes me to the Other. Not feeling at home with oneself and the urge of saying and the Third is what calls on me to decide who is the first Other and that calls me to rationalise and to subordinate the Others under the Said.

We cannot avoid trusting Others altogether because we need sociality. This sociality makes it possible to assemble the Saying into the Said. As Large (2015, p. 44) says, "the world we experience as meaningful would dissolve into apparitions and phantasms" if the existing "community of speakers" (Large, 2015, p. 44) were absent. We would have nobody who shares the signifier for the 'thing' we experience. Similarly, our knowledge is based on the accounts other give us and to a certain extent we must trust them to tell the truth (McMyler, 2011). Only in this way do the signifiers become meaningful. And these shared signifiers are necessary to form consciousness.

To Lévinas, all sense of being – the constitution of the I – arises from the encounter with the Other. In this encounter, we sense and enjoy the face – the presentation of the Other. In giving these sensations and enjoyments names, we lift them into consciousness and acquire the ability to thematise them. They become experiences we are able to process.

However, the act of communication, in whatever form, always consists of two elements - the saying (expressive and ethical) and the Said (theoretical and ontological). Both belong to each other cannot be translated into each other. The Said is to Lévinas the being, and the saying is ‘being’s other.'

Since our very selfhood is constituted by the encounter with the Other, we are responsible to the other without limits. This responsibility originates prior to consciousness and so locates it in the saying in ‘being’s other.' Hence it cannot be restricted by ontology and is, therefore, unlimited.

However, the Third to our relationship with the Other is another Other. Therefore, we have to decide between the two (or more) to whom we speak first – who is the first other.

I understand trust as a form of saying, a form of responding to the Other, a way of making me vulnerable, of stepping in for the other and of substitution. Me for the Other, ‘après vous’. But then trust must be distinct from any form of reasoning. It must operate in a completely different dimension. Trust is beyond, beneath and on the hither side of ontology. To me, it is basic human interaction which occurs before any concept or consciousness. It is always there and does not disappear. It is recurring in its nature. It only recedes temporarily if rationality becomes too dominant or if humanity is subordinated to reason and to being. This is when the ethical dimension of trust is reduced to concepts and the basic human interaction steps into the background leaving the stage for reasoning and control – for sameness and totality.

Methodological Implications

Ethics

For Lévinas, society is not comprised of a homogenous mass of people. It is a multiplicity of I-s and Others and Thirds which are related to each other in a web of relationships, each

constructing his version of the world and refining, comparing, and negotiating the version with the Others around him.

I am only in this net a tiny part. And I seek to refine, compare and negotiate my version of the world. Hence, I investigate the "fusion of private and social" (Ellis, 1991, p. 26). Lévinas leads me to a similar point. We are only ourselves in response to the other (Lévinas, 1974b). We need the other to define ourselves. Or as Davis (1996, p. 80) puts it: "Exposure to the Other is the bedrock of my selfhood; it is the condition of subjectivity, not an aspect of it." Hence, in the situation from the previous chapter, I distinguished myself from the other – the engineer – by insisting not to hand over the demanded the bill of quantities [see 'Writing in the evening' p. 32]. Although to hand over such information had some antecedents for me at the very moment the engineer and later the client demanded it from me. This caused strong feelings in me. Hence, the encounter with the engineer and the way she approached me was the actual cause of my emotions - of my subjectivity.

It is this area between rationality and subjectivity – between the calculating agent and vulnerable self - where autoethnography is strongest. "[A]utoethnographic works present an intentionally vulnerable subject." (Holman Jones et al., 2013, p. 24) But, I would argue, that autoethnographers do not intentionally present themselves but are vulnerable. To Lévinas, we cannot avoid being vulnerable.

However, one must be careful. "Indeed, while vulnerability has compelling dramatic and evocative virtues, most of us have parts of our lives that we consider too sensitive to reveal to scholarly or other audiences" (Anderson & Glass-Coffin, 2013, p. 76). It is the ethical demand of the Other – in this case, our readers – which demands vulnerability and exposure from us but at the same time, we ought to rationalise the possible consequences of our writings – for us and others. However, the consequences – although thoroughly thought through and rationalised must be questioned again and again. Ethics cannot be founded on some general principle.

In this regard, Lévinas' thinking is of particular help and particular difficulty. It is our obligation to constantly question what we do and write, why we do it and our principles and to reinvent them according to our relation with the Others around us. I know I will not do justice to all others around me but I am obliged to try. It is a utopianism but one it seems worth striving for (Wright et al., 1988). That is the essence of reading Lévinas and Derrida.

Ways of Seeing

Apart from ethical consideration, Lévinas' thinking beyond being opens another range of considerations. According to Wolcott (1999), ethnography is 'a way of seeing.' At conferences I recently attended I had some discussions about trust and ethnography. After one particular presentation, I could easily relate to the fieldnotes, the presenter read to us. I recalled several incidents from my time in business, which followed a similar pattern. But when it came to the author's interpretation, I had a very different understanding. Later, when reading the author's paper, my interpretation of the stories from the field differed even more than when hearing the talk.

The difference was that the authors of the paper had seen a snapshot of a couple of hours during a visit to a building site. My experience often covers a more extended period, frequently the construction process from the start almost to the end. That gives me another angle from which I am looking at these patterns of action. So, given our different viewpoints, we came up with different conclusions.

I wonder, how my reading of Lévinas will, therefore, influence my understanding of the world around me. Will I see everything through the 'Lévinas lens'? In a different context, but still, in qualitative research, Kelle (2005) cautions against the possibility of selectively collecting and interpreting data. Similarly, Weick (2006, p. 1727) makes us aware, "how reluctant we are to examine those conceptual boxes, and how much is discovered when we examine those boxes." I need to suspend concepts to go beyond them. "When we

intentionally drop underneath our thinking, we become aware of how quickly we put our experiences into tidy and unexamined conceptual boxes[…]."(Kabat-Zinn, 2002, p. 69)

At that point, Lévinas is of particular help and particular risk. His thinking addresses 'grand theories', although I would not call it one. Lévinas goes beyond grand theories as he is interested in the beyond ontology, beyond essence, the 'area' where no theory applies. Perhaps his theory – if one wants to call it theory however questionable that might be – is subjectivity.

However, as Weick and Kabat-Zinn suggest – he goes intentionally beyond the concepts, even beyond ontology and being. We are actually subjecting our experiences to a limited Said. But we should, as Lévinas (1974b) argues, be sceptical or better open ourselves to emerging scepticism. It is deconstruction taking place, "where there is something" (Derrida, 1988, p. 4). Hence, we have got the means to deconstruct or question our theories everywhere but especially at their very foundations and beyond. The Saying provides us with this recurring scepticism. It permanently puts me, my Said, and my academic work is such a Said, into question.

It is perhaps this Lévinasian thinking that made me critical of quite a few papers presented recently. The authors jumped too quickly on the back of a conceptual horse. All they found in the field had to fit into the categories of being. It seemed to me, they only thought in terms of the Said and disregarded the Saying almost completely.

Some made scant reference to observations they found difficult to describe, fluid, or intangible. To my understanding, these observations are related to Lévinas' Saying. However, it is our unique way of seeing. I see the world differently after reading parts of Lévinas' work. They see it differently too. But I have to acknowledge where the trust researchers come from. They are often concerned with organisation studies - quite a few were or are consultants.

Trust researchers' closeness to calculation and rationality, i.e. ontological argumentation, comes with little surprise. It is perhaps because they are very familiar with these patterns of argumentation. Most of us are. If these researchers are also consultants, something that is measurable and that counts is expected from them.

In this context, Tillmar's (2012) remark that trust is difficult to measure appears now in a different light [see 'Autoethnography in Trust Research' p. 23]. As I have demonstrated here, trust itself is not measurable since it belongs to the beyond being. Therefore, Tillmar's claim that trust is difficult to measure misses to point - we may probably measure the traces – the consequences – of trust but trust itself escapes measuring. Trust is not in our hands – we cannot measure nor control it.

I talked to colleagues about Lévinas and the idea of not controlling, of not being able to control, and therefore letting things go their way. I talked about the Saying as the expression of the infinite Other. The most I got was raised eyebrows. I can imagine that talking about losing control as a consultant to board members could backfire.

Perhaps it is important to mention here that I see my world more from the Lévinasian perspective. I may reflect further on that issue, but I cannot do much about it. Hence, you – the reader – are asked to keep in mind who is talking and from where I talk.

Language

Ellis writes about the evocative possibilities of autoethnography. For instance, in the co-authored paper, she writes:

> *"Autoethnography," I begin, "refers to the process as well as the product of writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness." (Scott-Hoy & Ellis, 2008, p. 130)*

She speaks of multiple layers of consciousness. Now, in the light of Lévinas' thought, I reinterpret that as a reference to what is beyond being. She not only refers to the final product but also to the process of becoming. Later in this article, I understand Scott-Hoy's words as being even closer to Lévinas' thought.

> *This painting represents what I've been trying to put into words, though I do not have the words to describe what I see and feel. Just now I doubt words will ever be sufficient. (Scott-Hoy & Ellis, 2008, p. 132)*

The struggle to put basic human interaction into words is the very problem Lévinas was faced with – and Derrida (1967) pointed to that problem. What Ellis and Scott-Hoy sought to address is the problem of the betrayal of the Saying through the language of the Said. Scott-Hoy used painting to display the beyond being. Others used performance or poems (Richardson, 2001), but all are faced with a very similar problem: Language in its straightforward use as Said is unfit to display the Saying. Therefore, Lévinas uses language differently. He created text with whom one needs to dance (Critchley, 2015) or that works like the waves on the shore (Derrida, 1967).

I seek to develop a sense of what goes on beyond the facts and what goes on beyond being by repetition and reiteration. When I seek to display trust by written language or by a form of being, in a language of being or in the Said, I essentially fail to build an understanding of trust as a form of Saying. I betray it by using the language of the Said.

Ethnographic Distance

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and Sage (2013), for instance, emphasise the value of distancing oneself from the observations in the field to develop a better analytic understanding. Wolcott (1999) and Anderson (2006) also argue that the author should step aside. Certainly, there is analytic value to such distancing. In Knowing the Other [see p.

125], I relate this distance (not in ethnographic but in every-day use) to the notion of the liminal space between text and interpretation in Iser's (2000) work. But I would like to introduce another reading of the relation between the actual experience and the (auto-) ethnographic text about it. This is the experience I see as the saying, the veracity, or as Large (2015, p. 44) writes, "the very utterance itself, or more precisely the presence of the speaker in their speech". The ethnographic text, however, is the Said that is produced from the Saying. The text has the features of translation in Iser's (2000) terms, but it is also a betrayal of the Saying that happened during the event.

I see the urge that motivates Anderson and others – a need to pursue an analysis that leads to theoretic clarity. However, one has to recognise Bochner and Ellis' attempt (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 1999) to achieve the ethical language which Lévinas calls for. I think the critics of evocative autoethnography need to realise the short-comings of their analytic pursuit. It is impossible to account in analytic language for the infinity of human interaction or what Lévinas calls the Saying. To be sure, I am not arguing against analytic autoethnography but for a recognition of the value of the evocative form.

I aim for my writing to represent my Saying, to reveal the ethical relation between myself and the Others around me as a form of the Said. But I depict Saying within the Said, which is a betrayal of the ethical nature of Saying. By this logic, ethnographic distancing is an attempt to withdraw oneself from the ethical relationship one maintains with the people around. It is as Bauman (1993) argues, a movement from seeing the other's face to reducing them to masks. Ultimately, distancing leads to comparing people with one another. I am forced to do that as a researcher and a businessman but have to be conscious that it is an unethical way of treating human beings, even though it often appears to be necessary.

Since there is no purely analytic or evocative autoethnography, I see unethical elements in both strands of ethnography. Therefore, after addressing the difficulties with Lévinas, I subscribe to Ellis' claim that, if properly pursued, autoethnography amounts to 'ethical

practice' (2009, p. 317). I argue that evocative autoethnography might be better able to transfer the ethical dimensions of our relationships. Yet both must fall short of being ethical because the analytic form seeks to display everything in the Said in analytic terms. The evocative form can never fully account for the infinity of the Other about whom it reports.

V. Looking Back

When philosophy and life are intermingled, we no longer know if we incline towards philosophy because it is life or hold to life because it is philosophy. (Lévinas, 1951, pp. 3-4)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I sought to demonstrate my understanding of Lévinas in relation to trust. Occasionally, I link my personal experiences to Lévinas' ideas to translate his abstract concepts into tangible situations I have experienced. This furthers my understanding and ability to interpret Lévinas' thought. However, I use retrospection to illustrate my points. In this chapter, I continue this 'backward' view, yet I try to understand my environment better. I seek to find explanations of what is going on around me and try not necessarily to draw conclusions about how to cope with the situations but to find suggestions of how to deal with them.

In this chapter, I try to relate Levinas' thought to what I went through in my daily business life. I return to experiences I have already written about and see how I can develop my thinking. I may be able to advance my conception of trust, seeing what implications this different thinking has on me as person and businessman as I consider the following questions: Do I approach others differently? Do I judge and act in other ways? How do I deal with this tension between calculation and trust? Do I anticipate that I know only something and only on a subjective basis? How do I deal with the anxiety of only knowing so little? If I know so little, do I need the courage to trust and how much courage is needed? What gives me confidence when trusting? Is the ethical in trust something I can work with? What role does forgiveness play? (Lévinas, 1968; 1977) Saying is a permanent recurrence; is trust recurring too? Is trust a means to achieve something? Can it actually be a means or

is this a completely misleading conception? What does that actually mean for me as a businessman? I have self-interest in (economic) survival but what does that mean after reasoning and consciousness?

I am not trying to reinvent the wheel nor explain what keeps the world from falling apart (Goethe, 1808). I seek to understand what makes me trust others and try to think through this question in Lévinas' terms. My thoughts inevitably linger and drift away to related concepts such as responsibility, forgiveness and proximity because they are very close to trust and I always seek to make connections between them.

But the connections I am looking for are different from the way of thinking I was used to. Civil engineering is applied science – in the sense of the search for a universal truth. This was the hallmark at the time I studied civil engineering for my engineering degree. The view was limited to positivist thinking. This thinking would not be questioned at all, although we had courses in site management which did include managing people. If one goes through more recent publications in construction management (e.g. ARCOM proceeding or Construction Management and Economics), one may find a more diverse collection of publications ranging from positivist to postmodernist philosophical underpinnings. But that was not part of my training in civil engineering. We were trained in engineering science, not in social science. To become a good engineer this might have been sufficient, but it lacked any introduction or basic training in how to cope with social interactions on the construction projects we were going to work on. We had to learn as we went along - by trial and error.

My years in business taught me that positivist thinking manifested in right-wrong-schemes is unsuitable to manage an organization such as my business. I slowly and sometimes painfully learned that others see the world differently and I am not always able to convince them that my view is the right one. My view is only one amongst many - no more or less right than any others. I learned what social construction is without the philosophical underpinnings.

I was introduced to research philosophy during my PhD, particularly during the methodology modules. This helped to understand my struggles with right-wrong-schemes a little better. Of course, there is right or wrong in engineering terms but now this distinction is bound to some conditions. For instance, whether a beam on a roof is sufficiently high and broad depends on the level of safety or the risk of collapse we are willing to accept. When we agree on that, among other determinants, we are in the position to say whether a design is right or wrong. This is not only helpful to engineers but necessary.

However, as I have explained in *Trust and Construction Projects* (Grosse, 2015b) [see 'Appendix C' p. 302], even engineers have to make trade-offs between more or less favourable solutions depending on personal preferences. Then right or wrong becomes a matter of personal choice, ever personal taste. Although I understood by then that reality is constructed, I still reduced it to rationality. To me, it was unquestioned that every action had a reason and I still related all my thinking to ontology - to a philosophy of being.

Discovering Lévinas made me think about what is beyond being. I wrestled with the thought that there is something which is not being, which comes before I understand anything. But after many weeks of reading I slowly began to understand that there is something that initiates our thinking and out of which grows consciousness. Or, as Derrida (1967, p. 105) concerning Plato's Republic puts it, the sun of the 'epekeina tes ousias' (beyond beingness or presence).

Rationality and Beyond

Apparently Rational Decisions

I have to deal with a thinking that traces its origins beyond all categories. For Lévinas, this is the response to the other person we interact with. We have to be responsible; we have to respond, to and for the other person. Although I cannot avoid responding since I frequently interact with people, I am very fast (perhaps too fast) to thing about others in rational terms.

This limits our interaction to some form of rational choice, which Lévinas' considers a 'terrible task' (Wright et al., 1988, p. 174). Reducing it to pure rationality disregards fundamental human interaction – sociality (Peperzak, 2013). This reduction to rationality is a violent act.

It is metaphorically violent since I reduce the richness of our interaction, the infinite otherness of the Other to a simplistic level to make a decision possible because I cannot cope with the ungraspable nature of the Other. It is violent because I have to act irresponsibly towards the one against whom I decide. Because of this decision, I do not give what I ought to give or even treat him badly.

But I cannot avoid being violent. I must decide and reduce complexity, otherwise I would drown in that very complexity and be unable to act altogether. But where is the balance between these two poles? I live in a culture where almost everything is reduced to what it is. Rationality and calculation are the hallmark of most people's thinking. I am part of that culture and most of the time this holds true for me too. So, I wonder whether a different way of thinking and dealing with the people around me is more beneficial than thinking only in terms of ontology.

Perhaps it is not a question of benefits. It might be that it is a way of understanding better. The beyond being belongs to the world I live in as the being belongs to it. Hence, it is a way of interacting and it does not matter whether I like to think about it or not. Therefore, it might be worthwhile to get a sense of what goes on beyond the curtain of being. I want to explore this in the light of the following episode:

Acting Ethically Costs Money

Recently, I had a conversation with a business partner. We talked about 'Gott und die Welt' – it literally translates as 'God and the world' which means we talked about a lot of things without aiming for something specific – accidently we also touched our business ethics. He said that acting

ethically cost money. First, I thought, he is right. To be fair and responsible costs one money. But then I stopped. He had told me a couple of minutes before that he advised his staff not to sell the most expensive – the most profitable – product to their customer but to look for a good solution often selling a spare part rather than a whole new machine. The customers seem to value this approach – they come back to him.

Of course, one may argue that this is rationally driven. It is essentially an approach to maximise long-term profits. But when we explored this approach a little more, we came to the notion of appropriateness. 'Does it feel okay to act this way? Am I able to look in the mirror and do I like the man I see?'

He told me then about the struggles he has with competitors from the internet. But although internet retailers are often cheaper, he does sell. He said, 'You have to give customers a reason to make the purchase with you. But the reason has not to be rational or sufficient; they just need any reason.'

Rationality is assumed to be the hallmark of our business culture but there is an underlying current that is as forceful or even more forceful than rationality. Maximisation of profits without any concern for ethics is not the way my business partner runs his business but customers do not solely make their choices on the basis of rational arguments. When neither act purely rationally, it suggests something pre-rational at play - the beyond being.

My business partner thinks the customer uses any reason to justify his decision to buy at his store. It seems as if the customer picks the reason that suits him and disregards the rest. Hence, one may say the customer's decision is only superficially rational. Staw (1976) observes that people tend to stick to their choice they have made in case they feel responsible for the chosen action. He argues that if people are committed to their choice by

responsibility, they invest even more in a decision to make it work. In the financial sector this effect is called ‘throwing good money after bad.’ I understand that by consulting his customers, my business partner creates a link to them which generates a commitment. This in turn makes it more difficult for the customers to abandon the relation since they feel responsible for the one who consulted with them about their problem.

Staw uses the term ‘responsibility’ to refer to what I would term ‘accountability’. Hence, Staw’s use of responsibility is only loosely linked to Lévinas’ use of the word. However, the connection between the moral and the subjective (non-rational) decisions are evident. It is here again that Lévinas helps me to better understand this connection.

To Lévinas the Said - our knowledge is essentially the trace of the Saying - our subjective experience of the world. This production of the Said in the subjectivity and responsibility of the Saying is the pattern which allows the customer more subjectivity and for non-rationality when it suits him. To support a choice that is already made choice one searches for reasons until it feels satisfactory to go ahead with that choice.

To understand the search for reason better, I have to step back and ask how the knowledge, or reasons on which I base my rational decisions are created. According to Lévinas, I primarily sense my world subjectively - I sense and enjoy the Other(s). Within this sphere of pre-ontological enjoyment (the Saying) I translate sensing the Same into the sphere of the Said. The reasons I base my decision on are created within the subjective sphere of Saying. Inherent in the Saying is this urge towards the Other, which Lévinas earlier called desire for the Other. The Saying, however, produces the Said, which I regard as knowledge and reasoning. Hence, the very ‘facts’ I base my decisions on are produced by the subjective encounter with the Other. Then the rationality I claim to apply can only be a limited, particular rationality but not a general, universal rationality. I only have limited capacities to experience, process, and understand (Iser, 2000) and I cannot comprehend the Other in his

essential otherness (Lévinas, 1961). In other words, my finite Said cannot account for the Other's otherness displayed in the infinite Saying.

In the example above, this is the meeting between the client and the salesperson – both are inclined to do business with each other and have the urge to be with the Other. My business partner and his client have a relationship between self and the Other. Lévinas described this relationship as desire for each other. From the client's perspective, the relationship to another seller of the same goods follows the same pattern. The client and the other seller also have a desire for each other. But the client can only do business with one even if he might like to deal with both. So, he faces the 'terrible task' of comparing the two.

This is the advent of the Third. The other seller is the Third to the client and my business partner and of course vice versa to the client and the other seller. Here it becomes clear that the Third is a non-event (Lévinas, 1974b). The Third is implicitly or explicitly always there. And the Third or Thirds force the client to make a comparison and choose with whom to do business. He makes a comparison based on the 'facts' acquired within the subjective relations between him and the sellers and quite often this is called a rational decision.

My business partner tries to find a fitting solution for the client. In searching for a good solution he takes care of his clients, act on their behalf and is responsible to them. This creates proximity between the two. In giving the client a reason to make a deal with him, he gives him a sign. Although the Third is present in the relationship between him and his client, by giving reason he creates even more proximity; he demands to be the first to whom the client answers. Within this proximity, the client decides whether to do business with him or not.

However, I am cautious to consider this Saying to each other as a sort of equation. It is impossible to evaluate whether one speaks more, addresses the client's wishes better or to assess the quality of the Saying. Saying is beyond any countable value. What can be counted or measured is the Said which is produced by Saying but is completely different. The

problem is I see the results (the Said) of something (the Saying). I can describe the results very well but I struggle to describe the source of these results by ontological language. I cannot get to grips with the Saying which always remains elusive.

These thoughts make the civil engineer in me tremble and the positivist engineer feel very uncomfortable. But the businessman in me is used to that feeling as losing control is a daily occurrence. I need this sometimes-naïve optimism to do business and sometimes I think: 'Things are going to turn out well. I don't know why it works, but it does anyway. Let's keep doing it this way.'

Perhaps, I have to stress the dancing allegory again. Although I am a lousy dancer, with some partners it works while with others not. I do not know why it does or does not. The same is true when I think about trust. With some it works immediately – we trust each other right from the beginning – with others it does not. What my business partner does when he consults his clients about solutions is this dancing or saying, and he does not know the reason why it works or why they keep buying in his store, but they do. It works anyway.

The example of my business partner shows a single interaction, but my business partner referred to ongoing relations with his customers. He said that they prefer to sell the best solution than the most profitable product, e.g. a repair kit rather than a new device. However, one has to keep in mind that even the repair kit could be purchased cheaper on the Internet. He continued, 'they know that we sell the best solution for them and they come back.' The approach he maintains in his business is more about building a relationship with his customers than making the maximum profit out of each deal.

There is more at play here than just maximising of profits. It looks as if my business partner has some idea of how things ought to be and how they should be handled and how we should treat each other. He knows that he could make more money with each sale, but he told me, 'it does not feel okay to sell such an expensive new product when one could easily repair it.' He hopes or believes that his customers come back to him because of his

responsible approach to doing business – apparently, they do. His customers deal with him even on the basis of weak evidence – he gives them ‘some reason,' and they readily accept it.

His customers do not look for evidence not to do business with him as they trust him and seek to support this trust in searching for the ‘right’ evidence to do so. It is this basic interaction between the client and the salesperson which lays the foundation for the business. Customers come back because of the way they are treated. This is not measurable and perhaps not even a fact. It is a way of interacting.

I have not talked to him about the fact that some customers do a kind of cherry-picking. For instance, they may buy the repair kit at his business, but when it comes to the new machine, they prefer to go for the cheapest offer on the Internet. I have similar patterns with some of the architects I work(ed) with. They give me jobs that are difficult, complex, and not profitable. But when it comes to comfortable and rewarding jobs they do it with someone else.

This cherry-picking is, in my opinion, a form of comparing people that happens in the realm of the Said. It is a purely rational choice (almost) regardless of a relationship based on the Saying. It is the distancing which Bauman describes. When we are in proximity, we encounter the face of the Other, but when we distance ourselves from each other, we only see masks. It is these masks that we compare (Bauman, 1993).

Trust as Rational Argument

However, the majority of architects we do business with are not cherry-pickers. They try to do business with us in all cases. Although they are not the ones who make the ultimate decision, they seek to influence their clients (the (future) house owners) to give us the job. It is often important for them to work with someone they know and trust.

In Chapter 2 on ‘Trust’, I tried to highlight how rationality fails to explain trust as a final consequence. Here I turn the argument around. Trust is apparently now a ‘variable’ in the

equation rather than an outcome. These architects use trust as if it were measurable - as if it were something of the Said. They make an argument to work with us although our offer is more expensive than the competitor. If we are more expensive than the other company trying to win the contract, any previous dealing with the architect helps a lot.

New Project

The other day an architect called to talk about a new project.

We did business with him before, and it finally went well. Although, the project was on the brink of going terribly wrong. We were commissioned to build the ground floor walls of a house. The walls were some 40cm thick, insulated sandwich walls. The outside and inside surfaces consisted of prefabricated 5-6 cm reinforce concrete. Behind the exterior concrete surface, the supplier mounted a 14cm thick thermal insulation. When erected on site we filled the remaining gap with concrete.

The architect expected us to deliver a finished high-quality surface. But something went wrong in the production process. The connectors of the inner and outer concrete surface produced small but very visible holes of 2-6cm diameter. The walls looked terrible – they were covered by a carpet of holes.

The architect took some risk when tendered the project. In his tender, he asked for concrete sandwich walls with an internal insulation. But he did not ask for a specific surface quality. He did so because the suppliers of sandwich walls decline to make an offer promising any specific quality.

However, the walls they produce are with almost no exception of very high quality because these walls are produced on a steel 'table' which is plain even. So, what one usually gets is exactly the quality the architect wanted, just that the producers do not make a promise on that.

So, this expectation we communicated to our supplier and the salesperson made a weak verbal commitment but not a written one.

When I approached him about the holes, he first tried to retreat to the fact that there was no written commitment. However, when I made the point that we just expected the usual quality and that these walls fall far behind this standard, we could start talking about how to fix it.

The days after the architect saw the holes for the first time, we met on the building site. He was in a kind of aggressive mood. I think he was angry, understandably, because we did not deliver the quality he expected and probably promised to his clients. First, I allowed him to let off steam. Then we talked about how to solve our problem.

First one of the supplier's staff filled the hole with some mortar. Technically it was fine but not aesthetically. It was still an ugly carpet of holes. The supplier insisted that this was the quality which is promised in the contract. The architect then said something along the line: 'But you knew what I wanted.' And I have to say, of course, we did. So, it did not feel fair to insist on the contract. We ought to do something about it, although we were not legally accountable for it.

Later, we got a specialist to do the job. One who was specialised in recreating concrete surfaced, in fact, a restaurateur. The problem was that the surface had to look the same as the rest of the wall. It was not just filling the holes it was essentially 'concrete cosmetics.' That means recreating a concrete surface as if it were original filled into a cast but was not. In some respect, it is faking the original. Yet the aim is that it looks as if and the specialist did a good job. In the end, it looked as we – the architect, the supplier, and I – expected.

Of course, we did not promise him the quality he expected, as our supplier did not too, but we knew that he expected this quality. So, we felt committed, and we communicated this commitment to the supplier. Hence, in the end, we delivered although we were not bound to this quality by the contract.

A couple of months later the architect called me and talked about this new project. The building site was some 3 hours' drive away from his office. He asked me to make him an offer, arguing 'I won't build this house with someone I don't know, with someone I don't trust.'

This architect certainly did not rely on any facts. He instead believed that we would get along well. I think he believed that we could solve most possible conflicts on the building project because we have a certain – not necessarily special – way of dealing with each other. I felt we were on the 'same wavelength.' This essentially means that we understand each other and that we assign similar meanings to things. This wavelength is rather about the way people interact and how they avoid deadlocks rather than how they resolve them.

I would even suggest that it is not about speaking the same language. One may find the same wavelength between strangers in different languages. I have experienced this sort of interaction with some foreign workers who only spoke little German, and in some cases hardly any. They find a way to communicate and work together.

When the architect contracted us for the next project far away from his office, he used the same text in the contract as he did before. Again, the surface quality was not specified and so he ran the same risk again. From a legal viewpoint, our position was the same as before but he took even greater risk since a legal battle away from his hometown is far more expensive. But we knew how we deal with each other and we had established a way of dealing that went beyond contract clauses and legal procedures.

The architect once said, 'But you knew what I wanted.' And I have to say, of course, we did.

It was this notion that made the difference. That is why we refrain from insisting on our contract. This lack of insistence - this suspension - occurs when concepts dissolve (Derrida, 1992). The moment when space is opened is when Saying occurs and becomes visible. Through our suspension of the contract on this matter we turned away from ontology and made the leap into the unknown, - the unknowable of the beyond being possible. I would regard it as an ethical business decision.

One may argue that all parties were involved because they saw the mutual benefit. The supplier could sell more of his products, the architect could more efficiently manage his building sites and we had won another contract. But apart from the economic advantages, it is also enjoyable to work in such an environment. Similarly to Rooke, Seymour, and Fellows (2004) who researched in Britain, I experienced the German construction industry as being prone to conflict. But that does not mean that people in the industry enjoy fighting. I enjoy successful project deliveries, thankful clients, and architects praising my staff. There is little satisfaction in getting a favourable verdict from a judge because that is often the last time I see the people involved. I will not do business with them again.

I identify two important aspects to this episode. One is the enjoyment we have working together, the other is that because we suspended our concepts and went beyond our contract, we made trust possible. The unknown is the space trust needs. Now the architect uses this trust to argue for us when it comes to new projects. Interestingly, trust becomes for him a sort of fact or an argument in his rational calculation.

One may argue that I also mixed both the rational argumentation (we saved costs) and the non-rational (trust). That is certainly true to some extent since both relate to each other. The rational and the non-rational (Lévinas' Saying and Said) influence each other. To me, it is a constant movement between the two - a permanent ambivalence. Am I the generous,

responsible person I ought to be or do I act selfishly? Is my selfishness just there for the sake of being able to later fulfil responsibilities, i.e. do I need to save some money to pay my workers better? The infinite responsibility is inevitable and always there. However, I have to make decisions to get on with my life. Always yielding to my responsibilities would be paralysing. It is tempting to mix the rational and non-rational (Saying and Said) because they always appear together. Furthermore, it is often difficult to distinguish between trust (the enjoyment of trusting and being trusted) and its consequences (cooperating trustingly and enjoying doing so). This is the very nature of life.

Methodological Reflections: My Research Practice

As I have written before (Grosse, 2015a), writing for me is a "nomadic inquiry" and I often arrive at new thoughts and questions (Adams St. Pierre, 2002, p. 5858). I quote two sections from Appendix G and J (Grosse, 2017a, 2018) to illustrate how I collected my material because I think it is there I have best described the way I write about negotiations and other business interactions.

> *Often, I sit down in the evening and write about the day. Sometimes it is just short notes, sometimes longer stories. This writing is my means of recording what happened that day. I often focus on a single event, I write how it unfolded, what happened, what I thought at that moment. Sometimes I stop there with a description of one or two events during that day.*
>
> *However, quite often it is only the start of a process. The event triggered some feeling, so I seek to explore this feeling. And then I recall earlier events, maybe weeks, maybe years before. Often, I write and rewrite, expand and reduce the stories. Then I try to connect these events to my readings in the literature. I ask how to connect these events to theories. The writing often begins quite focused on a particular event, but it becomes messier the longer I write.*

Emerson et al. (2011) talked about a sense of significance which the ethnographer needs to develop. When I choose the event to write about it is often the events that impressed me most that day. However, while writing a detail, some side-note becomes more important. Reflecting in the light of my readings often gives some interpretations a new twist or turn. It is this open process of wondering (or perhaps wandering) that makes auto-ethnography so valuable for me. This way of making sense of my life is not a straightforward process. One has to imagine it as a constant back and forth between the stories and the interpretations. It is essentially a hermeneutic circle in which an understanding gradually emerges (Iser, 2000). But the process of understanding is, as it is inherent in hermeneutics, never complete and finished (Iser, 2000).

I may have, therefore, disappointed readers who sought for detailed procedures of how I collected my field-notes and made sense of them. The procedures are less important to my approach. I prefer to follow Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005) and understand my writing as a method of inquiry. A stringent regime of writing is not important but rather curiosity about my experiences and their meaning and a constant scepticism about my understandings.

In conversation, we may sometimes hate the "yes, but …". However, this "but" is key to reflexivity in auto-ethnographic accounts. It is questioning how I as researcher or practitioner (with some vested interests) influenced my interpretation and how researching influenced me. After each new insight, each new understanding raises at least one "but." As soon as I think something, I may question it – Lévinas (1974b, p. 168) talks about scepticism which "follows" thinking "like a shadow" –which forms the bedrock of reflexivity. Reflexivity as scepticism is a substantial part of my 'writing as inquiry'. Then any description,

any claim, any understanding is followed by a new question – 'why?', 'how?', or just a blatant, 'really?'.

These questions help to reveal how I look at my own experiences - as a businessman of 15 years in the industry, tired of exhausting conflicts and stressed out by different demands. I have an interest in people trusting me and me trusting people. Without a great deal of trust, I would not be able to cope with my life. That fact frames my research. Does it render my approach as invalid? No, it does not, it sets out a subjective framing that I try to make explicit so the reader can take it into account and read my work in the appropriate way.

I research my experiences, which is certainly a limitation of auto-ethnography. Futhermore, I only take a look at my very close business environment which further limits my vision. Hence, my work is very strongly influenced by what I am. However, the narrow focus allows me to look close and to dig deeper. This is where auto-ethnography can contribute most – by close examination, by introspection. I can far more easily explore my emotions and thoughts than that of others. "Such introspection offers intimate knowledge" (Pelias, 2013, p. 387 387) which other methods have difficulty to yield. But still, I present my interpretations of events, in the light of the theories I reviewed, yet others may come to a different reading of the events I encountered. I may understand them differently later. (Grosse, 2017a)

As I wrote above, writing fieldnotes does not follow a precscribed route or procedure. I tried and stuck with what worked. It was very much a learning process, which took a while to 'fly'. I drew one particular idea from running. There are days when I have very little motivation and energy to run. On these days I go running anyway but to get started I set myself a minimum target of about 20 minutes. Often I end up with much more more and run an hour on these evening. I approached writing fieldnotes in a similar way.

Fieldnotes written about these negotiations are my ethnographic material recording the negotiations but also what I thought and felt at the time. They deal predominantly with recent experiences, thoughts and feeling but also contain recollections on informal conversations. I often use a voice recorder to take initial notes about recent experiences and later sit down to describe them more fully and give my reflections. Writing fieldnotes is very similar to keeping a diary. Usually, I set myself a word limit of about 500 words to start writing. If this "warm-up" is successful, I write more than my minimum and I am surprised where my thoughts and recollections take me.

My ability to write fieldnotes developed during my research journey. At the beginning, it was difficult to know what I should include, but as I progressed, I wrote the fieldnotes much more freely. I included the event I wanted to report but also reflected on prior experiences to explore my thoughts. I used the notes as a method of inquiry (Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005) and an analyzing technique (Emerson et al., 2011; Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005). The writing and subsequent reading form a hermeneutic process of investigating my research field in increasing depth (Van Manen, 1990).

Looking at my fieldnote writing over a longer period shows that my research focus shifted. I was initially interested in improving my negotiation skills to selfishly get better outcomes for myself. However, the more I learned about negotiating, the more I understood that trust plays a central role, and this became my focus. As Emerson et al. (2011, p. 24) put it, the "field researcher can focus on their personal sense of what is significant." To start with such a narrow focus on negotiations might seem difficult to an autoethnographer, but as a practitioner, I inevitably brought a very specific problem to the research arena. This showed that I needed to change the way I look at my environment. Writing fieldnotes about a broad range

of interactions with my business partners enabled me to shift focus and widen my view by observing and reflecting. As a construction professional, I used to deal with any problem that I encountered in turn and was quite comfortable when everything seemed to run smoothly. As a researcher, I actively looked around for the problem.

The particular knowledge acquired by autoethnographers has further implications for the research questions. Given the nature of autoethnography, the notion of a research question is even more difficult. Autoethnographers should observe and openly explore their field with only a rough idea of what they are interested in. For instance, Ellis (2009) wrote notes about her dying partner without a clear research question. The emergent nature of autoethnography (as well as ethnography in general) does not require, or almost forbids, clearly stated research questions. Only during and toward the end of the process of ethnographic work does one realize to which questions or problems one might now be able to contribute. Although I started with a narrow focus, I developed both my research agenda and the research problems. (Grosse, 2018, pp. 5-6)

This movement from a narrow focus on negotiation towards a broader understanding of trust and its implications, is visible thoughout the thesis. However, in the following two chapters this movement takes full force.

Moving Beyond Rationality

Picking up the example ‘New Project’ [p.151] above demonstrates that interactions take place within the said - within concepts, but interactions also takes place beyond concepts. In the following example I stress this point again.

Wrong Concrete

One hot summer morning around 6:30, my mobile rang. Nobody calls me at that hour without an urgent need to talk to me. I was sure problems were looming.

A foreman from a building site reported that the fresh concrete the plant delivered was not suitable for the foundation he was about to lay that day. In the background, I could hear a concrete pump. Two concrete mixer trucks were already there, and several other mixer trucks were on their way to the building site. Each of the mixer trucks was carrying some nine cubic meters of the wrong concrete.

My foreman and I briefly sought to figure out who was responsible for the wrong order but could not determine who it was. However, he insisted he ordered the right concrete when he called the concrete plant. Of course, the foreman at the concrete plant had a completely different opinion and expressed it loudly.

Minutes later, I called his manager. He already knew about the mess up and had anticipated our conviction that we had placed the order correctly. We knew we could not immediately determine who was responsible, but we put all our efforts into limiting the cost of this mistake.

Their manager diverted the mixer trucks to another building site where the concrete could be used, and he managed, with considerable effort, to get another concrete pump later that day. We were both able to convince our staff to put in some extra hours. That evening, the concrete pump arrived again on the building site and this time we got the right concrete.

A thunderstorm was forecasted for that night. If the foundation was not laid immediately, heavy rainfall could have caused severe damage to the

insulation below. It would have simply been flooded. The forecast was right that day, but I was relaxed when it started raining.

In the days that followed, we were able to determine that the actual mistake was almost certainly made by the foreman on the concrete plant.

Some weeks later, I met with the manager of the concrete plant for a coffee in my office, and we discussed the issue. He offered us an additional discount on future deliveries in order to cover our extra costs which resulted from the wrong delivery. (Grosse, 2015a, p. 8)

I suggested solving the problem first and finding out who was accountable later. I would not use the word 'responsible' now, but I did then as at the time I had not adopted Lévinas' use of 'responsibility'. I thought that it would be purely rational action minimising the damage, i.e. containing costs, because each one's share of the cost is smaller. In other words, the smaller the loss, the easier it will be to share it. This is not wrong but a purely calculative approach might have achieved something else. I should have assessed the likelihood and amount of loss on my part and then compared it to the effort I invested in minimising the damage. I would then probably have limited my efforts to minimise the damages but I did not make this calculation. Instead I insisted on solving the problem as smoothly as possible.

I had to search for another explanation for my actions. At this moment I suspended rationality – pure calculation –and opted for an approach that put our relationship first. I assumed without proper examination that it was most likely that the costs would be lowest if we solved the problem together. We assumed responsibility in a Lévinasian sense and opted for a 'mini-epoché'. We suspended the search for who was accountable – in an ontological sense – and tried to bring the concrete on the building site that day. In the absence of rational thought regarding who would benefit or care for each other, we lifted the 'we' above the 'I'.

To put the ‘we’ before the ‘I,' and to give the ‘we’ more importance than the individual might be seen as a moral action. ‘We’ tried to lay the foundation of this house together. The supplier mixed and delivered the concrete, he ordered the concrete pump and my staff brought the tools and sought to lay the foundation plate. But it did not work out. It went wrong at the first attempt as we got the wrong mixture on site. In this event, searching for a solution for ‘our’ problem, rather than searching for who was accountable for the mess ‘we’ were in, can also be seen as a moral response. It is good to solve the problem because one of us would benefit although we did not know who it might be. We did something together, from which one of us would profit in the future.

Being for the Other is, although not in reciprocity, being for me because I foster a sociality that benefits me and without which I could not live. By acting socially I enlarge benefits (or contain costs) that is about to be shared and, following Peperzak (2013), by working together trustingly we enlarging benefits more than each of us could on one’s own. Hence, it is likely that the share I get is larger too. Yet, calculating the size of my share and thus claiming reciprocity cannot work, because acting trustingly is not for my direct benefit but for the sake of sociality.

Of course, it had to do with the fact that I like working with this man. I had known him for some years and I wanted to do business with him in the future. In this case, behaving utterly opportunistically would have dealt a significant blow to our relationship. To minimise the costs of someone’s failure demonstrated that I cared for our relationship.

One may argue that minimizing the cost is utterly rational since the chance was high that both of us would pay a share of it and we were just minimizing our exposure to risk. That is not wrong, but the point I like to emphasise here is that rationality is only one aspect of the interaction. There is more in it. It is the nature of the response. I did not calculate but I did respond with an ‘I am for’ you (Bauman, 1993, p. 76) or better ‘the-one-for-the-other’ (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 96). Furthermore, although it was both of our own ‘affair’ (Lévinas,

1982) we both answered in the same way – We took responsibility, we cooperated to contain costs.

The behaviour or course of action that I employed was in stark contrast to that of the foreman on the plant. He employed a defensive and counter-offensive strategy almost by reflex. He insisted that he had delivered the concrete we had ordered and claimed that, as in most cases, it was our mistake. Stepping out of this pattern and saying 'wait a minute, let's solve the problem first, perhaps then we don't have to argue at all' apparently had a huge impact. This stepping out is to some extent Levinas' basic 'scepticism' (Lévinas, 1974b), fundamental reflexivity and an abandoning of concepts that may open new perspectives. This abandoning of concepts was not considered in the rational explanation I gave myself for my action on the day it happened, yet this 'mini-epoché' amounted to an implicit 'command' (Lévinas, 1954, p. 43) which I will develop further in the coming pages.

By concentrating on the problem we stopped fighting over the causes. The striking outcome was that all involved got 'infected' by this virus of problem-solving – what the Americans call log-rolling. The plant manager found mixer drivers to work in the evening, a concrete pump was also on site and my staff and the laboratory staff did not complain about working extra hours.

When we met weeks later to discuss the matter and negotiate the cost, there was a mood of problem-solving and appreciation of the collective effort. How to share the remaining costs was a minor issue.

The suspension of an argument about accountability was a dominance of the Saying over the Said. The Said did not become too powerful because we kept the cost low. This resembles Lévinas' notion that only one who has eaten can be responsible (Lévinas, 1961). I have had experience of costlier failures when the rational (the Said) - arguing about accountability was far more important than the relational (the Saying) - maintaining a good relationship and taking responsibility. A suspension of the Said - this form of 'scepticism' that is Saying

(Lévinas, 1974b) becomes more and more difficult when the stakes are higher. The people I dealt with in costlier failures were fair and ethical up until then but they became extremely selfish when their businesses faced existential threats. Metaphorically, they became afraid that they would not get enough to eat (Lévinas, 1961).

The General Contractor

For a couple of years, I did very good business with a general contractor. The projects we did together were often quite difficult ones. We always maintained a good relationship. Of course, there was bargaining and haggling over prices and discounts, but it was rather a ritual. Yet when we faced problems on our projects, we supported each other and always found a solution that both could live with. Often, we didn't even write down anything. Just our word was enough. However, the mood deteriorated when the partner faced severe economic difficulties. One of his clients, he told me, would refuse to pay large sums. Ultimately, his company went out of business.

During the phase of looming insolvency, we argued fiercely about payments, and I constantly had the impression that he recalled past agreements differently from the recollection I had. It seemed as if his recollections altered more in his favour the more difficult his situation became. And perhaps my perception diverged too – only in the other direction – since his economic difficulties hit me hard too.

I wonder whether the contractor himself believed the claims he made in the example above – to me they seem totally unrealistic. Does a person's perception of what is going on alter so much in favour of their economic survival? Sometimes people seem to have a very skewed understanding of a situation – this certainly applies to me.

The examples above seem to support Lévinas' position that there is a connection between Saying and Said - that we see the traces of the Saying in the Said. The clients come back, the architect argues for commissioning us, the plant manager engages in problem-solving and we succeed. Does this make a case for comparing the Saying and Said?

Rational versus Responsible

The rational and the responsible operate in two different universes so I cannot compare them; rationality is ontological, but responsibility is pre-ontological. However, the Saying leaves its traces in the Said, therefore, responsibility does affect rationality. Actually, rationality is impossible without responsibility. Again, my self is not defined by 'I am I' but by 'I am for' (Bauman, 1993, p. 76)

When I translate this to trust, it makes a difference whether I act in a trustworthy manner. But if I cannot say what is essentially good, can I say what it means to act trustworthily? It cannot be measured by any standards but it is what Mayer et al. (1995) call 'integrity and benevolence'. So, in contrast to what Mayer et al. (1995) and many others suggest I would suggest placing trust on the hither side of ontology. The actions and outcomes following from integrity and benevolence are traces of the Good - they are the traces of trust but not trust itself.

The very assessment of one's abilities – whether my client is able to pay my bill or whether a bricklayer is capable of plastering a wall sufficiently well – is a matter of ontology. It is derived from my categories. I can read the confirmation of client's bank and I know whether my bricklayer plastered a wall before, but I cannot know with the same certainty whether they are genuinely good people.

But this is probably the wrong question since it would suggest there are genuinely bad people, which I doubt. Like Lévinas, I draw on Plato: the genuinely good is the light beyond the light. Hence, being good is beyond the order of ontology.

> *[…] Greek metaphysics conceived of the Good as separate from the totality of essences […] it caught sight of a structure such that the totality could admit of a beyond. (Lévinas, 1961, p. 102)*

Whether they act out of opportunistic reasons such as fear of legal battle or losing their job or they act just because they feel that it is their genuine responsibility to do so or are meandering between both, being good and weighing the consequences of their action remains unknowable.

This question cannot be answered, at least not in the realm of ontology. I am not sure whether I act trustworthily because I hope for reciprocity or because of an obligation to do so. I may believe that acting benevolently and honestly might inspire others to do the same but does that actually work and do they regard my actions as good? Again, I cannot know. It is the Other who judges my action and who does or does not regard me as trustworthy.

I can be terribly wrong, even with the best of intentions. I may assume due to my own values that taking care of things is the right thing to do but the Other might have a fundamentally different view. Baier (1986) gives us a less severe but illustrative example of the postman who reads the postcards he delivers. It could be understood as an act of caring or an invasion of privacy. Hence, I can be wrong because the Other compares my action with the actions of the Third and translates it into his same - his Said that is limited and has different categories. This explains why trust is broken. Trust measured by the categories of the Same is a sort of gamble. I am trying to gauge the Other's categories to find some familiarity- things that suit the Other. If I hold his deeds against my categories - my Same, it becomes the question of whether the Other has done what I wanted and expected him to do. If so, my trust was placed 'rightly' but since I do not know who the Other really is, I do not know his categories, and he does not know mine; we are doomed to disagree at some point. Most people make judgements about trust in this way but it is problematic.

There is a better way to approach it. Trust is best placed in a person that strives for the Good and acts benevolently towards the Other. Yet, I can never really know what is good for me because Good is beyond being - beyond my categories. Good is infinite and limited as I am, I cannot grasp infinity. Therefore, I cannot grasp what the Good is and what is good for me. It exceeds my comprehension.

> *"I understand responsibility as responsibility for the Other, thus as responsibility for what is not my deed, or for what does not even matter to me, or which precisely does matter to me is met by me with as face. (Lévinas, 1982, p. 95)*

This responsibility goes beyond any concept and that in two ways. First, I am responsible although I am ontologically not linked to the things at stake as they are not 'my deed.' Again, responsibility is there before I even think about it or contemplate thinking about it. Second, responsibility is only about the Other's concerns. The only thing that matters is what the Other needs, wishes or demands. Responsibility only concerns the Other and not me at all - I am supposed to step back completely. It is not my values or concerns but only what the face of the Other says to me that matters.

I am responsible for what does and does not matter to me. It makes no difference to responsibility whether what is at stake matters to me or not. It is this disinterestedness that makes up responsibility. I am responsible whether or not what I have to care for is important to me. This in turn makes up trust – I think of the Other as caring for me.

If I seek to trust people more, I have to face the reality that someone - the Other, cares for us. The Other does not necessarily know what is best for me but he makes his best effort to achieve what he thinks is best for me. If that is not what I expected, it is no reason to abandon trust. He tried his very best to do Good to me and this should be the guideline against which I hold his actions.

It is very similar to the example with the cracks in the column [see 'The Cracks' p. 109]. The architect left it to us to decide, saying, 'Do what you think is best.' This in essence, is genuine trust - 'You're not me, but I believe you'll do your best.' He left it to our genuine discretion Baier (1986).

But trust is to some extent only a partial retreat from knowledge. In the example of the cracks, my foreman would not have come up with the idea that there 'ought to be something done' about the cracks without knowledge. The very fact that he recognised the cracks and the potential threat they posed required some knowledge. And the architect understood this problem only because he was familiar with the problems the cracks may cause. Furthermore, he assumed that we knew what had to be done. Hence, the suspension of knowledge went hand-in-hand with quite a lot of specialist knowledge. But still, the very nature of trust is suspension and the belief in the Good of the Other.

Yet constant back and forth between knowing and not knowing makes it difficult to distinguish between them. This shows naivety on the part of the trustor, as she gives herself to the caring hand of the trusting but also on the part of the trusted because she does not retreat to measures of accountability. She naively takes on responsibility for everything.

Now, I return to the point where trust is a belief in the Good of the Other and by no means a rational calculation. It cannot be a rational calculation because we cannot get the 'variables' to calculate. If they could be found they would lie beyond being and this is not the place where variables settle.

Bauman also guides me on this point:

> *"The awesome truth about morality is that it is not inevitable, not determined in any sense which would be considered valid from the ontological perspective; it does not have 'foundations' in the sense that perspective would recognize. The ethics that leaps into the Great Unknown of 'before being' does not do it in order to find or build foundations that no expedition starting from 'being' has managed to reveal*

or build. Ethics looks in the 'before' of being […] because it knows that it is precisely the act of looking there which founds the moral self […]." (Bauman, 1993, pp. 75-76)

This lack of any ontological foundation of morality is also apparent in trust. I trust because I do not know ontologically, and I believe in the morality of the Other. Morality demands the Other to do what ought to be done. Trust is the belief that I will do for the Other what should be done. Lévinas describes this fusion - the becoming one which Peperzak (2013) later addressed to trust;

To show respect cannot mean to subject oneself; yet the other does command me. I am commanded, that is, recognized as someone capable of realizing a work. To show respect is to bow down not before the law, but before a being who commands a work from me. But for this command to not involve humiliation - which would take from me the very possibility of showing respect — the command I receive must also be a command to command him who commands me. It consists in commanding a being to command me. This reference from a command to a command is the fact of saying "we," of constituting a party. By reason of this reference of one command to another, "we" is not the plural of "I". (Lévinas, 1954, p. 43)

Acting morally is essentially demanding trust from the Other. But I am in no way entitled to do so explicitly. It is a gentle request, as if I hold a door open and say, 'After you' – 'Après vous'. Whether he trust me or not is his affair and I can only ask humbly and implicitly. I offer my morality, and the Other may or may not accept it.

Personal Remarks

I recall a quote, referred to earlier. The Other is like me but he is infinitely different at the same time:

"I, who have no concept in common with the Stranger, am, like him without genus." (Lévinas, 1961, p. 39).

Who is this Other and why is he so important to me? Lévinas is different from other thinkers as he leads me right away to the central and very crucial questions. For example, Foucault (Gutting, 2014) asks whose agenda we follow and who leads the discourse and Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2008) asks what kind of capital do I and others hold and what are the implications. But Lévinas goes immediately to the fundamental questions - Who am I? Why am I? How can I know I am? and What is being? Lévinas questions a philosophy obsessed with being. He points me to thinking about the origins of thinking.

This makes it difficult if not impossible to find conclusive answers. I would even go so far as to say I believe I know. Hence, all I claim to know is not much more than a belief. I think this makes me a bit humbler as I can only claim to know something. However, I can also feel arrogant alongside people who claim to know something, especially those that are only a little reflexive. When a person such as a business partner does not act respectfully towards others, I immediately disrespect him. Although, I should be humbler in my judgement since it is subjective and not much more than a belief founded in some observation and judgement.

This is a consequence of reading Lévinas. To him, all knowledge is founded on subjectivity. I sense more than I can ever know. Therefore, all I think that 'is' is merely a consequence of the unconscious. Yet this urges me to constantly question what I believe I know and what actions I pursue out of this belief of knowing. I am haunted by this 'revenant' scepticism, and its 'refutation' (Critchley, 2015).

Moon (2006) asserts that there is no logical endpoint to reflection but fortunately there are many Thirds who demand decisions from me. I have to make judgements and I need to strive for just decisions. I do not have endless time to think and reflect as they demand action from me. Justice, as Derrida (1992) writes, must come immediately and it cannot wait.

Hence, the infinity of Saying must be broken by the Said in the form of decisions I have to make.

Standards versus Arbitrariness

Entering the world of Lévinas also left me a bit puzzled. What does it actually mean to be responsible prior to concepts? What are the consequence of "Plato's wandering causes" (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 13) when I struggle to give this cause a proper name and address meaning to it. Meaning and names are not created yet. On this side of the distinction between being and beyond being, names and meaning do not exist. The creative source lies in the saying. The very process of meaning-making happens at the edges of both. When traces of the Saying become so strong that they make up for a signifier they become visible in the Said. At this moment, when the names are born, they are supposed to leave. They are thrown out of this paradise of naivety.

The notion of paradise is quite significant. One has to leave paradise, as soon as one begins to know. This state is reached when one is able to make a distinction, to know and is not naïve anymore. Perhaps, there are parallels to my own history in business. In some respect, I started my business life in a naïve way and learned the hard way that it is not paradise – by losing money. When I learn something, I leave the paradise of naivety and then I am able to and subsequently have to decide.

This also applies to my relationships with business partners. The more I know about them, the more decisions I have to make. Each bit of knowledge I gain about the Other I am interacting with forces me to make a judgement. It is a judgement I have to stick to for the moment, although I have to be sceptical about it. The scepticism of the Saying demands me to put this judgement constantly into question. No principle is eternally valid as each is basically arbitrary. How can one live with this total relativism?

Waldenfels (1995) clarifies that the responsibility prior to concepts not accountability and the very notion of care is the one that must guide action. But a constant drive to scepticism and questioning, the incompleteness of the Said and the permanent recurrence of the Saying (Critchley, 2015) must lead to paralysis. At the moment, I make a judgement I am aware of its imperfection and of the judgement being unjust. How then can I act at all? I am supposed to rethink. But does that help? A decision must be taken immediately otherwise it is unjust (Derrida, 1992).

I am supposed to do something but doing nothing is also an action. The very avoidance of acting is acting. And it can be unjust with the knowledge I have at this very moment? I do not know for certain as it is just an a-proximation towards justice that I am performing. I know I cannot be just but I know to do nothing or follow another course of action can increase injustice.

This is another of the more profound thoughts that Lévinas incites. Is not scepticism a sort of care for the very way I care for the Other? Is it not necessary to be sceptical when one knows how fast one sometimes jumps to conclusions? Is scepticism then not the recurring force that keeps me caring because it tells me that care can never be finished? Then scepticism is the driver that keeps my care and my responsibility on course towards justice although I know I am never going to reach it.

I am not sure whether the course of action I have chosen is the most just, therefore, I need the recurring scepticism. Is a moment of reflection necessary or is it a permanent action? I do not believe that an action can become permanent. I think of a repeated, withdrawal, a second of thought, a minute of talk, some minutes in the park or a night of sleep… you name it. [for a further discussion see Appendix J – An insider's point of view (Grosse, 2018) p. 384]

I wonder what being an ethical person in the Lévinasian sense looks like in practice. How can one cope with this unfulfillable task? How can a person deal with the constant struggle,

with the nagging of knowing to be unjust and to be unfair by default? I enjoy being with the Other as Saying is pure enjoyment, but I am guilty and limitlessly indebted. This is the terrible dilemma.

The Third and the Retreat to the Said

First come first served

We are in the meeting room of the architect's office. I did not know the architect before, but it seems as if he were a person who is fine to work with. With me is a carpenter I met on other project and we worked together a couple of times, He introduced me to this architect.

We sat together for some 90 minutes and have talked through the project the architect needs construction company for. First, the architect explained what the aim of the project was and then we discussed several design solutions. I explained what our job on that project could comprise of. We agreed on another meeting the following week with a structural engineer to discuss some more detailed designs. Everything seemed to go in the direction that we get the job. And everybody on the table seemed fine with that. There were only two things left- our price for the job and the date when we can start working on the building site. The price we were going to calculate within the next couple of days. Nobody expected me to make an offer at the meeting table. But the architect asked when we could start the job on the site.

I used my standard formula: 'First come, first served.' I explained that we could start within the next six weeks, but if someone else signed a job with us prior to the architect's client, this project would be deferred to a later time.

Although we were four at the table, the talk that afternoon was predominantly a discussion between the architect and me. It was, for the most part, an encounter between the Other and me. The situation had numerous elements of what Lévinas describes. We were polite to each other, employing an 'après vous' attitude:

> *One thing we discussed was the demolition and closure of the old chimneys in the upper floor. He asked me to include filling the remaining chimney with sand. But sand in rinsing is almost like water. Usually, there are holes in the wall of the chimneys on each floor. When one for whatever reason perhaps pure curiosity opens the cover of one of these holes, a massive flow of sand will spill out.*
>
> *I knew that this could become a problem later on long after we may have left the building site. So, I thought it would be fair to tell him. I proposed to mix some cement to the sand, all dry. That mixture would flow through the chimney as well, but after a couple of days, it would get stiff. At least stiff enough that it did not spill out anymore.*
>
> *And there were other occasions with a similar pattern. I saw something that could not work or posed some difficulty, and I shared my knowledge.*

This sharing of knowledge is a form of taking responsibility although there was no direct personal benefit from doing so. Instead, it was something I ought to do - what should be done (Waldenfels, 1995). It was Saying or ethically responding to the Other. This bears some similarities to the example in the chapter on Lévinas [see 'The Cracks' p. 109] where my foreman and I took responsibility for cracks we were not accountable for. We felt we ought to do something about them.

In this example here as in 'The Cracks' [p. 109], we did not benefit directly. Here, we metaphorically started dancing and began some sort of exchange of gifts. I told him

something and he told me something helpful for the project. We began this move back and forth and at some point he proposed meeting the structural engineer to move the project along even further. I am convinced that that would not have happened if my response had been less in the realm of the Saying than the Said. The way we interacted – this intangible Saying – had consequences – we left very tangible traces in the Said.

But although I considered this meeting to be dominated by the Saying, at one point the Third party lurked and dragged the whole talk for a moment into the Said. When I mentioned my principle of 'first come, first served'. It was as if I was refusing the very responsibility I assumed before. The mood up to this point was that we just needed one or two meetings for my offer to be signed and for us to start working. But introducing this principle was to tell him he was not the only Other I was responsible to. This is the practical manifestation of Other as a 'non-event' (Davis, 1996)

I conveyed this notion so that he could easily assume my position. I used phrases like 'What else could I do?' or 'That would be unfair to other clients' or 'I am in a dilemma, I must make a choice.' He could therefore see that I had to act in this way but if we had not learned to dance with each other before, had not found a way for smooth conversation or if there were no dominance of Saying in our conversation, it could have dragged the whole meeting into a defensive mood.

Trust the Other, Trust the Third – Forcing Trust into Rationality

I am led to compare the faces, to compare two people. Which is a terrible task. (Lévinas in an interview with Wright et al., 1988, p. 174)

This is a terrible but necessary task. By setting the architect from the example above in my position, I could make him anticipate how I felt and how I sought to resolve my dilemma.

The following episode is from an internal conversation in my company. The pattern is similar, but I want to focus on the view of the decision maker.

> *Haggling over Manpower*
>
> *It's Thursday again. We talk about who will work on which building site next week. One site manager asks me to assign two additional bricklayers on his project. Then I talk to a foreman about whether he can manage the next week with two fewer workers. He can't, he says. He says, the architect will bite his head off if there are only two next week and he lists the jobs he has to finish soon.*
>
> *Going back to the site manager I tell him that there is no one available, he insists, 'but we promised' to the client.*

It is a terrible task to compare as I know that one of them is going to suffer. I cannot serve everybody. In these situations, I try to be rational. I ask questions regarding the potential damage and inconvenience to the client, what it would mean for the company if the client is upset with us or what we actually promised and what was written in the contract. I gather as much information as possible and then make a judgement.

Unfortunately, this often fails to resemble the actual situation of the foreman on the building site or of the site manager talking to the client. I may take them into account as best as I can, but there is only a sketchy picture of the foreman's or site manager's reality. I am not them. Even more problematic is the fact that I often have relationships with the project architects or clients. Some are very close and others I have never met yet, I have a responsibility towards all of them. They still have a 'face' in Lévinas' terms. But which face do I respond to first and to whom do I speak?

Being closer to one person is often the deciding issue. Some of the people I have to deal with respond to interactional arguments. When I explain my dilemma that I do not have

enough workers to do all the work that should be done in time, they can anticipate my situation. That is true for foremen but also for architects and clients. But some do not want to see my situation. As Plato says, “But could you persuade us, if we won’t listen?” (Plato, 1997, p. 973). They literally do not respond to me.

But there is seldom a complete failure to respond. When clients fail to listen it often coincides with a retreat from our contract. I often hear, ‘but we agreed to the contract on…’ etc. In these situations, it is often helpful to challenge the clients with the fallacies of the formulations in the contract. For instance, when they insist on a certain date for the job to be finished but I remind them what they should provide and care for to make that happen, they immediately see that they are not holding their own contractual commitments. Or, when I demonstrate how widely a formulation in a contract can be interpreted, which is sometimes a complete game changer, they realise that an almost stubbornly intolerant demand is not leading anywhere.

This is reminiscent of Derrida's (1992) deconstruction of concepts. The concept I am dealing with is the contract I have with that particular client. When I question the client’s adherence to the agreement, I undermine the authority of this agreement and speak to his responsibility. Essentially, what I am saying is, ‘since we know that our contract is not all-encompassing, shouldn’t we act responsibly towards each other regardless of our contract?’ The more we abandon the contract, the more playful the relation becomes. The more one or both of us insist on the nitty-gritty details of the contract, the nastier and more hostile the relation becomes.

I would argue that this is a movement between two extremes. One shows the Same or Said of the contract with its rules hammered in stone and fixed into a structure to the extent that it is dead. The other shows complete flow, everything in flux, no rules or structure and limitless responsibility. This is also overwhelming and impossible to live with. It has some resemblance to Weick’s (2006) notion of the area between smoke and crystal in which life

is only just possible. Smoke for Weick is chaos or entropy and crystal is structure or order. Although, I constantly seek to structure my life, life has a tendency towards entropy. One may understand this move towards entropy as the constant nagging of the Saying – what Lévinas calls 'Saying's scepticism'.

The corrective of the Saying takes away the uncompromising nature from the Said because it suspends them when contracts are regarded by both parties as unethical or not fit for purpose. But if one of the parties in the contract does not like to dance or does not want to move or open up to the Saying, it is difficult to open up the space for communication on the terms of Saying.

The Saying has an element of playfulness. It is a moving with the Other and a kind of dancing or a wave that Derrida (1967) describes. Perhaps this is one of the points where Lévinas is more aligned to Eastern than European philosophers. Hermann Hesse also refers to Siddhartha's attitude of playfulness in (Hesse, 1974). Here, the young Buddha learned to let go to achieve his goals. He learned to let go of structure and planned and correctly executed action to achieve greater success. He also understood the structures in which he moved but the key was not to stick fiercely to these structures but to allow for the deconstruction or inherent reflexivity to take place [see Appendix J – An insider's point of view (Grosse, 2018) p. 384].

My understanding is that these two poles in Hesse's Siddhartha can be seen as Lévinas' Saying and Said. Saying and Said coexist and I need both to act as human – the Saying to be humane and the Said to resolve dilemmas stemming from the responsibility of the Saying.

The Said is exactly where I locate Weick's (2006) crystal – like a structure that does not allow for life. Saying is Weick's steam – unknowable chaos which is overwhelming and uninhabitable. Life happens in between these extremes. Control is Weick's structure - the Said. It is comparing two people in the realm of ontology. Trust is Weick's steam - the Saying. This movement between comparing and responding is well described by Bauman:

When the Other dissolves in the Many, the first thing to dissolve is the Face. The Other(s) is (are) now faceless. They are persons (persona means the mask that – like mask do – hides, not reveals the face) I am dealing with masks (classes of mask, stereotypes to which the masks/uniforms send me), not faces. […] Masks are not as reliable as faces, they may be put on and off […]. The innocent, hopeful confidence of the moral drive has been replaced by the never quelled anxiety of uncertainty. […](Bauman, 1993, p. 115)

What makes me trust is the 'innocent moral confidence' rather than ways of structuring and comparing. Life within structures - within the Said or within being – would not be life at all. Life needs to break with structures and the Saying makes this possible. Trust is the belief in more than structures. It is the belief that things get solved beyond structures and beyond the totality of being. It is not reducing complexity as Luhmann (1973; 1975) but a way of living with complexity because trust operates in a different mode.

Trust is the-way-of-living-with-anxiety, not the way to dispose it. (Bauman, 1993, p. 115)

To trust someone means doing – trust must be understood as a verb. It is extremely difficult to understand the nominal meaning of trust. To trust is to act, feel and think rather than a state of being. It is trembling - 'schaudern' (Goethe, 1832). When I understand how little I know and how little control I have, I get goose bumps.

Principles: Their Upsides and Downsides

To act on certain principles is highly regarded in the business world and in society in general. But there is an underlying problem with this attitude: it does not account for the particularities of a situation. Take, for instance, the concept of "principled negotiations" (Fisher & Ury, 1981). Fisher and Ury propose the introduction of an objective principle on

which both parties in a negotiation agree and then solve the disputed issues according to this principle.

This sounds straight forward, and it is. But using a principle can lead to the negotiation becoming very stifled. The parties must retain the option to question this concept in case it does not fit the issue at hand otherwise the application of the concept can become unjust. A one-fit-all concept does not exist because the Other is different to me. Hence, we have to be constantly sceptical about the concepts we apply.

When one applies the approach of principled negotiating there is shift in emphasis from the Saying – the responsible approaching of one negotiating partner – to the Said – the application of general predefined concepts. Ultimately, one agrees with his negotiating partner to abandon the mutual responsibility for each other and replace it with a system of accountability to a 'higher' order concept - the principle the partners apply. We rely on this principle rather than genuinely trusting our partner.

To rely on one or other principles is a good choice, from a managerial perspective and even more from a legal perspective (Fisher and Ury researched for the Harvard Law School). Once the principles were agreed on the partners were relieved from the messy nature of responsibility – the Saying is discarded – and they could account only for the principle – the Said becomes dominant.

When business partners interact on the basis of principles, they do not actually trust each other, they just rely on the principles to be followed and sometimes even followed blindly. These principles might lead to very unfair outcomes. For example:

> *Pricey Bricks*
>
> *An architect, I had known for almost my entire business life, called me and asked for help with a project. The contractor, her client, commissioned, could not finish some work on time. So, she asked me to finish part of the job. One part of it was exchanging old broken or defect*

bricks from an early 20th century façade. We agreed on a price for a single replaced brick by a new brick. In the end, we multiplied the estimated number of bricks to be replaced by the price per brick and got the sum of the contract.

We started to work, and after some time it turned out that the price was far too high. The actual cost of replacing a brick was only a fraction of the price in the contract. My site manager when he wrote the invoice offered a substantial discount on the price for the brick.

When we discussed the issue, he said something like: 'Of course, we want to make a profit, but that seemed too much. We can't do that. We're still making a good bargain, but 'let's keep the church in the village.'

The site manager could have insisted on the principle – our contract – but it seemed unfair to him. The principle applied to a particular situation was inappropriate. He uses the metaphor 'keep the church in the village' which reflects the fact that churches are usually situated in the middle of a village, and all the houses built around it. So, it feels odd and misplaced to build (or move) a church out of a village. Germans using this metaphor often refer to something that is very inappropriate or very out of touch with reality.

This inappropriateness also comes out in his wording. 'Wir können das nicht machen' – literally,'we can't do that' but with a slightly different intonation in this context; 'können' translates as 'can', but here it means 'we should not' or 'we are not allowed to'. Of course, given our contract, we could charge the client for the whole sum, but we should not. There is no proper rule or principle, but it did not feel okay – it is what ought not to be done (Waldenfels, 1995)

I was fine with his suggestion to abandon a principle for the sake of showing responsibility. In the end we acted a little more ethically. It cost us some money – as it cost my business partner money not to sell the priciest solution – but I think we kept our

interaction with the architect and the client very much in the realm of the Saying. We sent a clear message - ‘Look we don’t stick too fiercely to principles so don’t do that either!’

I think this made us appear trustworthy. We were not just reliable on principle, but flexible to adapt to a particular situation and we showed responsibility. We took care of our partners - only to the extent that we had ‘enough to eat’ but we shared from ‘our mouth’(Lévinas, 1961).

There is a big struggle when one fights for economic survival. This person might be the one that has not eaten and cannot share from his mouth (Lévinas, 1961). This poses two problems. How do I know when one has eaten and how do I speak to a person that has not eaten?

What does it actually mean to fight for survival? It is perhaps better described as ‘being in a desperate situation,' – a situation which might be the brink of bankruptcy or the loss of a valued property, but also perhaps the breakdown of a marriage. Eating as I understand it is in the first place a basic need, for food, shelter and sleep. But it also becomes a socially constructed need and the distinction between whether something is a need or not is difficult to make (see ‘Desire’ page 96).

Vulnerability

The Said offers some security – although deceptive. If one acts on the grounds of the Said it seems as if everything is calculable. It reduces the complexity of human relations to a manageable level. If one acts on principles, e.g. organizational rules, one cannot be wrong. One makes oneself only accountable for one’s action with regard to these very principles and nothing else. Hence, it looks as if one’s responsibility were limited but in fact it is only accountability which can get limited. Responsibility goes beyond even the most complex set of rules.

One may think that he is not accountable for the consequences of his actions because he did respect the rules but responsibility goes way beyond that. One might see that the rules

produce unjust decisions and still stick to the rules. Hence, one can claim to be unaccountable for these unjust outcomes and refer the accountability to the source of these rules. But this person still bears responsibility since he was aware of the consequences of the application of the rules.

However, sticking to a rule, a principle or a contract is quite easy. Not doing so out of responsibility is a tricky business – in a world of 'accountants', For example, in 'Experiences with Auto-Ethnography – How to Write when Emotions Run High?'(Grosse, 2015a), I discussed the following:

> *Deadlines*
>
> *I had several meetings with a client and the project manager that were marked by ongoing conflict. The building process was three weeks behind schedule because some drawings were delivered late and others were still not done. In one of these meetings, which was exceptionally cooperative, we agreed on some changes to the design in order to meet the approaching deadlines. Our work went on and we met the deadlines. However, in a later meeting, both the architect and the client blamed me for not delivering the originally agreed upon quality. I reminded them that we had deliberately altered the design in the above-mentioned meeting, and hence the quality, in order to finish the work on time. Now, I learned that the whole responsibility*[1] *had been shifted to me with no acknowledgement of the fact that this had all transpired following the architect's delay in delivering the drawings on time. (Grosse, 2015a, p. 3) [see 'Appendix B – Experiences with Auto-Ethnography (Grosse, 2015a)' p. 289]*

[1] Again, today, I would not use to word responsibility in this case. I would call it accountability. But at the time of writing this paper I used the word in the sense of 'being accountable for'.

It was not my job to deliver design - it was the architect's. I did not have a contract for doing it, nor would I get paid for it but I did want to progress the project. I badly wanted to make it a success for us as a company and for the client. Therefore, I did not hide behind the wall of what I am accountable for but took responsibility in Lévinas' sense. I made proposals and tried to find a solution with the client and the architect. This cooperative meeting was a case of Saying to the others.

But it also made me vulnerable because I went beyond what I had to do as the fulfilment of my contractual obligations – what is fixed in the Said of the contract and the applicable laws and regulations. I offered more – by Saying I face my responsibility. I sought to open a space for an interaction so that the situation became positively creative - to make the situation tremble and to move it forward. Had I stayed in my 'trench' and not taken responsibility for their project, it would have almost certainly gone wrong.

> *[Saying] is in the risky uncovering of oneself, in sincerity, the breaking up of inwardness and the abandon of all shelter, exposure to traumas, vulnerability. (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 48)*

Now, I had to defend my proposal. The measures against which I had to defend it were that of the contract. Hence, it was quite easy to make me accountable for it but only in the realm of what was written in the contract, not with regard to acting responsibly. I had to justify my proposals. Why did I suggest changing the original design, how did I suggest changing it and did all that comply with the norms and regulations and with the client's demands? I was suddenly dragged into the realm of the Said – rules and contracts. As the Saying is not present in the Said, I could not argue, claiming I sought to take responsibility; it was my best effort. My effort felt betrayed, as the Saying is betrayed by the Said, and I felt betrayed myself.

It is not possible to avoid such situations. This would mean finding a rule, concept or theory which provided me with the means to fight off the Said and to make the Saying something permanent. Both Saying and Said function in two different philosophical spheres: being – of concepts, theories, the Said and beyond being – of responsibility, genuine care, the Saying. But being does not know what beyond being is. Hence, the very remedy for the betrayal would be of the nature of being. But being does not speak to the beyond being, hence, it cannot operate as remedy.

Summary – Trust as Saying

If a person seems to be driven only by self-interest it is hard to trust them. I assume that this person will exploit me at the first opportunity. It is similar to the person who fiercely and uncompromisingly sticks to rules and regulation. I do not trust them and expect them to abide by the rule and not use the power to act responsibly. Here, the concept of responsibility returns. It goes beyond pure accountability; to be responsible and to act responsibly incorporates far more than just being predictable and abiding by certain set of rules.

I think when we talk about trust we have to think about a judge. The person I trust is a judge who makes a decision on my behalf. It is not simply that this person makes the same decision that I would have taken. I think that would be a too simplistic idea of trusting. This person has to care for the things or tasks given to him. This caring is different from just doing what I would have done. He should do something for me, and I must believe he is able to do it and have to show him.

> *[T]he command I receive must also be a command to command him who commands me. It consists in commanding a being to command me. (Lévinas, 1954, p. 43)*

If I want to be trusted, I have to trust the Other. It may sound as if it were an equal relationship I need to maintain with the Other, but it is not. The Other commands me to do

the work I am capable of doing i.e. to care for him and to act responsibly. But at the same time, this command reflects back on him as I am his Other. He needs to respect me, to care for me and to act responsibly towards me too. I might expect him to do this, but it is not something I can order him to do as that would make the Other essentially equal. I am responsible for him and I seek being good to the Other so how can he not be good to me? Therefore, before we start reasoning, we have to trust.

When Peperzak (2013) says that to trust means to be with the Other and to become one, it is certainly not in the ontological sense. He dismisses the 'all-encompassing' ontology of the basic human encounter. This basic human encounter is marked by a being together of two strangers – strangers that are infinitely Other to each other. One ought to think of this encounter or of this being together as mutual comprehension and knowing each other but one has to understand it as an ambivalent meeting:

> *The true union or true togetherness is not the togetherness of synthesis, but a togetherness of face to face. (Lévinas, 1982, p. 77)*

The central difficulty of this thought – of being together in alterity – is the argument for being good to each other. We may or may not act morally but we have no ontological reason to do either.

> *The awesome truth about morality is that it is not inevitable, not determined in any sense which would be considered valid from the ontological perspective; it does not have 'foundations' in the sense that perspective would recognize. (Bauman, 1993, p. 75)*

When I think about trust as a form of Saying or a moral response to the Other, it has to belong to the realm of beyond being. But the implication of it is far-reaching. There is no

ontologically valid foundation for trust. It is a moral obligation which has begun before I thought about it and before I became conscious of this ethical answering to the other.

I may therefore just trust by ‘default.' Being a moral person and an ethical person means to trust – and not to ask why I trust. I just do it.

This is, admittedly, a very odd statement in a world of accountability, claims, laws, rules, numbers, measures and measurements. But nobody can proove me wrong as I have left the field of ontology. To any challenger, I may say: Come to the beyond being and all you’ve got ceases to be. You’re naked. You cannot do anything but trust and respond in the realm of beyond being.

Prior to thought – morality beyond ontological argumentation

Lévinas says that the Good is primordial - it is there ‘il y a’ before anything. The good or the responsibility for the Other is there before I am aware. It stems ‘prior to any meaning’ (Lévinas, 1974b, p. 10) I am actually awakened by my responsibility. “Responsibility conjures up the Face I face, but it also creates me as moral self. “ (Bauman, 1993, p. 75)

However, I have no means to argue for responsibility or the Good before being. Ontologically, there is nothing but being. If there were it would be a being otherwise not otherwise than being. When the foundation of morality lies within the otherwise than being, one cannot argue ontologically for or against it. (Bauman, 1993)

It therefore makes no difference in ontological terms whether I am responsible or not. Logically one cannot argue for or against it. It is the same with trust. If I am behaving badly, others will respond accordingly. This does not necessarily mean they will act badly to me, although it is possible. It means I am defining the sphere we are acting in with my own actions.

More importantly, when the Good is beyond being or it is something not represented by ontology, I cannot definitely define what good is. I can say this is fair with regard to a certain

standard or convention, but this is subjective. Hence, we need a constant scepticism against our standards of what is fair, just and good.

And there is no just standard. A concept or rule cannot be universal enough to fit all circumstances. A concept is always a representation in the sphere of the same and so it is limited. Therefore, it cannot account for the Other's infinity and must always fall short of this ideal. However, Lévinas makes the following point:

> *There is a utopian moment in what I say, it is the recognition of something which cannot be realised but which, ultimately, guides all moral action. This utopianism does not prohibit you from condemning certain factual states, nor from recognising the relative progress that can be made. Utopianism is not a condemnation of everything else. There is no moral life without utopianism – utopianism in this exact sense that saintliness is goodness. (Wright et al., 1988, p. 178)*

It is perhaps the guiding function of morality that makes it so pervasive. Extending the arguments of others (Bauman, 1993; Eikeland, 2015; Eikeland & Saevi, 2017; Peperzak, 2013; Saevi & Eikeland, 2012), I argue that trust is a form of Lévinas' Saying. Trusting 'is' an activity to be understood as a verb but not a noun. Trust escapes concepts and although it is used as an argument, it is not a fact but always elusive. Trust is a way of dealing with the Said's anxiety, but when we try to rationalise it becomes an anxious endeavour. Trust forces me into constant questioning and scepticism. Last but not least trust is the natural sibling of responsibility. Given their close relation and their shared properties and traits, I understand trust to be what Lévinas calls 'Saying'.

Methodological Reflection

Qualitative research is a messy business - a 'nomadic' enterprise (Adams St. Pierre, 2002). I tried to get my thoughts straight, but I could not. I start with one thought, move to

the next, to yet another and occasionally come back to the first. The thinking develops, and I move these thoughts a bit further or in another direction but I am not sure if it ever becomes any clearer. Sometimes it seems as if the mess is only getting messier. But then a huge wave comes which takes me a couple of meters away and everything clarifies. One of these big waves was when my foreman said we had to do something about the cracks [see 'The Cracks' p. 109] and another when my site manager said, 'we can't do that' [see 'Pricey Bricks' p. 186]. But then complexity builds up again. The next projects with that architect were not that easy and smooth. So, is my interpretation of the quality of our relationship wrong? Not quite. It was probably a good representation of the moment as I lived through it. But life moves on and so must my writing.

Large (2015, p. 44) speaks of "the presence of the speaker in their speech." When I retreat to write, as I often have recently, I do not think I fulfil the role of the present speaker very well. I am often not there and not meeting clients, staff, suppliers etc. And Lévinas taught me that presence cannot be replaced by structures, written rules or guidelines.

I want to be here sitting, writing and thinking but I want to live the life of an entrepreneur, acting, dealing and moving forward. Again, I am drifting away in my thoughts. It is perhaps navigating this dilemma which is so similar in autoethnography and running a business. I have a rough idea where I want to go with what I am doing in both business and research, but I seek to stay openminded to new development. One never knows what one might come across either in research (especially in qualitative, explorative research) or in business. The interaction with people in my business holds an infinite number of new possibilities for me. Isn't that great?

VI. Looking Ahead

In this chapter I examine the implications of Lévinas' thought. What does it mean to regard trust as a form of Saying? Where do I go from here?

I am not entirely sure what it means for my life. At the very least, it has left me with the impression that I cannot explain everything. After exploring Lévinas' thought and my experiences in the light of this, I only know a little more about why I cannot explain and cannot know. It is not that I am unintelligent, inattentive, or incapable of understanding enough, but only that I am just not the Other I am interacting with. I cannot step into the Other's shoes.

This realisation makes me relax a little. Relentless efforts to understand will not solve the puzzle of the Other's actions. The Other is entirely foreign to me and never at my disposal. This also means that I do not have the capacity to control him and never will have because I cannot know him. I know a bit of him - what I can translate into my Same, my Said. But that in no way accounts for the infinity of his otherness, of the ongoing encounter, the infinite Saying or the 'il y a' or 'there is'. This is the permanent 'trembling' (Goethe, 1832) that makes up our social world. It is as if I can let go a little more. I may be terribly wrong in my judgements about what the Other I am interacting with is going to do but I cannot do much about it. Therefore, it makes no sense to be terrified as it would just paralyse me and I would just squander my days contemplating what could or could not happen.

I could naively believe in the good of others. This would be as justified as not believing in it. The good is beyond proof and beyond being and I cannot prove its existence. The good is inherent in the Saying and it is better to believe in the good of others than not as it gives me the opportunity to forgive. This is not a superior kind of forgiveness but a humble one. The Other is not fundamentally for nor against me (Davis, 1996): The other might come to

the decision to be with the Third against me but I must still speak to him. I have to respond; I am still responsible.

This responsibility is manifested in the constant effort to solve conflict. An architect I very much enjoy working with once said to me: “Never stop talking to people.” He insisted that even in bitter conflicts one should not abandon the conversation. Although he might have thought in ontological terms, this advice can also be interpreted in terms of the pre-ontological. In interacting we create proximity and we respond to each other; we engage in Saying. Therefore, a different Said is likely to be produced. It is almost certainly different because of the Saying’s infinite difference it must create new knowledge and different ‘facts' - a different Said. This is where the solution to a conflict might be hidden.

In other words, interacting or Saying in its subjectivity produces new interpretations. The Saying leaves new traces in the Said and the Said is altered. Conflicts are always rooted in the Said - in comparing. Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that a solution is possible within an altered Said.

The Problem of Rationality

A calculation of my accountability would have allowed charging the full price for the bricks [see ‘The Cooperative’ p. 219], but I think pure reason leads us to be technocrats. If I only made a calculation of accountabilities, I would only apply laws. Hence, I would be an emotionless technocrat.

Williamson (1993, p. 453) clarifies that compared to other social sciences “the economic approach to economic organisation is decidedly more calculative.” Yet a purely calculative approach often neglects social cohesion. This notion is nicely reflected by Weir (2011). He demonstrates the shortcomings of a western conception of management by only concentrating on an evidence base. It is – as I have shown in my Lévinas readings – only one aspect of human interaction. Hence, if management only builds on evidence, it misses

an important part of human interaction. Weir, however, emphasises the importance of caring in management, which to a western-ontological belief falls behind the supremacy of profitability.

If maximising profits - the very notion of the economic man - is the only thing that guides human interaction, we may abandon trust altogether. It is evident in Williamson's (1993) analysis of calculativeness and trust that trust cannot be explained by pure rationality, and we also find this notion in earlier works (Simmel, 1907).

It becomes a pure risk-assessment and whether the other acts in my interest or not is pure Machiavellianism [see 'Responsibility' p. 101]. Under this premise, I do not assume the Other in any case to be genuinely benevolent to me neither do I assume he is a genuinely good person. He is only benevolent to me because it suits his interest. This, in fact, is not what I understand as benevolence - it is window-dressed opportunism.

Ultimately, this is what Weir tells me about the western approach to management - the way management was taught to me at university in Germany and is perhaps done so everywhere. But my experiences in business are different. There are underlying patterns that I cannot reduce to pure calculation. There are of course people with a tendency towards opportunistic behaviour but there are also a lot of people I did business with of the opposite kind. They acted very benevolently although it was not in their economic interest to do so – at least not in the short, foreseeable future. Hence, there is something beyond rationality. I think people emphasise rationality in their decision-making process differently. Some act, it seems, on pure calculation and are therefore often opportunistic, others follow more what they might call their feeling or instinct. This feeling might be what ought to be done (Waldenfels, 1995).

The people that tend to mere calculation are the ones I am reluctant to trust as I know that they are just looking for what suits them best. I may work with them as I do not have a problem with people being opportunistic - as long as I realise it. But if I believe I can trust

them I will probably be exploited. If I anticipate this I can I put it into my calculation. It is then pure risk-assessment. I can cope with it although I may not like to work in such a climate because I have to keep my business partners at arm's length (whether the word partner applies here is yet another question). I must not expose myself to too much risk. This allows only for small and/or simple transactions. Ambiguous, large contracts are beyond discussion with these people. They would be far too risky and exhausting.

Working with someone who emphasises the ethical side of interaction and does not purely rely on opportunistic calculation is a very different matter. I assume this person to be inherently benevolent and at least in principle good to others - to me. Hence, if something in our contract is ambiguous or not regulated in our contract we are going to find a solution that is fair for both of us and not just beneficial for one of the parties.

This is a nuanced picture. People tend to one or the other side and may sometimes change sides. To me, it is enjoyable to deal with people who act ethically as I can be quite relaxed with them because I am not afraid to be tricked or exploited. These are actually the ones I look to do business with.

Lawyer

One autumn Sunday morning I went jogging in the Tiergarten which is one of the largest parks, if not the largest, in the city centre of Berlin. Some metres in front of me was another jogger running at almost the same pace as I did. When I reached him, we greeted each other and began to chat. First, we talked about running in the park, after some time the conversation turned more into our daily lives and what we do for a living. I found out that he was a lawyer with his business in Berlin.

And then, of course, we talked about the legal practice, how litigations run, how some lawyers lure their clients into lengthy processes and so on. At

some point, he said what left quite an impression on me. 'Clients tend to find the lawyer that fits them.'

I discussed this statement with different lawyers and they all agreed. Regarding myself, I have to admit it fits in multiple respects. I think my lawyer suits me well as do the others I do business with e.g. my clients, the architects I work with, my suppliers and last but not least my staff. I have come to believe that there is an underlying pattern that guides me in the direction of a certain branch of people or that we align our behaviour with the others we are interacting with. It might be a bit of both.

I am quite forgiving about a lack of abilities. For instance, if one takes a seemingly stupid decision, does not know something, acts clumsily or thoughtlessly etc. I do not have a lot of problem forgiving that person. But I struggle to forgive if the person acts obviously (or apparently) ill-willed to me or is utterly opportunistic and anticipates my loss. I may trust that clumsy, thoughtless, unskilled person and this person might be nice regardless. This has nothing to do with the person's abilities. Whether one can write proper German does not necessarily make them a good soul. I can calculate the risk – I would be rather reluctant to hand the clumsy person my valuable china - but that has little to do with trusting.

Trusting is beyond calculation. Calculation does not matter in trust's regard. This is the essential difference between trust and control. If the person is unable to fulfil the job, I want him or her to do, it does not matter whether I control this person or how good-willed this person may be. They cannot do it.

The distinction between trust and control becomes clearer when I think about a person I do not know enough about. If I guess that a person is able to fulfil a certain task and it turns out that they could not it is quite easy to forgive this failure if it was due to a lack of knowledge, skills, etc. as long as I learned that the person did her or his best. I may be angry about the fact that it did not work out but not with the person.

But it is very different if it turns out that this person was able but not willing to do what I wanted and what we had agreed on. I could have exerted more control over this person to coerce him or her to do what I want. But to trust means that I believe the other person follows an inner obligation to do me that service. This person assumes responsibility for the task, essentially for me to do the job sufficiently well. Even the clumsy person does his or her best not to break my china, and in most cases, might be successful. To me it is less important what they are actually able to deliver but whether they wanted to. This good-willed but incapable person might assume responsibility for not delivering, the opportunistic certainly not.

I believe that each person is a moral person to some extent. If we were not good at all, we would kill each other pre-emptively [see 'Responsibility' p. 101]. Hence, I believe in a bit of morality in every person and therefore trust everyone to some extent. But I try to avoid doing business with the ones that seem to act more opportunistically and seek the ones with a more obvious moral attitude.

Therefore, people that base their decisions on regulations regardless of the particularities of the situation and people who are stiff in their applications of rules and too inflexible to make these rules serve human sociality, are the ones I trust only a little. I may rely on them because I can predict what they are going to do with a likelihood close to certainty, but in ambiguous situations, I would prefer to work with a flexible person who acts according to a primordial ethical obligation rather than a given law.

A person can both stick more or less fiercely to regulations and norms and tend to more or less selfish behaviour. I do not really like to do business with people who are very strongly committed to rules and regulations because if rules do not fit the particular case, there is no way that something can be dealt with in a responsible manner. If the contract says something, these people follow it regardless of whether it is appropriate or not.

However, if these people also tend to act opportunistically it is my idea of interactional hell. It is the opportunism that makes it really problematic. Even if they do not stick fiercely to rules and regulations, the tendency to opportunistic, selfish behaviour makes it difficult for me to interact with them. Of course, I love to deal with flexible and ethically sound people, but this might be to do with the construction industry I work in. In the retail business, many issues are clear-cut. It often boils down to one question: 'This is the goods or service, and that is the price. Do you want it?'

My industry is far more ambiguous. Often project files lack important specifications for a variety of reasons (people involved, longevity of projects, changes in regulations and demands etc.) These things change during the construction process. I have not seen a single building that was built as it was initially planned. There are changes everywhere.

Given this ambiguity, there is a lot of room for discretion. On building sites and in project teams I enjoy people who are flexible because we can advance the project by moving beyond rules, but it has to be coupled with a good portion of Lévinasian responsibility. When the person I interact with assumes the responsibility that is opened up by dismantling concepts (rules and regulations) (Derrida, 1992), then it works fine for me. But if not, as in the case of the architect and client shifting responsibility to me (Grosse, 2015a), it frustrates and angers me.

I may be inclined to look in the first place for people with the fitting moral attitude. Whether they are flexible with regard to rules and regulations is not that important. I can at least count on them to follow some (even inappropriate) rule. I may not like it but at least it is predictable.

To make a partnership successful – business or otherwise – it is most important to find the person or people that have the most suitable balance between being moral and being rational. For one person it might be best to work with one who does exactly what is written in the guideline, rule or law and very seldom deviates. For others, it might be best to have

one person at hand that does what it is best for the purpose or the particular situation regardless of what the contract says.

The new Bricklayer

Some years ago, I hired a new bricklayer. As it turned out, he was well qualified and skilful. After around a year I promoted him to be foreman. We talked through the project I had assigned him on and discussed a number of details. At some point, the question of who may order the material from the supplier came up. I said to him "you do!"

He was surprised. He told me that in the firm he worked for before, he never did that. It was always the boss's task. The boss wanted to be in control. However, I replied, that I think he knows best when and how much material is needed. If he had any questions, he could, of course, approach me.

I think this shows two quite contrary approaches to management. I trusted the foreman and did not control him. However, his former employer felt the need to control. In a later conversation the foreman told me that his former employer made all the arrangements so that he knew exactly when the reinforcement, the concrete, and the bricks would arrive on site – even four weeks in advance.

I may assume that the employer did not feel comfortable to trust his employees and so controlled them to a great extent. I felt quite happy to leave a lot of decisions with my foremen because I believed they would do their best. Therefore, I need people around me that have this attitude and who assume responsibility without explicit commitment. I am there for them (or at least I try to be) and I believe that they are there for me.

Giving them power is essentially what Lévinas says when he mentions the implicit command [see 'Rational versus Responsible' p. 171] "[T]he command I receive must also be a command to command him who commands me." (Lévinas, 1954, p. 43) Leaving these

discretionary powers with my employees is a way of inviting them to use these powers responsibly. It is an implicitly communicated expectation.

In some respect I have the opportunity to choose the staff members with whom I work. This is also the case regarding my clients and partners, yet I cannot always choose with whom I am going to work, nor do I know enough beforehand to make an informed choice. Sometimes it turns out that the person I thought of as being very moral is very selfish and does not regard morality as a high value. A person may even seek to give the impression of being moral although they are not. How do I deal with them? On the one hand, I could try to adapt and be selfish as well but that can lead to a downward spiral – a vicious circle of atrocities and counter-atrocities. On the other hand, sticking to my moral values can leave me vulnerable and make the situation much worse for me. The problem I describe here (trust and vulnerability) is difficult or impossible to resolve. However, I have to deal with the dilemma because I cannot solve or avoid it.

Forget about Control

In the previous chapter, I sought to understand my own experiences and I tried to find the traces of Lévinas' ideas in my business practice. As the aim of this investigation suggests, I predominantly dealt with concepts surrounding trust and trust itself. I have argued that trust should be understood as what Lévinas calls 'Saying' – an ethical response to the Other. The difficulty is that ontological thinking about trust is rendered extremely difficult by this understanding, if not impossible.

But when trust is intangible in a classic sense and very elusive, it is not measurable. We only see the effect of trust on us rather than what trust is itself. I may develop a trusting relationship in the same way I develop a way to dance with a partner. We can account for the comfort we experience in such a relationship; we can account for the joy we experience

in interacting with someone we trust - at least I can. But it is impossible to pin trust down or to hold trust itself.

I wonder why I struggle to find any structure in all the writing I did. Trust seemed so tangible when I wrote about it as Saying. I had the knowledge, the Same, my concepts and categories - I had ethics, the inexhaustible spring of Saying, caring and trusting. But I live between those two poles. Neither pure Saying nor pure Said are achievable. Both disrupt the other and therefore form a relationship with each other.

Trust is therefore related to knowledge. My foreman in the 'The Cracks' example [p. 109] only acted ethically because he knew, and the architect only appreciated our approach because he knew and he only trusted us because he thought we knew. It is this recurrence that haunts me. The Said and the Saying are permanently recurring. This constant movement between the two makes it terribly difficult to deal intellectually with trust as Saying. I can say it, but when I write my thoughts down or when I show you the Said, you might not see it any better than I.

It is difficult to draw any conclusions on how to build trust. Should we be ethical, care for the Other or try not to be too hard? I am talking about something one cannot learn from a textbook. It is not as simple as, do this and not that and then others will trust you. We are given advice like this all the time. For example, I recently heard Paul Zak giving a keynote at the FINT workshop in Dublin (November 2016) and he measured what to do to make others trust you.

One of his claims was caring for others makes them trust you. I would agree that care plays a major role when one wants to be trusted but as e.g. Baier (1986) emphasised, care must be fine-tuned. The right amount of care might lead to trust from the Other but intrusive care or a disrespect of privacy can result in the opposite. It is only by responding to the Other that we may find the right ways to care for him. But it is still impossible to measure this very

subjective appropriateness. It would mean measuring the Other's alterity and that would amount to gauging infinity.

For advice to help it must be of a different sort. It should be more about a general attitude than concrete action. I know that I am moving in a direction which is not well regarded in managerial science as managers want to know about best practice and how things have to be done. But this is not what I can offer. I can only advise myself to be deeply reflexive.

The thing I can suggest is to question yourself. I am the only person that I can change. It is caring for the Other which makes them trust me and this caring must always be directed towards the Other. Care because the Other is there and not because of me and care for the Other on the Other's terms, not on my terms. It is the turning to the Other that Pillow (2003) emphasises but in a way that hurts; turning to the Other until I am exhausted.

And this care is for the Other's sake and not mine. I should not care for the Other because I want to be trusted but because of the Other's wellbeing, not mine and not because I want him to trust me. This may come or may not but it is very likely that when I only care for Others because of selfish interest –the selfish interest of being trusted – it will lead me nowhere. I cannot demand trust. The Other has no means to will to trust me (Baier, 1986). My demand would, therefore, be meaningless.

Because it is only the Other that concerns me, I must forgive him. This is what Lévinas calls 'substitution' – me for the Other. 'Apres Vous' – after you. Hence, being upset or being angry and unforgiving would render my efforts to care for the Other impossible. Forgiving is the very act of putting the Other before me. Forgiving makes me less important than the Other.

This conception is in strong contrast to that of trust as a means to achieve something. For instance, Paul Zak stressed in the keynote on the FINT Workshop that trust is an outcome of an equation. And he made the point that trust serves as a means to an end, i.e. if your staff trusts you, they will work harder for you. However, for me trust is a value in itself. It is a

value that my care for others has rewards and as long as I am in the position to trust, I should do so.

It might even be worth enduring the trust-vulnerability-dilemma I discussed at the end of the last sub-section. Perhaps, trust is the anti-concept to the continual optimisation of our society and business life in particular. It relates to Peperzak's (2013) observation that we miss an important point of sociality if we only insist on rationality. Being kind to others brings the reward of being trusted and trust rewards us perhaps with reciprocal trust but also economically. We might get back what we spend.

This sounds altruistic and it is to some extent. I should be good to people as long as I can and although I cannot get guarantee it, I am likely to be repaid. Acting ethically costs money but acting unethically has a personal cost that cannot be measured in any currency. Being ethical is rewarded by being trusted. This is a value in itself, and it creates real benefits in the ontological sense.

One may argue that a lot of people behave untrustworthily and make a lot of money from doing it. But I would not be able to look in the mirror if I considered myself to be extensively exploiting others. This attitude is not uncommon among my business partners and friends working in different industries. Yet all struggle with a similar problem: the issue of finding a balance between altruism and selfishness. If in doubt, I tend to choose altruism.

However, I should clarify that given that I run my own business in a western society, I am not in the position to regard myself as an altruist. Of course, I exploit people, perhaps not the ones close to me, but I have to admit that the life I live is based on exploitation. It is exploitation not through my own hands but numerous proxies. However, I try to make at least a small difference.

Trust to my understanding is the anti-concept to modern management. Managers are asked to control things. To control is to check, to verify, test facts, etc. It is knowledge about processes, people, groups, etc. but it also means to steer and to be in control of the process,

the people, the group, even the whole organisation. But I think we are well advised to drop that thought as it only leads to disappointment.

The German translation of ‘to disappoint’ is ‘enttäuschen’. It is a composite word. I translate ‘ent’- as ‘de-’, ‘dis-’, or ‘un-’ i.e. to reverse or better to undo something done before and ‘täuschen’ as ‘deceive’, ‘delude’, ‘fool’ or ‘cheat’. The word predominantly refers to myself. I delude myself with the belief I can control things, people or organisations. I am supposed to reverse this belief and ‘entäuschen’ (de-fool) myself. I must abandon the belief. At first sight it seems as if it would be nice if I could control, but only from my selfish perspective and on a limited scale.

I am far too limited to understand enough. However, I have dwelled on that to show that trust is necessary and here I dwell on it again. I am not in the position to take such a huge responsibility. I could not do justice to everyone I control since I am simply too stupid to understand enough. Better I let them decide for themselves. I cannot understand what their needs and desires are and I cannot feel their feelings or think their thoughts. The Others are just that - not me. Therefore I cannot subdue them under my totality. To believe I could control or steer them in a responsible way would just be foolish.

Secondly, if I claimed that right for me, how could I prevent someone else claiming the same right for himself? When I seek absolute control, others might seek absolute control too. I have two options; either to fight for the upper hand and we submerge ourselves in a devastating battle or to simply surrender. In other words, either I engage in a fierce battle which with all likelihood causes more harm than gain on all sides or I give myself up entirely.

Therefore, I think we have to let go of the idea of controlling people and should aim instead for management of care (Weir, 2011). I refer to management in its widest sense. In some respect, I manage not only my staff, subcontractors, and suppliers but also my business partners and clients as I want all of them to do something for me. I want my staff to work for me, my suppliers and subcontractors to deliver goods and services, the engineers and

architects to design buildings and help me to get contracts, and the clients to treat me fairly and pay their bills. All of them want something in exchange.

And it always goes beyond what I wanted beforehand as I want and need more than I knew before. Opportunities for business are not created by controlling but where control is missing. The very development which is stifled by crystal, needs steam that is not controlled (Weick, 2006). This is Barbalet's creative power of trust (Barbalet (2009).

I reconnect this creativity to Lévinas' notion of Saying. It is the Saying that creates and produces and not the Said. The Said is stiff, breathless, and dead. It rests in its totality. If I could control others completely, I would rest in my own totality and not move anymore; I could not create and more importantly the others I control would not create either. This would be a very bleak prospect.

I need the Saying to escape this destructive totality. I need to break out constantly to create and produce and, more importantly, I need the Others to produce and create. Again, I am moving between the two extremes of Said and Saying. Pure Said is totality, or to Weick (2006), stifling crystal, and pure Saying would be total chaos because it lacks all structures – like Weick's steam.

If I seek limited control, I reduce risks although I must be aware that I will never eliminate risk, i.e. vulnerability. The setbacks I encounter are inevitable, but it is about moving on. It would be counterproductive to seek to eliminate them and it is dangerous to embark on a failure avoidance strategy since it inhibits creativity. We need to try new things or we will never discover anything. The Saying in social interaction is the source of the new and the emerging - the very creation of something.

To my understanding it is counterproductive to think about laws or rules or when to trust and when not. It results in a failure-avoidance-strategy that prevents organisation and individuals from taking risks and subsequently from taking chances, hence from striving.

To trust is to take a step in the dark – but this darkness is not necessarily negative. It is just what is beyond what I know or what I can know. Hence, I can be far more relaxed about betrayed trust because I took a chance in the lottery and I did not win. However, most of the time I will win, or I would always lose, if I did not dare to join this lottery. I could even go so far as to say I would not even be me because without trust I would not encounter Others.

Lévinas argues that we must let go to gain something. I cannot know and it is better to acknowledge that than to stubbornly and desperately seek to control and know the unknowable. This is quite different to most approaches to management, especially evidence-based management. But I would say this inability to control must be seen as positive. Otherwise there would be a single right way to manage and hence we would face the prospect of totalitarian management.

Trust and Courage

I clarified that trust is founded in the unknown. One cannot argue for or against it. Hence, to trust someone one requires courage - courage for the leap into the unknown. Without the guts to trust someone, I can go nowhere.

> *Courage is not an intellectual virtue. The meaning seems closer to self-confidence. But this also is inadequate. It is not self-confidence about one's carpentry skills. It is a confidence that an individual can do what is fine or best in difficult circumstances, that one can face a threat, be it physical or social, for the sake of a worthwhile cause. Clearly, a cause may inspire such confidence, but a positive view of one's own ability is required to act on it. (Putman, 2001, p. 464)*

A positive view of my abilities is needed to be courageous. But a positive view of his intention and moreover, his morality is necessary for the courage to trust the Other. But morality is beyond knowledge and so it becomes risky.

Still, risk is often, if not always, related to the probability of loss and has some negative connotations. I seek to avoid risk but I risk something to gain something else. I often can only gain something if I risk losing something else – be it as little as the time and effort I spend engaging with someone.

I take the chance to gain – whatever that might be – by trusting the Other I am dealing with. I give something and hope to get something back without knowing whether I get something at all and what that something might will be.

I consider trust in positive rather than negative terms - not so much as the risk of losing or getting hurt as the chance of gaining. I can then take chances and act trustingly - taking risks for the sake of getting chances. To me this is the potential benefit of acting on trust and that motivates me to be courageous and to take risks.

There are situations when my acting trustingly was perhaps misplaced. As I show in the 'Deadlines' example [see p. 189, and 'Appendix B – Experiences with Auto-Ethnography (Grosse, 2015a)' p. 289], when I sought to advance the project but my efforts were not appreciated and were instead exploited even more or when the engineer ['The Engineer' p. 62/67, and 'Appendix C – Trust and Construction Projects (Grosse, 2015b)' p. 302] did not act as we agreed on. I consider my trust as wrongly placed, at least in the former example. However, I wonder whether it was wrong to trust. Although my courage did not pay off, I would perhaps act trustingly again. If I did not, I would have closed all options to gain and would be stuck in control mechanisms. Hence, although I failed in this attempt to create a mutually beneficial situation, I may try it again and risk something more in order not to close off the possibility of gaining.

> *Courage by definition involves risk, so the confidence one has in one's skills, or abilities cannot be simply a passive confidence. It must be confidence that includes extending oneself in an effective manner. (Putman, 2001, p. 465)*

The actions which result from trusting tempt me to link courage to trust. It is the courage that leads to an extension of oneself. I would like to connect this back to Peperzak's (2013) notion that when I trust someone, I extend myself through the other and the trust lets me become one with the other. Together we are bigger than the sum of our parts. Courage is necessary because to extend I have to give up something of myself. I also find this in Lingis:

> *Courage and trust have this in common: they are not attitudes with regard to images and representations. Courage is a force that can arise and hold steadfast as one's projections, expectations, and hopes dissipate. Courage rises up and takes hold and builds on itself. Trust is a force that can arise and hold on to someone whose motivations are as unknown as those of death. It takes courage to trust someone you do not know. There is an exhilaration in trusting that builds on itself. One really cannot separate in this exhilaration the force of trust and the force of courage. (Lingis, 2004, p. xi)*

To me, the courage involved in trusting is what makes me an entrepreneur. The strength I show when I trust another is what makes me powerful. But it is a strength not in the sense of being in control of everything but of having the courage to act, even if the control is absent. One may understand it as a weakness when I retreat to some impersonal rules or control mechanism.

It is this doubling of responsibility and trust that makes me consider it as so important. 'Entrepreneur' translates in German as 'Unternehmer' – literally, 'undertaker'. When I look up 'undertake' in dictionaries, I find the following notions: 'commit oneself to and begin (an enterprise or responsibility)', 'promise to do a particular thing' (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016b), or 'to take upon oneself', 'to put oneself under obligation to perform' (Merriam-Webster Dictionaries, 2016b). All the entries suggest that the entrepreneur undertakes something. I put myself under some commitment, promise, obligation, or responsibility.

The core of my entrepreneurship is taking on the obligations I can handle, making reasonable promises, committing myself to a certain goal and being held accountable for my deeds and yet remaining responsible.

The Price of Morality

Does it cost money to be moral? In the short term, it seems so. I saw this in the example of my business partner selling repair kits rather than new products to make customers come back [‘Acting Ethically Costs Money’ p. 151]. The two problems are assessing the initial question of whether acting ethically costs money or it pays off, financially. My business partner chose the ethical option so I cannot know whether the clients would have bought the new product and can only assume they would have done. This was what he supposed but I do not know whether being treated fairly was the reason they came back for their next. I can only assume.

Would I go to a place where I felt treated unfairly, exploited, or badly counselled? I would only do so if I had no other choice, but my business partner’s clients had other choices. Is it useful to think about business ethics in terms of return on investment? I may be able, at least in theory, to track cause and effect of the particular action. Because my foreman spoke out about ‘The Cracks’ [p. 109] in the column, the architect could choose whether to use us for his next project, and he did. But I am relating effects and symptoms. Speaking out was only the manifestation of our inner urge to treat him fairly. Speaking out was the symptom but not the urge itself. Or in Lévinas’ terms, the Said is measurable, countable, ontologically valid, the essential message and the signifier – but our Saying is not, it was the inner force that made us expose our thinking, it was this feeling that ‘there has to be done something.’ The Saying only left its traces – in this case what we said about the cracks. The ethical is Saying – signifying – and therefore not measurable.

Furthermore, can we identify an ethical way of acting? It is problematic since I have no criteria to judge ethical behaviour. Ethics is what happens before theories (Caputo, 2000). It looks arbitrary, but it is not. The demand is spelt out by the Other when I encounter that person - the Other's face.

Again, I am responsible for the Other, but I cannot claim anything. This was very much the case with my business partner's clients and also with my clients and architects – I feel responsible for them, but they are not obliged to respond to me. It is nice if they do and come back to do business with me but I have no right to claim it. It is their choice.

I try to employ ethical behaviour to be regarded as a fair partner and it is important to me to give this impression. For further discussion of this [see 'Appendix E – An Insider's Point of View (Grosse, 2016a)' p. 333 and 'Appendix J – An insider's point of view (Grosse, 2018)' p. 384]. It is important to me as I want my business partners to regard me as a fair and to be trusted by them. I do my very best not to disappoint them and most of the time I believe I am successful. However, as in the case with the architect of my paper mentioned above, I realise how hard it is for me to discover that others do not trust me or think I am acting unethically.

I believe that people do business with me because they know that I seek to act ethically and am reluctant to exploit others. Some may think I am a fool; why should one be ethical in a world of selfish people? But looking at the long-term implications, it seems that this perspective is flawed. I would not be able to do business and would act purely by selfish considerations. I would ruin the relationships with my business partners one after the other.

In the example of the wrong concrete [see 'Wrong Concrete' p. 166], if I had not highlighted the importance of our relationship, we would have ended in bitter litigation. But working together to keep the costs down for one of us helped. I seek to act morally sound and ethically whether or not I succeed or am perceived as doing so.

To me, economic success is only one goal. But I do not seek to achieve this goal by any means. I can act selfishly as I have to care for myself and cannot just care for everybody else. That would be self-sacrifice which is not what I am about. However, I could never act purely selfishly and so I never make an inappropriately high profit.

This is the dilemma I am in. The problem is to permanently strike a balance between being ought to do something and making money. I want to live a decent life, I want to spend some money on my kids and partner and I want to have a bit of luxury.

Reflexivity makes this terribly hard. I know that every personal gain I make takes something away from someone else. Claiming anything else is denial. So, compared to many others, I live in a very luxurious world. There are people next door earning far less than I do, not to mention others in poorer countries. But I could also compare myself to people that earn more than I do - it sometimes looks as if there is an almost infinite number of them.

If ethical behaviour is a means to earn more money, it is not ethical anymore. The ethical must come from itself not from the drive to earn money. I want to do something good regardless of the consequences for me. I want to do good because of the good itself. It just feels good and it gives me some comfort.

By solving the problem of the wrong concrete, I was acting in a way that was beneficial to me, but to be ethical, this must not be the reason for doing so. The personal benefit should be a side-effect because trusting others must not be motivated by the wish for being trusted. It must be sufficient to itself - I trust you, and I don’t care whether you trust me or not. It is your business.

I act trustworthily because I believe that it is a good thing to do. This is Saying in its essence - making oneself vulnerable without retreat. There is nothing behind Saying. If there is, it is not Saying and not trusting.

Forgiveness

"Here we have a reversal of obligation. It is the offended party who worries about forgiveness that the offender does not concern himself with. […] the offended party walks back and forth in front of the offender to give him an opportunity to ask for forgiveness." (Lévinas, 1968; 1977, p. 22)

Baier (1986, p. 238) writes, "[i]n any case of a questionable exercise of discretion there will be room both for forgiveness of unfortunate outcomes and for tact in the treatment of the question of whether there is anything to forgive." (p.238). I think that forgiveness plays a major role for two reasons. First, forgiveness is directed towards the Other. I think myself in the situation of the trusted having done something which the one trusting me does not appreciate. If the trusting now blames me adamantly and makes me accountable for all the consequences of my deeds, I cannot take on any slightly ambiguously defined task from this person because I run the risk of being blamed again for any slight deviation from their expectation.

This reminds me of a conversation with a friend. He supervises a couple of staff members in his department. When he ran into an overflow of work, I told him he should delegate more to his staff. He replied that if he did so it would take him almost the same amount of time to supervise than to do the things by himself. I argued that he would teach his staff and develop their skills, and after a while he might get something very close to what he expected. This would be 'good enough' and he would win a lot of time for more important things.

The notion of 'good enough' is to me a practical translation of forgiveness. If it works why should I strive for something close to perfection? Perhaps even more importantly, I have to stress the Other's otherness again. It is this deviation from my Same, from what I expect that resembles the creative power of the Other.

The second aspect of forgiveness is no less important. We often stand in the way of ourselves. In some sense, I have to make peace with the Other. Forgiveness helps me to calm down. When I presented *Experiences with Auto-Ethnography* at the Ethnography Symposium (Grosse, 2015a), I talked extensively about how I tried to cope with the strong emotions resulting from a breach of trust. One person from the audience asked what it would mean to me to forgive them. Actually, it did not matter to the person who I believed had exploited my trust. They did not care whether I was angry with them or not, but it mattered very much to me. I felt no more need to be 'violent' against them and the whole paralysis of overwhelming strong emotions resolved. It was a process rather than an immediate switching off but slowly I let go of the feelings. I am still angry and sad about how they treated me but it is different; I learned to cope with it. It is what Ellis (2004, p. 19) described when saying autoethnography "helped me organise my life, figure out what was going on, and then put away events and feelings to deal with what happened next." I would not trust these people regarding my business interests and I would be very careful in how to deal with them to safeguard my position. But there is a relief that comes with forgiving and I stopped thinking about how to take revenge.

To forgive others who treat me badly is the first step in taking responsibility for them. What they do to me is their affair (Lévinas, 1982) but what I do about them is my responsibility and this responsibility for my perpetrators (Lévinas, 1961), if I may call them this, begins with forgiving them. It may be the smallest incident, such as my neighbour forgetting to water my plants, or as for Lévinas, forgiving Germans for what they have done to the Jews (Lévinas, 1968; 1977, p. 25).

In the Nine Talmudic Writings Lévinas stresses the notion of forgiveness and aggression. "The aggressiveness of the offender is perhaps his very unconsciousness. Aggression is the lack of attention par excellence." (Lévinas, 1968; 1977, p. 25) My lack of attention was to some extent resolved by the comment, I got during this conference. "Why don't you forgive

them?" This helped to resolve my aggression against them as I became conscious of how meaningless this aggression is. I know that I am turning Lévinas' argument in the opposite direction – from the view of the offender to the view of the offended. However, when I am aggressive, I become an offender too. But more importantly, to Lévinas, it is always my responsibility and not the Other's. Hence, I must contemplate what I can do and not what the Other could do. Some lines further Lévinas dwells further on this thought:

> *But perhaps there is something altogether different in all this. One can, if pressed to the limit, forgive the one who has spoken unconsciously. (Lévinas, 1968; 1977, p. 25)*

I had not read this piece by the time I began to forgive them but believing that they spoke unconsciously made it possible for me to forgive them. They should have known that it was unfair when they shifted the whole accountability to me. But it is my standards and my thinking that this is unfair. They might have though it is the way one does business and it is just sport to trick the other. Or they may have some other explanation to justify what they did. I have to let the Other be in his alterity and to deal with it. I am responsible and I have to make choices. Whether I act on my trust in them or not is my affair.

Without this aggression, I could 'talk to them', as my business partner advised me and keep the conversation running. It is hard to think in this way when feelings are hurt, but it is utterly pragmatic. I may even be able to rebuild a relationship after a perceived breach of trust. In German we call this 'jumping over one's own shadow' - to do a seemingly impossible thing or to be 'untrue' to oneself (Watzlawick, 1983). It is to abandon thinking of wrongs and rights and to think the situation is as it is so let's make the best of it.

Care

Weir (2011) refers to Lévinas' notion of the infinite responsibility yet, he emphasises the shared responsibility in the finance business in Arab countries. He points out that there is no fixed interest rate and that the lender has to adjust his interest to the borrower's capabilities.

This has some similarities to my business experiences. Years ago, I had difficulty paying certain bills on time, yet some partners allowed for a delay. I was left with the impression that each one cares for one another, at least to some extent. In this environment, one can rest assured that when business goes wrong, others help out.

I have done similar things in my business and had good experiences with it:

The Cooperative

We worked on a social housing project. The owners of the estate, a five-floor building in Berlin with space for some 20 families, was a cooperative. The ones who wanted to live in this house were obliged to be members of this cooperative and did not actually own one flat but rather the right to live in one for rather low rent. Hence, they had shared responsibilities and some advantages. Apart from that, they had to do quite a lot of building work by themselves to keep the cost of constructing the buildings low.

When we came to the end of the project, it turned out that we had to charge them more than our initial quotation included, since we had to do more work than initially thought.

We sent the architect we worked before our final bill, and he gave his approval. But then the money did not come. We had sent them a couple of bills before, and they never paid late. So, I was a bit surprised. One day I called the architect because he had close ties to the cooperative and asked why they did not pay.

The problem it turned out was that they ran out of money. The architect recommended to call the cooperative directly and gave me the number of the accountant.

I did call. The accountant quite frankly admitted that they were short of money and that she could not pay.

One has to know that the families living in the house are low middle class - not really poor and in need but also by far not in the position to buy a detached house in Berlin's surroundings. They are working class. They can afford to pay the monthly rent and may have paid some to the cooperative. But apart from that their financial situation appears to be strained.

During the phone call, I raised that there is a monthly income on the side of the cooperative - the rents will come each month. So, I suggested that we find an agreement where each month a small amount of money is paid, and I offered them a very low interest. She discussed it with the board of the cooperative, and they agreed to my proposal.

Of course, I could have insisted on my right to get paid immediately. But at this moment that seemed not fair to me. No question, I wanted to get my money. But I did not need it immediately at that time. So why should I 'point a gun at their chest?' I got my money with quite some delay, on top of some interest, and they were happy too.

They did not really ask me to give something but I would have caused them a lot of trouble if I had insisted on immediate payment. So, they asked whether I could help them to solve their problem. I am not sure whether it was to do with the repeated phone calls and the pleasant atmosphere between the accountant and me. It was not some far-off corporation or faceless client I had to litigate but people with a phone number I knew, with a voice I heard

and with a face I had met. This was not only true for the accountant but also for a number of the cooperative members. I had seen them working and had a beer and a grilled sausage with them at small events on the building site. They had a face that I had I encountered and that is the very moment they dissolved an indistinguishable mass of masks in the distance, to use Bauman's (2008) terminology, and became faces in my proximity.

It was this proximity that made the difference. I dealt with real people and if I had pushed through and claimed immediate payment they would have suffered. I would have been violent to the guy at the barbecue, to the one who collected the rubbish on the building site, and to the accountant I had had a nice chat with. I was not able to do that.

It would have been different if I were under financial constraints. If I had had no money in my bank account and a pile of bills to pay, I would not have been so generous. I would have pushed harder to get my money faster. The question is, how hard would I have pushed? I think I would have looked at other options. From whom can I demand what? How hard can I be to one business partner in comparison to another?

It is here that Derrida (1992) comes into play. I have to make a judgement. Lévinas says that we are infinitely responsible towards the other and we are violent when we compare the two others but we must. We have to take ourselves into consideration and satisfy our basic needs or we cannot give. In this tension between multiple poles, we are entangled and have to weigh them. We cannot make a perfect a just decision, Derrida tells us, but we have to try.

In this case it was very easy and also very enjoyable. I had enough money and did not have to fight with people I liked. I could do them a favour. But there are many situations when it is not that easy. There had been times when I had struggled to make ends meet, when I paid my own salary late and when I could not pay my bills on time. Then it becomes a question of who will survive. This very tough and I wonder where the ethical is found in such situations. When I offered the 'loan' to the cooperative, they could not pay the bill. What

should I have done? Should I have said, ‘that's your business, not mine’? I do not think so. It would have ended in litigation and a ruined relationship. I would not have been accountable since it was not my fault that the cost overran the budget but I could not have denied my ultimate responsibility. Hence, I would do the same again if it was in my power to do so.

Four Dimensions: Trust and Control, Responsibility and Forgiveness

I choose not to control and I stop attempting to do so. I cannot control, and I should not control as I have demonstrated. I must trust others, and I should trust them. When I do so as a business leader, as an ‘Unternehmer’, I let the Other do things her or his own way. That might be different from the way I would have done it but it might be beneficial or even creative. If I do not let them do it would just be done as it always were without creativity and without additional benefit.

It is then that I am not so much the ultimate leader but the coach, mediator, consultant, or carer. It is not that I say how things should be done but rather that I offer help and perhaps some guidance. But still, I take responsibility by caring for the things. Again, to take the quote Lévinas himself likes so much from the Brothers Karamazov, *“We are all responsible for all for all men before all, and I more than all the others.”*

Through my years in business I came to a similar conclusion myself. Often I say to myself: *“The only one who can change things here [in my business or my life] actively is me. Don’t wait for anybody to come and do things. It’s just you.”* Lévinas’ interpretation of Dostoyevsky goes even further. It is not only me who can do things, and it is me who should do things, but it is me who is to blame for everything. To Lévinas there is no point in blaming others. We are even responsible for our perpetrators (Lévinas, 1961).

In extreme terms, I can apply this to the situation of when the client and his architect made me accountable for a lower quality than we had previously agreed on (Grosse, 2015a). Why

did I let myself be in this position? Why was I angry about what they did? Shouldn't I have been aware of that very possibility? There is a shifting responsibility for what happened to me that may seem to overwhelm me. But at the same time, it opens the possibility to forgive them. It might be their action and their responsibility but it is their 'affair' (Lévinas, 1982) and not mine. I cannot demand them to treat me in a particular way I can only change things myself. It is all up to me, and I am ultimately responsible.

To cope with the overwhelming nature of this responsibility I just need to be conscious that I cannot solve the dilemma as it is always too much to cope with. However, I have the means to forgive myself. This is Lévinas' central message; I am not in the world towards death, but I am in the world for the Others (Large, 2015). Whatever way the Others approach me and however they treat me, I am supposed to surrender to them. I have to get along with them even if this means 'comparing people' or includes harsh decisions.

I may consciously break trust when my calculation tells me to do so. And I may be wrong because my Said - what I comprehend - is limited. I make a decision which I know can be wrong. When Lévinas talks about the terrible task of comparing people (Wright et al., 1988) this is the terrible part of that comparison. The decision is actually wrong – at least for the Other. Because it must be wrong for the Other who understands the world differently from me. It is bound to be wrong decision for someone. I have decided to be with the Other and not with the Third, who is another Other.

Yet, I must forgive myself for this wrongdoing because I know I cannot avoid it. This is the terrible dilemma I am in. But it is a good thing to be haunted by this dilemma. I have to consider, to contemplate and to be sceptical. I must not stop in my efforts towards the Other and I must seek justice.

I am trapped between trust and control, between responding to the Other and translating the Other and between Saying and Said. It is forgiving Others and myself which makes the dilemma liveable and saves me from being overwhelmed.

Reflections about Otherness

Weir (2011) picks up the notion of the Other and urges the reader to respect their otherness. But to me, it is not just about respect for the Other's otherness. It is also valuing the Other's alterity - both practically and spiritually.

I have dwelled on the spiritual notion of alterity already which make it possible to me that I am. It is the spiritual encounter with the Other that makes my selfhood possible. But there is also a practical side to the alterity of the Other.

The alterity which Lévinas talks about is not connected to special traits, personal features, abilities, etc. It is just about being someone else. But this being someone else gives the other different insights, different knowledge and different thoughts about the world. It is here that people who think differently about a problem come up with different solutions than I would. These alternative solutions may have great value for me and it is this rearranging, reinventing and approaching things differently which makes creativity possible.

Let us look again at the last example of my bricklayer foreman. How could I know better than him what goes on at the building site? He had much more experience than I did and could far better estimate when the work would be done and when they needed certain materials and how much of them.

Controlling him, stripping him of his alterity or not leaving him the space to flourish would have robbed me of many opportunities. He could contribute to the process not only through his physical labour but also through his thoughts and opinions.

VII. Reflections on my Research Journey

Research in general is a practice and therefore, a process (Sergi & Hallin, 2011). This is even more important when talking about qualitative research and especially autoethnographic and practitioner research. The researcher is implicated so much in the research product (Bochner & Ellis, 2016) and vice versa and so one has to look at the development of my thoughts and their implications in my research 'products'. To reflect on the process, it helps to look at the whole journey and remember where one started. To do this, I began rereading my initial research proposal and went through the papers I gave on conference and workshops.

My initial research proposal was formulated in 2012. Apart from my naïve optimism about the time needed to prepare the thesis – I thought I could submit in 2015 – I am astonished by the development in my thinking since then. It actually felt strange to re-read it – as if the author of this piece was another me.

The proposal from 2012 demonstrates a prevalent thinking that I find particularly bewildering today. I wanted to look at a 'typology of negotiation styles' and establish an 'influence of these styles on the outcomes' of the negotiations. Furthermore, I wanted to research and look at the long-long term consequences. One particular question I raised makes me uncomfortable today: 'Is there a correlation between success and negotiation style?'

This way of thinking about my business and about research is the point of departure in my research journey. I was thinking in terms of definitive relations. In other words, I wanted to find the right negotiation style to build long-lasting business relations. I was convinced that such relationships are the best alternative to develop a sustainable business. My research was supposed to 'prove' such correlations. But this was never going to happen, and I learned something completely different.

The first thing I bring to mind when thinking about my research is 'serendipity'. I would be lying If I claimed that my research was well planned and executed accordingly. I did not

even plan to do a PhD in the first place and certainly did not stick to a well-considered and defined plan. Instead, I moved around accidentally and learned from what I came across. In some way that is the sense of significance an ethnographer needs (Emerson et al., 2011). I happened to notice an advertisement for my university in the Berlin metro (Grosse, 2017b). This brought me to the program in the first place. I then followed a suggestion of a senior lecturer to think about autoethnographic research and I followed Edward's advice to read Lévinas. Skimming through the mailings from our research department, I applied to conferences which sounded interesting to attend etc. However, once I embarked on one or the other idea, I did so with considerable commitment.

These unplanned twists and turns are both the main assets and difficulties in my thesis. They are assets because I would not have learnt what I did if I had planned for everything. But it was problematic to deal with so many different topics, including autoethnography, phenomenology, construction management, and trust, to name just a few. Working on one theme influenced my thinking about the others. It is therefore challenging to summarise my thoughts on each theme because I cannot discuss one without mentioning the others.

It is important to reflect on my papers and the process I went through as I worked on them. These reflections are an effort to critique my own work. I wrote them in the winter of 2017/2018 while revising the main body of the thesis and the "Reflections" chapter. The journey (to use this metaphor for the development I went through) is not so evident in the thesis itself as it is blurred over by numerous revisions. However, the development of thought can be seen within the conference papers I gave during the journey. Each paper depicts my thoughts during the time it was written. Therefore, I offer my reflections on these papers and try to show how the understandings made their way into the thesis. To make a clearer distinction, the reflections on the papers are printed in italics, whereas my thoughts on the thesis are printed in standard letters.

I still wonder whether the preparation of the paper for the conferences or the presentation of the talk itself had the greater benefit. Much of the brainwork goes into writing the paper and preparing the talk, sometimes accompanied by a rigorous review process, yet the feedback and the conversation with likeminded and un-likeminded colleagues is also very useful. However, as writing papers and going to conferences belong inextricably together, I leave the question of which part is more beneficial unanswered.

I try to show how my thinking developed over time with the earlier papers. It is quite easy to demonstrate how different I understand things now than I did years ago. However, with the later papers it is the more "serious business" (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 75) of deconstructing my writing and opening up my thoughts. I try to find breaks and fissures to add complexity and do a 'second' reading to find questions previously overlooked.

I would like to try to categorise the papers. There are those on negotiations and trust (Grosse, 2014, 2015b, 2016b, 2017a) and those on autoethnography (Grosse, 2015a, 2016a, 2017b, 2017c). If asked to judge them I would argue that my knowledge (and skills) in methodological issues are stronger than the knowledge about trust. My engagement with methodology certainly led to a stronger interest in philosophical questions. This ultimately guided me on the postmodernist plane. However, it also created a feeling of unease with quantitative research. This led to me speedreading quantitative research on trust and negotiations. Speed reading means thoroughly reading the introduction (because it is often very inspiring), skimming the methods and data collection sections (because I was very critical of them) and again reading with interest the findings (but with a fair amount of scepticism). Often, I said to myself 'Interesting thought, but you would not ask this question quantitively!'

On the one hand, I have to say that this lack of interest in quantitative research on trust – perhaps even a disregard for it – is a weakness in my research. But on the other hand, my thoughts about Lévinas and trust dismiss a quantification of trust. If trust is beyond being

and ontology, how could one attempt to give it a figure to it? Certainly, one strength of this work is a different methodological approach and the strong incorporation of philosophy. It sheds light on the issue of trust from a particular standpoint and inevitably does not account for a quantitative researcher's view on trust.

The papers are sorted according to their publication date. This way one can see how I developed my thoughts both on autoethnography and trust. The development happened almost in parallel as I was often working on two papers at the same time. The mutually fertilising effects surface at some points in the papers but more importantly perhaps took place in my thinking.

Therefore, I turn to the next section of the conference papers I gave during my journey. In between the reflections on the papers itself, I summarise their contribution to the thesis and highlight the insights gained during the respective period. Towards the end of this chapter, I highlight my findings and discuss what may follow from my study.

Where did I come from and where did I arrive?

Perhaps, as I suggested in the introduction, the ethnographic journey began much earlier than this piece of writing might suggest. More than ten years ago I followed my friend Theo's advice, and began taking personal coaching sessions once a month. I had the feeling I could no longer cope with the demands of my job. In some respects, this was the first step to becoming an autoethnographer.

In these coaching sessions, the coach and I often dealt with relations between me others. I had to ask myself what others may think, feel, or experience. I had to step into their shoes and look at myself. Only when I embarked on the autoethnographic journey did I learn how helpful this reflection on practice would be for the researcher I was about to become. Thinking about the impact of these sessions and the conversations with Theo, I would even

go so far as to claim, that without him and the coaching sessions I would not have come to write this piece.

During the first year of my PhD program, a senior lecturer asked whether I had ever considered doing autoethnography. In the paper, for the FINT doctoral workshop in Coventry, I developed this argument further and made a case for researching trust using autoethnography.

Reflecting on: Trust in Negotiations: An Auto-Ethnographic Approach (Grosse, 2014)

Within this paper, I see the movement away from positivist thinking. However, in the opening paragraphs, I still pursue the idea to negotiate "optimal outcomes" or reconcile interest in "optimal way" [p. 277]. Given my understanding now, it is not about 'optimal' outcomes, solutions, or practices. 'Optimal' refers to a single perspective. I can seek the highest profit, the maximum gain, the least time etc.; 'optimal' is for me strongly related to differential calculus. But this thinking assumes that there is one singular truth from which I refrain now about interpersonal relations.

Some pages further [p. 281], some traces of this thinking are also to be found. In the methodology section, I talk about limiting the "influence" of "my personality". From today's perspective, the section sounds odd to me. On the on hand, I seek to limit my personality's influence – which is bracketing of critical realist orientation (Gearing, 2004) – on the other hand, I seek to make its influence explicit while acknowledging the impossibility of excluding it – which goes more into the postmodern thinking (Chiseri-Strater, 1996).

Given the ideas I held two years earlier, this is a major development in my thinking. However, for me, it was and still is difficult to abandon thinking that aims at a singular truth since I work in business and I need to judge decisions by right and wrong. That is an expectation I am constantly faced with. Staff members want to know which the right course

of action is to take. Often questions boil down to: "Shall we do it or not?" Postmodernist thinking leaves one in a permanent limbo of not knowing or better relative knowing. But a yes/no decision is absolute. Even if it is conditional, the conditions in business practice must be limited and cannot be limitless as they are within postmodern thinking.

This goes in line with the problem solving and problematizing divide between practitioners and researchers outlined by Bartunek (2007). As a researcher, I am supposed to dive deeper and deeper into my subject to know more and more about it. The aim of the researcher, especially if it is one of the qualitative sorts, is to problematise, whereas as a practitioner I often have to find a solution for the pressing problem within a short timeframe. These demands require different thinking, and it looks as if this struggle is reflected in the paragraphs of the following paper.

Looking at my thinking about trust at the time, I recognise two issues. The first is again related to the research philosophy and the practitioner thinking: I wanted to "predict" [p 283-283] the future actions of the person I am trusting. As of today, I would be very reluctant to render my research intentions this way. I would refrain from using language that is so strongly tied to law-like relations. I would instead say 'anticipate', but even this word would have a connotation related to a reasoned expectation which is difficult. Prediction looks like controlling the other person who is from an ethical standpoint strongly questionable because I deprive the Other of her or his otherness.

The other issue is the notion of 'mutual understanding'. It suggests – especially in connection with prediction – that it is, at least in principle, possible to understand another person in an unambiguous way. From today's perspective, I strongly doubt it is ever possible. Rather I translate my experiences into my own concepts of the Other which are constantly changing. Yet when the architect in the paper [p. 302] talked about "to know someone" it indicates toward a similar way of thinking: that we can form a conception of the other person – to understand him or her – and subsequently forecast this person's action.

Here the tension between Lévinas' Saying and Said becomes evident. I may form an understanding (Said) of the Other, but it will never do justice to the Other in his or her infinite otherness expressed by Saying. I still grapple with this tension between my urge to put the Other into concepts and frames and my incapability yet the undesirability to do exactly that.

Although, the thoughts were at the time very immature, the feedback was helpful. I recall, for instance, being posed with ethical concerns about the covert nature of my research which led me to think about these concerns in more depth [see 'Researching and Running My Own Business –Ethical Consideration' p. 40]. Apart from that, presenting to an audience of doctoral students and some senior researchers was an interesting and challenging experience which took away a lot of anxiety and gave me much self-confidence.

What stands out in this paper and even more in the research proposal I submitted to enrol at the university (not included here) is that at the beginning of my doctoral journey, I was very concerned with getting things right. I wanted to understand phenomena and to find solutions to the problems I encountered. I aimed to learn something about negotiation and to apply it to my practice. I had the somewhat naïve idea that doing some research would enable me to find practical solutions to the problems I encountered in my daily practice. This sort of thinking is also reflected in 'Trust and Construction Projects' (Grosse, 2015b) [see p. 302] where I seek to find a way to better understand the Other – in this case, the engineer. Yet, already in this paper my underlying problem – if I may call it a problem – begins to surface: I could not comprehend the Other but only begin to understand the Other's otherness and its consequences.

The more I delved into the subject, the more I understood that finding general solutions to negotiating problems was not going to happen. The more I studied, the more I understood that the solution to a negotiating problem would require some singular truth and to develop this one would need one axis or point of reference to which all social interactions refer. The

writings about qualitative research and postmodernism in particular clarified that such a research objective is unattainable.

During this period I first read Iser (2000) and then Berlin (2013). Although both were not directly concerned with qualitative social research and not at all with autoethnography, their understanding of reality had a huge impact on me. From Iser, I learned that the interpretation of a text cannot be finished and so the interpretation of our experiences cannot end, from Berlin I learned that the very social environment we inhabit is far too complex to be ever understood to its full extent.

Both ideas were quite disturbing for an engineer who never likes to lose control. However, they were also liberating as I realised there was no need to try as I could never achieve full control. Yet both Iser and Berlin, while acknowledging their limits, showed ways to advance their understanding of the subjects they were dealing with [see 'Understanding the Other' p. 64]. So, I proceeded not with the aim of a final understanding but of deepening insights.

In 2014 and 2015 I wrote fieldnotes on a very regular basis – almost every evening. The writing helped me to develop my thinking further and to ground it in experiences and reflections about these experiences.

The two papers that followed are products of this intense fieldnote writing. The first 'Experiences with Auto-Ethnography" (Grosse, 2015a) [see p. 289] is a reflection of difficulties in emotionally charged situations within which I felt strongly about being betrayed. In the second paper 'Trust and Construction Projects" (Grosse, 2015b) [see p. 302] I seek to analyse experiences of perceived trust breach. Needless to say, although worthwhile endeavours, they were early attempts and not well developed.

Reflecting on: Experiences with auto-ethnography – how to write when emotions run high? (Grosse, 2015a)

While re-reading the paper [see p. 289], the first thing I recalled was a reviewer's comment on the second paper (Grosse, 2015b) [see p. 302] written during this period. In

both papers, I experimented with the layered text account (Rambo Ronai, 1995). The reviewer argued that because of its structure "it is difficult to read or engage with the text." This is certainly the case for this piece. I still like the idea of a layered text since it reflects my thinking very well. It represents different angles from which I look at the phenomenon. Yet I see the difficulties in following the account, the permanent switch between perspectives and the very short thoughts make it difficult to follow. Re-reading it, I get a feeling of being lost, having too many thoughts to follow, and none of them thought through thoroughly. This makes the text of course "difficult to engage" with.

The layered text was meant to facilitate a reflexive approach. In some respects, I succeeded, but I think I failed in one major respect: I depicted myself as a victim – the poor, exploited entrepreneur. I depicted myself as powerless prey to architect and employer. That makes me sad now because there was certainly the possibility to explore my own actions and opportunities much better. The account sounds as if I were trapped in a dilemma with no possibility to escape. Even if I felt so in the very situation, I should have been able not necessarily to get out of it but at least show ways of easing the situation. Today, I would rather try to endure the situation in a stoic manner (Aurelius, 1992) and to be alert to possibilities of dealing with it. Although I used the word 'try' very consciously because of all efforts I still cannot control my thoughts and feeling in every situation, and I do not believe I ever will.

In the paper, I fail to identify my personal responsibility and therefore fail to guide a way out of the conflict. Hence, it obstructs learning for later conflicts and misses the opportunity to understand this conflict and my contribution to it better. In this respect, the paper is not sufficiently reflexive. More self-critique would certainly have meant that some strong emotions and aggression had been mitigated, in doing so I would have been able to pay more attention to my own actions and emotions and, therefore, write better fieldnotes.

Perhaps, one listener after the talk, asking me whether I had thought about forgiving them was a hint in that direction. Only years later, I understood how important forgiveness can be because I cease to be the passive victim and become an actor in the situation.

Reflecting on: Trust and Construction Projects - An Auto-Ethnographic Exploration (Grosse, 2015b)

Regarding the reviewer's comments on the layered text account, the paper is slightly better structured than the previous one (Grosse, 2015a), I dwelled slightly longer on each perspective, and it is, therefore, easier to read. This is certainly owing to the fact that I revised the first submission. Hence, editing and revising are as important as writing itself perhaps even more important (Zinsser, 2006)

Within the paper but especially within the final thoughts, I find a substantial development away from positivist thinking. I talk about the engineer's and my understanding. I developed an interest in the other's perspective and how the other's perspective reflects on me. I understood a distinction between 'right', and 'wrong' is misleading. However, I use the word 'misjudgement' which suggests there is a 'right' judgement. Here, I fell back into right-wrong schemes.

I still assume a 'knowability' of the other. As for instance, when I sought to know "who he is" and in which "context" he acted (p.1286). The thinking behind that was of a possible knowability of the other (even if only in principle). Although, I recognise that "comprehensive" understanding is in practice impossible and that understanding must be "incomplete" (p.1288) this belief in a theoretical knowability lead me to a "trust evaluation" (p.1286), something I would certainly refrain from given my current understanding. I assume a calculus-based approach to trust which I now think is misleading.

Although I understood full comprehension and complete knowledge of a person and the person's context is impossible, I did not explore the problem of knowability in more depth. I was quite comfortable with assigning it to the "changing" and "constantly evolving" nature

of the social world we live in (p.1289). Yet interestingly, in the last couple of paragraphs (1288-1289), I drew a practical lesson from it. I came to understand that "tactful action" (Van Manen, 1995, p. 7) is required to cope with the lack of understanding.

I wonder about the deeper meaning of 'acting tactfully'. At first sight, it is probably being respectful, humble, and perhaps a little reserved. It is judging out of a gut-feeling but rather taking moderate and measured but not divisive and harsh action. It is thinking that goes into the direction of Lévinas' saying (1974b), yet it falls short of acknowledging the full ethical dimension of responding to another person.

I began writing my thesis while working on these two papers. I looked for endorsement of my idea for qualitative exploration of trust and negotiations in other research and found many in favour but also a few against it. The most important issue was to identify the criteria against which my work should be evaluated. Of course, my research is not replicable and I cannot claim to have found law-like relations, a singular truth or 'the one and only' explanation. But I argue that my research is different from what is available in trust research and in construction management. Depending on how narrowly one defines the term, autoethnographic studies are rare or altogether absent in these areas. And certainly, no business owner has undertaken autoethnographic research into trust or construction management.

Uniqueness and particularity in research have both value and limitation. After a conference presentation [presenting (Grosse, 2017a) see p. 354], I was faced with the question of whether what I am doing is research or mere personal storytelling. Considering the background of the one asking the question this was a fair objection. For most researchers with an engineering background and, therefore a positivist understanding of research, an approach like autoethnography does not count as serious research. I must admit, before stating my PhD, I would have struggled to see autoethnography as serious research. Yet the research methods social and human science are often fundamentally different from research

methods in natural science and engineering. This leads to widespread objections, among researchers from different fields but especially among people unfamiliar with research because they often cling the image of a researcher in a laboratory and not someone who observes daily interactions. However, one of the reviewers of my submission to CME (Grosse, 2018) suggested I should stop defending my method and instead describe what I did.

The focus on the environment close to me and the introspection I sometimes used (Ellis, 1991), contributed immensely to my understanding of trust. While writing these two papers (Grosse, 2015a, 2015b), I formed an understanding of trust 'prior' to Lévinas [see 'Trust' p. 49]. Trust is first of all difficult to define. It coexists with control but too much control inhibits trust rather than fostering it. Yet neither full control nor complete absence of control and total trust are possible. They always get alongside each other. Control always requires knowledge about the one controlled, yet this knowledge cannot be complete. This lack of knowledge and, therefore, the inability to control, makes it necessary to trust. In turn, trust is a belief that builds on a lack of knowledge, otherwise it is not trust. Additionally, trust has a moral component. Without the possibility of betrayal, a relation to the Other cannot be called trusting.

The moral component and belief (Simmel, 1907) involved in trusting called for an understanding that goes beyond ontological explanations of trust. It must have something to do with 'leap of faith', as Möllering (2006) argued. This led me to follow Frederiksen (2014) and Løgstrup (1997), locating trust outside of a calculative realm. These considerations and some gentle hints form Edward Trezise made me think about Emmanuel Lévinas' work in relation to trust. Subsequently, in 2015 I began to read Lévinas, but only in 2016 did I start to deeply engage with his work.

However, I kept on thinking about autoethnography and its role in construction management research. I had a vague notion that autoethnography helped me run my business and I sought to explore the personal benefits of autoethnographic research.

Reflecting on: A Fine but Often Blurred Line – Distinguishing Insider Action Research and Auto-Ethnography (Grosse & Rose, 2016)

Writing and presenting this paper was great fun. It reflects very much how Michael and I talked during our frequent phone calls in that period. We were inspired and encouraged by two senior tutors from our university, yet we only followed their example partly – our conversations were less structured, not scheduled, and not in person but on the phone (Simpson & Trezise, 2011). Nevertheless, they had a significant impact on our learning. By representing the conversations, we succeeded in crafting an easy read. And it was an exciting experience to work with someone else on a paper which is seldom the case for autoethnographers.

We raised a lot of issues reflecting our experiences while researching and managing. But the number of issues were too many to say something significant. We rambled around – as most of our conversation did – but we did not dwell on one or two issues in real depth – which only some of our conversations did. The reflections only scratched the surface, but we did not dig deeper. Therefore, I have to say that the paper was a good exercise but unfortunately only that.

These early thoughts were not yet developed but I returned to them later and worked on them further e.g., the notion of responsibility and the impact of doing autoethnographic research on the researcher's professional practice. Hence the paper has to be understood as part of my journey - moving from justifying autoethnography to just doing and reporting it.

Reflecting on: An Insider's Point of View - Auto-Ethnography in the Construction Industry (Grosse, 2016a)

When starting to draft this paper I considered writing about the benefits for the practitioner involved. But in conversations with Martin Loosemore, I came to understand that writing about the possible contribution of autoethnography to construction management research would be better received with the conference I was writing for. Hence, I tried to make a case for autoethnographic studies in construction management. The research methodology award and the invitation for publication (Grosse, 2018) suggest that my argument was well received. However, I had to learn that writing a conference presentation – even though it went through a three-stage review process – is only a small portion of the work that is needed to place a subsequent article in a journal. Writing about the benefits for me as the manager (Grosse, 2017c) and the benefits for my business (Grosse, 2017b) followed the year after.

The other thing that resulted from this conference presentation was an invitation to review for this journal. For me, it was voluntary but very rewarding work. On the one hand, it is an appreciation of my research, but on the other hand, it is difficult and induces a feeling of insecurity. There was insecurity because I was not sure whether my criticism is too harsh, whether I am demanding too much from the author, and whether what I write goes down well with the editors. Yet the rewarding part is to delve into another perspective, to deeply engage with a paper in development, and most importantly to reflect on my own writing. I wondered whether I am as tough with my own writing as I have been with this author.

Would my writing meet the criteria I held against the reviewed article? Probably not, I must admit. Reading my own writing and in particular, reading it critically is an extremely demanding exercise for me. However, doing it, I spot some flaws in my writing. The first thought is about the implied reader. I know what I want to tell and therefore I don't have to understand the content of the text. I read the text with an implied reader in mind. Would my

anticipated reader get what I seek to communicate? – it reminded me of Richardson's work about reaching different audiences (1990). Especially when writing for construction management researchers about a research approach unfamiliar in the respective field, the importance of anticipating what they might know about ethnography in general and especially in autoethnography becomes a major issue. I could not assume that my readers would know what autoethnography is and what it could provide but also, what it could not provide, what limitations it had. In an engineering dominated realm, where positivist and realist thinking have a strong foothold presenting postmodernist writing, can be very challenging for the author, yet inspiring and thought-provoking for the readers.

The second thought is about the level of reflexivity. I asked the author of the reviewed paper to be more self-critical but am I as critical of myself as I demand from others? Do I really deeply question my professional practice? I sought to do that in this paper. Yet in other papers, I failed (e.g.; Grosse, 2015a, 2015b). For instance, recognising the missing reflexivity in 'Experiences with Auto-Ethnography' (Grosse, 2015a) when I depict myself as the victim is one thing, yet I suspect there are many other issues I did not spot. As for instance to think about forgiveness as one listener suggested. The danger is that I am unable to see the obvious because of my insider's view. In a variety of ways, I am unable to take a step back and see myself from another perspective. I tried that in this paper, and I think in some respects I succeeded yet I am certain there is much more to discover. But in turn, what am I allowed to ask from another author if I know about my own shortcomings?

During the development of the paper into a journal publication, Paul Chan helped me with numerous comments. One comment regarding the relationship to the architect read as follows: "You still seem to bear a grudge against the architect. This architect seems to be invisible in your observational account. Reflexivity is about asking why, and also examining yourself in relation to and in interaction with others." (Dec. 2016) Only some weeks later I read in Marcus Aurelius' Meditations, "Men are not easily seen to be brought into evil case

by failure to consider what passes in another's soul, but they who do not read aright the motions of their own soul are bound to be in evil case." (1992, p. 8) The intriguing thing about this quote is the self-focus as a point of departure. I think the key to understanding the confrontation with the architect lies more in my 'mind's movements' than in understanding his thoughts and actions. I may even claim that this is one development within my thinking throughout my doctoral journey. First focussing on the other, then understanding myself and therefore being only able to appreciate the Other (now capitalised in reference to Lévinas) more consciously. I trace this focus on the self in many writings about qualitative research but in particular about ethnography and autoethnography (e.g.; Chiseri-Strater, 1996; Ellis, 2004; Pillow, 2003). Yet in some ways, they were mere primers for reading philosophy.

Coming back to the paper, the turn to myself is the whole strength of the paper – a powerful account of my own thought. It is a vulnerability that turned into a strength. By exposing myself, and not analysing others, I provide something unique. This vulnerability is the same I exposed in 'Experiences with auto-ethnography' (Grosse, 2015a). Recalling the talk I gave during the conference, the positive feedback I received was aimed most at describing the feeling of being exploited – in Aurelius' terms observing the movements of my own mind.

This paper contributes only indirectly to the theses. It is a methodological reflection on my research and an attempt to demonstrate what autoethnography can provide to a research community. It leaves its mark on the thesis but, although I provide some examples, it is more a discussion about autoethnography than a demonstration. Certainly, the workshop (Writing retreat in Manchester) during which I worked on the draft and subsequent commentaries from Paul Chan helped me not only to develop the paper but to enhance my writing skills and my thinking about reflexivity in general.

Reflecting on: Trust beyond Reason – Lévinas and Trust (Grosse, 2016b)

What is fascinating for me is the relation between my experience (fieldnotes) and theory (philosophy) – understanding theory in the light of experience and vice versa. Reading Iser and Berlin were my introduction to all that followed when I read Emmanuel Lévinas. Writing fieldnotes about my experience became less important as I concentrated on reading and understanding his work. Although I view this partial retreat from fieldnote writing with some remorse, I know that I had only limited time and I had to decide whether to fully delve into Lévinas or continue writing fieldnotes with the same intensity. I opted for the former.

Lévinas gave my understanding of trust a whole new spin. Suddenly, the ideas of Iser and Berlin were underpinned by Lévinas' considerations about ontology. It made even more sense for me to pursue my qualitative path of exploration and shortcomings in past trust research. His understanding of responsibility as sharply distinguished from accountability and his treatment of the Other were the major arguments that reframed my thinking about trust.

My experiences reflected Levinas' thoughts very well, but more importantly, thinking about my experiences in the light of his ideas made it possible to understand his way of thinking. Without translating Lévinas into my daily business, I would have been left puzzled about his thought.

Lévinas survived the Shoah and this experience strongly influenced his thinking. Consequently, Lévinas calls for a deeply ethical almost altruistic response to the Other(s). But at the same time, I am supposed to be selfish for the sake of economic survival. Most of the criticism of Lévinas originates from this ambivalence. His critics claim that he demands too much responsibility and subsequently this leads to altruism. I also experienced this opposition to his thought from colleagues and friends. They argued that one cannot run a business and follow Lévinas' thought. I wondered whether this is really the case.

It is disturbing to think of an unlimited responsibility for and to the Other. How can I ever run a business on this premise? But pure selfishness does not work either. Hence, it was the dilemma of being between both extremes which nurtured my thinking while exploring Lévinas. The more I thought about it, the more examples of these struggles I saw in my experiences. Yet, I can see how convenient or just feasible it is to retreat into selfish behaviour and to justify it with the need for economic survival. And I could also see how demanding or even 'utopian' (Wright et al., 1988) it is to face one's responsibility. However, I learned that pure selfishness would be as detrimental to my own interests as to the interests of the people around me. Hence, both selfishness and responsibility have their place in Lévinas' thought and in the world that I experience.

However, I also started to see a deeper pattern. This was the distinction between ontology and what is beyond ontology. This thinking is more disturbing for an engineer than the hermeneutics of Iser (2000) or my limited capabilities as shown by Berlin (2013). It goes beyond what could be understood. Lévinas' 'beyond being' escapes the grip of ontology. Realising that I am far more limited than I thought and understanding that my knowledge is under permanent attack and that no claim can be made without the subsequent nagging question is something I, as an engineer, will probably never get used to. This understanding in the end leads to a much humbler attitude towards what I claim to know.

The intention behind writing the paper was to present my thinking about trust to an academic audience that is familiar with trust research. This worked insofar as the paper was accepted for presentation. However, the audience did not really connect to it since most of the people listening had an organisational and management research background and were not very familiar with philosophy. They were certainly not familiar with Levinas and only one researcher had dealt with him before.

Yet in retrospect, this should not have surprised me. Apart from Peperzak's work (2013), a few paragraphs in Bauman's Postmodern Ethics (1993) and three articles of Saevi and

Eikeland (Eikeland, 2015; Eikeland & Saevi, 2017; Saevi & Eikeland, 2012) I have not seen any published work on trust informed by Lévinas. In particular, apart from Saevi's and Eikeland's work there is no research on trust in an organisational setting available that is informed by Lévinas' thought.

Within the paper, I strongly argue in favour of locating trust outside of calculative thinking - something that is there before one starts to rationally fathom a situation before one rationalises a relation to another person. This thinking is strongly driven by my reading of the philosophical works of Lévinas. Yet the connection to autoethnography is very weak. I do not support my argument with examples from my business practice and it is, therefore, difficult to connect to managerial practice. Hence, the relevance to this research community does not come across easily.

Furthermore, the lack of ethnographic elements makes it difficult to follow. One or two examples from business practice could have made a good connection between philosophy and business practice. This would not only have demonstrated more relevance for the organisational or management research in general but also made it much easier to identify hands-on or down-to-earth issues, and in doing so I would have to translate philosophical concepts into them. This is especially important since the paper diverges from the conference's main approach to trust –a calculative and utilitarian view. An episode of managerial experience which reflected my thinking about trust would have made a far stronger case for my approach to trust.

The paper itself is written very simply. In other words, it does not question or contradict the claims it makes. Perhaps that is due to the fact that I spent a lot of time getting into this way of thinking – outside of ontology. Yet, the paper appears to be quite immature. Finding arguments against my conception of trust and then weighing them against supporting arguments would have made my claims and, subsequently, my paper much stronger. But not attempting to deconstruct my claims is a clear weakness.

For example, one can argue against the concept of good beyond reason which is the idea behind Lévinas', Derrida's, and Bauman's thoughts about ethics. I have not considered the possibility of evil, which one senior researcher in the audience in Dublin raised. Furthermore, my thinking moves beyond ontology. One may argue that this is more speculation than serious research because it is not ontologically displayable. One may even call it esoteric - which one of my fellow students mockingly does. However, investigating or at least raising the possibility of evil should have made a case for my approach and so would have made the paper even stronger.

The paper essentially conveys the main message from the chapter on Emmanuel Lévinas [see 'Emmanuel Lévinas' p. 84]. I think that trust, like responsibility, is closely connected to the encounter with the Other. It is essentially what Lévinas calls Saying. I cannot approach and engage with another person – the Other – without being responsible for and to the Other and at the very same time trusting her or him and hoping to be trusted too. My interpretation of Lévinas thought says that trust must have begun before any conscious decision [see 'Preconscious Trust' p. 130]. To Frederiksen's (2014) observation that trusting is another mode of interaction I may add that trusting is part of Lévinas' Saying distinguished from Said or calculation. Locating trust prior to all rational thought comes with a bunch of implication, especially if we think about reciprocity and calculus-based trust. These thoughts I developed further in 'Does Lévinas help us to trust?' (Grosse, 2017a) and in the following chapters [see 'Looking Back' p. 148 and 'Looking Ahead' p. 196].

Within the two subsequent chapters (see above) I sought to connect my interpretation of Lévinas' thought to my managerial practice. This provides feedback to the idea of writing something about the benefits of pursuing autoethnography for business people and their respective businesses. In 'Doing Research and Running a Business' I sought to emphasise what autoethnographic research might contribute to the business where it takes place.

Reflecting on: Doing Research and Running a Business: Is it just too much? (Grosse, 2017b)

The paper is the second of three dealing with my experiences doing autoethnography as a construction professional. The first paper (An insider's point of view (Grosse, 2016a)) focussed on what autoethnographic studies might contribute to the construction management research. This paper deals with the benefit of the business. The third paper (What's the Benefit? (Grosse, 2017c)) deals especially with the learning of the practitioner – in my case the owner/manager of the business. Reading the third paper (Grosse, 2017c) one may easily spot the parallels to the present paper. Yet I think taking the three perspectives – researcher, business, and practitioner – was a worthwhile exercise. In my case, these are three important lenses I use to see my life – needless to mention there are numerous others (e.g., being a parent).

That said, the paper, unfortunately, does not live up to its potential. First of all, it should have gone through one or two more revision cycles – I stumbled over numerous typos, which feels a bit embarrassing. Perhaps the fact that I had just a month from the day I was asked to write the paper for the final submission serves as some excuse. Apart from that, I really like some ideas and thoughts in the paper, especially how my management style changed over time and how I learnt to use postmodernist thinking to solve or at least ease business-related problems. Yet it could have gone further and deeper and most of all it did not single out the benefit of the business and rather sticks to the learning of the manager. The learning of the manager is, of course, an important part in developing the business further, but I did not show whether and how I convey the lessons learnt while pursuing ethnographic work to my staff members. Hence, I left the opportunity to show that autoethnography might have an impact on the business beyond my personal practice.

Because of missing the wider impact, the central message of this paper is only slightly different from the third. Although I wrote the paper at short notice, I could have done a much

better job. The quality of this paper reminded me of Zinsser's notion that revising a piece of writing is the most laborious but also the most important part of the writing process (2006).

Reflecting on: Does Lévinas help us to trust? (Grosse, 2017a)

I can identify a significant improvement when reading the paper discussed here and looking again at 'Trust beyond Reason – Lévinas and Trust' (Grosse, 2016b). First of all, this paper has a much stronger connection to my managerial practice and therefore to the construction industry. Although I presented 'Trust beyond Reason' to an audience interested in trust in organisational context, the focus on the construction industry would have been misplaced, a stronger focus on managerial issues – especially anecdotes from practice – would have made it easier for listeners and readers to connect to my argument. In this paper, the examples worked well to support the theory. In supporting my concept, the examples worked for me and not the other way around (Wolcott, 1990).

I have dealt here with the asymmetrical or non-reciprocal relationship to the Other and hence non-reciprocal trust. On the one hand, I have once more not spent much thought on the possibility of evil. That is a blind spot within all the papers on trust I have written so far.

On the other hand, I connect trust to other related concepts, for instance care, forgiveness, and control. However, sometimes the paper is not focussed enough. I get easily distracted and go off on a tangent. That in itself is not problematic, but I do so without contributing much to the thought and therefore to the value of the paper. It ends up as piece rich but significantly underdeveloped thoughts. For example, I talk about the necessity to forgive others. Yet, I do not discuss how hard it might be to forgive another person. Although it is necessary to forgive, a discussion about whether it is sufficient is lacking.

But this messiness is part of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) and hence somewhat unavoidable. Yet there is still the demand from the implicit reader and from myself to advance the thought further and perhaps give them some structure or at least ease the confusion one is in, as Adams (2012) writes. Having said that, I see that messiness belongs

to autoethnography. However, it should not serve as an excuse for not developing thoughts thoroughly but skipping from one idea to another.

The title suggests advice on how to foster trust (in oneself) and the paper delivers. Yet the paper falls back on benefits of trust and does not take trust as a value in itself.

I articulated my thoughts about trust and Lévinas in this paper and 'Trust beyond reason'. They were stages in the process of forming what is written in the three preceding chapters of this thesis. Again, preparing the papers and presenting them helped me to develop my thinking.

It was while working on these two papers that I understood how difficult it to write about Lévinas' thoughts concisely. I initially struggled to read Lévinas' work but I gradually learnt to deal with his language. But when I had to write about his work and to articulate my own thoughts about it in connection to trust, I suddenly understood how difficult it is to write concisely in a language that can never be concise. It is difficult to describe experiences that escape rationality, and which belong to the Saying and not Said. This experience made me an even greater admirer of Lévinas' work.

The work on these papers revealed to me the deeper meaning of an ethical relationship to the Other. During this period, I formed an understanding of this primordial relationship with the people I encounter. The reading was essential to get me thinking but writing down my thoughts was the most significant point - "the essential moment was that of writing itself" (Sartre, 1975, p. 5).

During the work on this paper and 'Trust beyond Reason,' I developed my understanding of Levinas' work. To avoid repetition, I summarise my thoughts on trust, Lévinas, and my business practice after working on the last of my conference papers.

Reflecting on: What's the Benefit - A Personal Story of a Researching Manager (Grosse, 2017c)

This paper is the third in a row after 'An Insider's point of view' and 'Doing Research and Running a Business' (Grosse, 2016a, 2017b). Since I had already dealt with the contribution to research (Grosse, 2016a) and the benefits for the business (Grosse, 2017b), the purpose of writing this paper was to work out whether the 'whole' doctorate was worth the effort for me as a person and manager. Although I write in the paper about the commitment needed to pursue a PhD, I merely concentrate on the outcomes and benefits of doing research. I approached the problem like an equation to be solved. Which part was bigger or worth more and would my efforts pay off? However, I did not emphasise the cost – effort, time spent, missed (other) opportunities etc. – I looked almost entirely at the benefits.

Was this the right way to do it? Should I have admitted to myself that it was all a waste of time? Should I have told others that it was not worth the time spent? Should I have said that my work had little value regarding the effort needed to produce it? That would surely be too much to ask for - perhaps even impossible (at least to me).

I am a very optimistic person. For me, the glass is never half-empty. It is a quarter-full rather than three-quarters empty. I find value in almost everything I do and I seek to emphasise the positive aspect of everything. Within this mindset, I create my own reality. My truth takes shape within an optimistic and positive framing. I may recognise the hardship and suffering of doing a PhD, but I will always shift my emphasis to the things I learnt and discovered, regardless of how little and unimportant they might be.

I may have disregarded some costs of doing a PhD but on the other hand, I cannot tell whether it was worth doing as I cannot see the long-term effects. I do not know whether this experience will have future pay-offs. But perhaps the whole question is utter nonsense. What is 'benefit' anyway? How can I measure it? Is personal development a benefit? - probably.

Is a new managerial skill a benefit? - certainly. Is solving a problem a benefit? - of course. But how do I compare them? Is one worth more than the other and how do I weigh them against the so-called cost? And isn't everything one does not worth doing anyway?

The speciality of autoethnography is its reflexive aspect. I learned to observe my thoughts and not merely indulge them. I am able to shift them. This is particularly helpful in a crisis. I recognise myself as being aggressive, defiant and tough but also as weak and suffering. The interesting thing autoethnography taught me is to step out, take a seat on the balcony and see myself act on the stage. However difficult this distance is to achieve in stressful situations, it helps me to understand the impact of my actions. But it also shows the impact of my reflections on my own thinking and acting.

For example, one of my favourite themes is forgiveness. When I am able to forgive, I resolve my anger and grudge against another person. This is much more important to me than to the other (Lévinas, 1968; 1977). I resolve my aggression, I am re-equipped to think more freely and am able to pay much more attention to the other and the situation as a whole. If I leave aggression behind, I do not have to think about retaliation and revenge and I can focus on what is important to me. I can think of far more options that are available to me. This is only one example, although a prominent one, of the way reflexivity works for me.

Exploring the process of autoethnography from different angles provides different perspectives. This is not surprising but it is fascinating how these different perceptions influence each other in a hermeneutic manner. An understanding developed using one perspective alters the understanding within other perspectives and vice versa. It is the crystallisation Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2005) describe (comparing the different perspectives to a crystal turning in one's hand) but at the same time changing this crystal by an hermeneutic process as described by Iser (2000). Before I started this research journey, I found this instability frightening but now I feel almost comfortable recognising this movement of understanding.

Reflecting on An Insider's Point of View - Auto-Ethnography in the Construction Industry (Grosse, 2018)

Recently, I got an email form the editors of the journal 'Construction Management and Economics', saying: "The contents are fine now, but what is left to do is to have another go at the language." After the initial delight about the message, I realised that it was not just the language; there were still some issues about the content, although minor ones. Some weeks later I read the lines I had been longing for - "has been accepted for publication".

The initial conference version (2016a) developed into something almost entirely new. It did not contradict the former version but expanded it as the reviewers' and editors' comments made me think in new, unanticipated ways. But it is worthwhile to reflect on the process I went through personally. The conference paper had elements which read like a defence of autoethnography. The reviewers urged me to replace this section with one which confidently explained what I was doing. Yet this is a challenging balance between self-confidence and defensiveness. I needed to be sure to pursue valuable research but not to defend it to fiercely, but I was also required to acknowledge the limitations yet not belittle what I was doing. I am happy with the balance I struck between the two, however I am sure re-reading the paper in the future I may see it differently.

Perhaps this is what makes a researcher mature; having confidence in what one is doing but being open to critique. For the moment I am happy with what I have written but I may change my mind on the basis of the views of others. The process of continuous learning though being confident in the present applies to me as researcher but even more as a practitioner. I need to be confident about what I do when managing my company but also open to alternative ways of doing and thinking.

Summary

At the beginning of these reflections, I offered a distinction between papers on trust and Lévinas and papers on autoethnographic research in business. I used these two perspectives throughout writing the papers. However, as I advanced with research, I understood that these two perspectives cannot be separated from each other. The writings about Lévinas and trust improved the more I anchored them in practice by using examples from business, and the writings about autoethnography and business became stronger the more I supported them with ideas from philosophy. Therefore, I think the strength of this work lies neither in the thoughts about Lévinas and trust nor the thoughts about autoethnography and the construction business but very much on combining the thought about both. I cannot overemphasise the mutually fertilising effect of engaging with these two worlds.

Closing this reflection, I am still moved by the realisation of how much my thinking has changed. To use a German metaphor again, I learnt to look beyond the "Tellerrand" (the plate's edge). The plate was my positivist thinking. I believed I could understand everything, at least in theory. My initial questions reflected a thinking that my negotiating is unambiguously understandable. Abandoning this thinking was perhaps my most important learning outcome of the whole journey. Now, positivist thinking has become a part of my repertoire – when it suits. But I am able to use other frames of thinking. I know that positivist thinking is essential for an engineer, but I am also aware of its limitations. These limitations surface especially when dealing with others. In this case, postmodernist thinking is more helpful than a deterministic approach.

The importance of this change in thinking is that it opens new possibilities for me. As I have written recently, (Grosse, 2018), the deconstructive journey would have been impossible if I had not made this move in thinking. Looking beyond my old positivist 'plate' and realising that it is only one plate among many feels uncomfortable in the beginning because it takes away a certainty (I believed in). However, in the long run, this deconstructive

process made me more relaxed for two reasons. First, I understood that inconsistencies in my understanding are natural or unavoidable. Hence a desperate search for 'the answer' was unnecessary. Second, I am aware that understanding is not something that could be fixed but rather something that defers and differs all the time (Derrida, 1967).

This is partly the reason why I dropped 'negotiation styles' from my research objectives. Negotiations almost disappeared from my wording as I deferred my focus to human interactions in my business environment (which can be seen as negotiations). The narrow focus on negotiation styles suited my narrow positivist vision at the beginning of my journey, however, my shift to postmodern thinking forced me to look further - beyond the 'Tellerand'.

Therefore, I would now phrase research questions differently, although my objectives would be the same. I already noted that it is odd for an autoethnographer to start with such a narrow focus [see 'Trust' p. 49], but at that time I was yet to become the autoethnographer I am now. I brought a history with me to the research setting, which I slowly deconstructed. I think to expect a naivety or 'virginity' from an established practitioner is illusionary. I even have difficulty imagining who could have an untainted and utterly open mind. It is more about helping new (auto-)ethnographers to develop and to emancipate from narrow thinking than expecting them to start as open thinkers.

In the end, I answered questions about trust and business practice I could not have even thought of when I started researching. There was no ethical component in my initial research proposal and there was nothing that diverted from ontological thinking when I began to explore my business practices. I thought about constructing a systematic approach to negotiations but not of deconstructing my thinking about negotiations.

Practitioners search for solutions and researchers search for problems (Bartunek, 2007). I had to learn the researcher's way of thinking – to problematise (Grosse, 2018). Yet I must constantly switch from one way of thinking to the other. I am and I will stay in business, and I will also continue researching. Therefore, I may probably never start an exploration with a

genuinely open mind. There is always the problem-solving practitioner present. This is a limitation which can be turned into an advantage. It is a unique way of seeing from the inside. I can connect practitioners' problems to academic debate because I have learnt to think in both ways.

VIII. Closing thoughts

After reflecting on my research journey, in these closing thoughts I will highlight the main findings of my research. I will sketch my suggestions for construction management and continue summarising my thinking about trust, my experiences of pursuing autoethnographic research, and bring together what I learnt about business practice.

Suggestions for Construction Management

"Imagine turning your thesis into a book sold on the management shelf at the airport. What would you have to tell managers?", asked David Weir during my viva. It seems inevitable that this question would be asked, therefore, I was surprised I had not thought about it earlier. One may wonder what kind of practitioner research this is if it does not offer any contribution to managerial practice. Since I am a construction industry professional, I would like to talk about how my research helped me in my managerial role in the construction industry. I leave it to the reader whether my understanding and experiences are of value for them.

The learnings outcomes I present here are interwoven, conflated and contingent. The things I have to tell managers come as a huge pile of different interdependent suggestions. However, I try to structure them like the thesis. First, I emphasise how autoethnographic research can support managers, second what I learnt about trust, and third I provide insights I drew from Lévinas. But since all three are connected to each other I try to step into a meta perspective to yield the wider insights of doing autoethnography and reading philosophy.

Autoethnography

Put simply, autoethnographic practice is observing, writing, and reflecting. It is disciplined or even ritualised thinking about oneself and one's environment. Certainly, managers do think about their environment (i.e. the organisation they manage) and

themselves – at least that is what they should do. Yet the process of writing about one's thoughts makes deeper insights possible, compared to contemplating and not writing in down. In writing we fix our thoughts and we catch the loose ends or as Sartre (1975) says about thinking, "the essential moment was that of the writing itself." Writing clarifies the thinking and provides the opportunity to reread one's thoughts and to develop them further. The writing up of observations and the inevitable interpretations and developed understandings are core to autoethnographic research. One might easily understand how such a deepened understanding might help a manager to deal with a challenge she or he faces. A vivid example of such learning by writing ethnographically is how I recognised that I had failed to listen to a client and consequently paid more attention in the next meeting which I described in Appendix J (Grosse, 2018).

Autoethnographic practice provides a room (to use a metaphor) for such thinking – room in the sense of a ritual (e.g., every workdays' evening, or once or twice a week) or as tool used if one feels it is necessary (e.g. when one comes across a problem difficult to deal with). My experience suggests that writing regularly helps to acquire the needed skills. When I started researching, I wrestled with the question of what incidents to write, what and how to write about them, and so on. But after a while I felt better and learnt to describe events better. I learnt to tap into thoughts and feelings and to connect them to earlier writings and past events I recollected.

This process of describing leads to a deeper understanding of the situations I faced and it leads to spotting and exploring problems which I was not aware of before. It is the shift from practitioner to researcher thinking – from problem solving to problematising (Grosse, 2017c, 2018). By writing about my daily practice I spotted issues of which I was unaware, but which were problematic. Sooner or later I had to address them. Yet this awareness only developed through writing about apparently 'unsuspicious' matters.

However, I also read literature on trust and later on and of Lévinas. This reading influenced my vision, which has both advantages and disadvantages. It certainly limited my vision. Selectively, I paid more attention to observations that I could relate to trust and Lévinas' thought. However, it helped me to understand situations differently. I could use a special lens to make sense of the events I encountered.

One may reduce autoethnographic research to three main activities: observing, writing, and contemplating oneself and one's environment. Each activity by itself is very valuable for a manager in the construction industry. However, coupling the three enlarges and hones my vision. Thinking about a problem is one thing but writing up these thoughts is quite another. Afterwards, thoughts are clearer, and the observations are qualitatively different. My autoethnographic research in this regard was a wonderful training. I look and think differently since I am writing about the issues I face in business. It is certainly enough to write for oneself and there is no need to publish any of the writings.

Very early during my research I wrote predominantly for myself – to play, experiment and test. At that time, I still focussed on negotiations, but I soon realised trust's importance to most negotiation processes.

Trust

The autoethnographic writing made me even more conscious of trust relevance to my business relations. Trust is almost everywhere. Without trust one would not get up in the morning (Luhmann, 1973; 1975). To keep this in mind prevents me from seeking ultimate control over things. I know trust is an essential part of my daily business and I can only replace it by control to a very small degree. Furthermore, replacing trust comes with enormous costs. Within the existing trust literature these costs are predominantly related to control effort but also to a lack of cooperation. However, reading Lévinas, I understood that controlling also has strong influence on my relation to the other, beyond what I expected before dealing with Lévinas' thought. I began to be interested in understanding the other,

especially while working on ‘Trust and Construction Projects” (Grosse, 2015b). Seeing the Other under constraints and pressures certainly influenced my research, but even more my practice as manager. I began to understand the limitations of my influence but also spotted different ways of dealing with others.

One of these limitations is that trust cannot be willed (Baier, 1986). Hence, I cannot demand trust from customers, business partners, or employees and they are unable to deliberately trust me. To ask someone to trust me is as paradox as it is to ask someone to be spontaneous, which Watzlawick (1983) so vividly (and humorously) describes.

The consequence of the inability to will trust is that I must abandon the thought that I could force them to trust me, although I may desperately want them to. There is no silver bullet, no remedy, nor something particular I have to do so that others trust me. Trust works in another dimension. Rational thought is one mode of interaction and trust is another. One has to let go of rational explanations – they do not work in regard to trust. This is very difficult to accept for a manager in the construction sector, where contracts, claims, invoices, Gantt charts, drawings and calculations govern the daily business. But the longer I read about and observe trust relationships, the more I understood trusting does not relate to this dimension of business.

However, I recognised the difficulties of letting go of the compulsion to rationalise trust in myself. I understood how difficult it was for me not to think in terms of cause and effect in relation to trust. And I have to admit I still struggle to leave this thinking behind. To move my thinking forward I more or less accidently turned to Lévinas. His thought helped me considerably to better understand my relation to Others. His notions of ‘same and Other’ and ‘said and saying’ offered me a new dimension to localise trust.

Lévinas

Reflecting on when I started working on the thesis, I am astonished how I developed my thinking. I started my research with the idea to streamline my negotiating to achieve selfish

ends. To streamline negotiation to economic ends – for instance the utilisation of game theory shows – seems to be a common approach in business in general but also in construction management. However beneficial to the economic outcome of a negotiation employing such an approach might be, especially in the short term, one must not forget that a negotiation is a human encounter which always comprises a rational and a non-rational dimension. Lévinas was of great help for me to understand and to learn to deal with the resulting tension between these two dimensions.

I do not deny economic considerations in negotiations. I still care for myself but my thinking about negotiations does not solely revolve around how to get the most out of it. Now I understand negotiating more as an interaction or an exchange with a genuine Other than the attempt to squeeze the most out of him.

But to arrive there I first. had to embrace Lévinas' thought. As Edward Trezise once explained, his thinking is like a wave on a pebble beach – once it hits the pebbles on the shore it gets everywhere – among, above and beneath every single stone. On construction projects, I constantly have to deal with Others, but there is hardly any aspect of my life in which I do not have to deal with Others. Hence, once I started engaging in Lévinas' thought, the 'wave of his thinking' trickled through almost every facet of my life.

To demonstrate how Lévinas influenced my thinking I begin with a simple but far reaching statement: "Ethics is first philosophy." This statement has different implications.

First, it should not be a philosophy that governs our thinking but the ethical encounter with the Other. Or in other words, all what we call philosophy or rational thinking stems from facing Others. Hence, encountering the Other governs philosophy rather than philosophy governing the encounter.

Second, I ought to act ethically for no reason, simply because ethics is not founded in reason but in the human encounter. If it is for a reason, one cannot call it ethical.

Third, since ethics is acting responsibly, I am responsible prior to anything else. I may as a manager create rules and contractual provisions in order to limit my accountability but the responsibility remains with me and is infinite. Yet there are no reasonable claims to be made about the responsibility of others. I discussed these three statements and background in Chapter IV on Lévinas. Here, I will dwell on their implications for my professional practice.

The knowledge about one's infinite responsibility and its haunting nature, strangely enough, does not pose a particular problem to me. In fact, I find it relaxing. When I started researching, I believed I could shift responsibility, but responsibility somehow returned to me. I could hold someone else accountable, but I realised that the ultimate responsibility remains with me and any shift of accountability is an insufficient means to get rid of responsibility which can only give temporary relief. The belief that I could get rid of responsibility was problematic. Knowing that my efforts are bound to fail, makes me feel much more relaxed. I did not know when I started researching that it is an ongoing and constant effort to face one's responsibilities. There is no way of escaping and no need to search for one.

This relates neatly to Aurelius' stoic attitude to life (1992). I have to adopt my course of action and my thinking to my environment and to the Others around me and should not expect to change them. For example, I cannot change my clients or business partners. The only thing I can do is to adapt to how they act and what they demand from me. It is always my responsibility.

For example, I may tell an architect that the proposed design is not going to work. By writing to him about my objections, I could shift accountability to him. However, if I build the house using the faulty design, I am probably not accountable but still responsible for insufficiencies. The client may ask me why the house has faults. I may reply that I informed the architect and in doing so avoided being held accountable. However, a feeling or sense of inappropriateness will remain. I will have to ask myself whether I have done enough to avoid

the faults. Certainly, I will have doubts about having done enough, spoken out loudly enough or having tried everything to avoid building a deficient building.

I am responsible at the very moment the client confronts me with his complaints. The claim that I informed the architect then sounds hollow – it is an inadequate response. This example illustrates Lévinas' quoting of Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov: "We are all responsible for all for all men before all, and I more than all the others." (Lévinas, 1982, p. 101). One cannot entirely avoid situations like this, yet one must be aware that a shift of accountability does not transfer ultimate responsibility. These ethical questions are of interest to the wider construction management community, as a recently accepted abstract shows. I am responsible for and to the Other. Hence, I am supposed to set the Other centre stage: The other should be my main concern.

Is not management completely meaningless without Others? Whom should I manage and for whom? I recall Large's (2015, p. 44) thought on the 'community of speakers'. As a manager I need the people I work with and without them my work is meaningless.

This is perhaps the only reason (if one wants to call it reason) on which responsibility rests. That is why we need to care about Others. From this end, management starts to make sense to me. It is not about me, it is only about the Other and about the Other's concern.

One of the first obstacles is to regard the other person as Other - to think about the Other as neither for or against me, just different, but fundamentally different. We are not a complementary pair (like black and white) - the Other is someone outside of my categories who is no threat, no enemy but also no friend or partner. The Other is just another and not me.

The fundamental Otherness is the biggest value of the Other for me. He or she is different, and thinks, knows, acts and feels differently - in ways unfamiliar to me. Preserving this otherness provides me with an eternal source of inspiration. Clients think in ways I have not thought before. For example, they present new ideas which I may integrate in my business.

Staff members approach problems differently and hence we may innovate new solutions. But I can only tap into this inspiration if I am open, welcoming and receptive to the Other. I must not see the Other as a threat or enemy to get this inspiration.

It is difficult to embrace this way of thinking if one finds oneself under pressure, for example, time pressure and budget constraints. To think this way is a challenge and one easily gets trapped into thinking of the other as an adversary. In some respects, this might be the case – most clients want to pay less, and I usually want to be paid more. But that is only one aspect and there are others that are not opposed to each other. I have to focus on the latter to see the Other as valuable for me. One should seek each opportunity to embrace a positive thinking about the Other and ask what the Other might offer to me.

To benefit from the Other's otherness, managing should not be understood as a way of directing persons in the direction I determined beforehand. It should rather draw on the different people with their different ways of acting and thinking. Hence it is a navigating among alternating currents. This poses a challenge to my thinking - the Other puts me in question but also enriches me tremendously.

I faced a lot of disappointments, incidents of being let down and even outright betrayals. Holding a grudge about the people involved for too long (for a short while is often natural and inevitable) does not lead anywhere apart from bitterness and stagnation. Hence, to forgive is essential. Forgiving relieves the one who forgives and is therefore more important to the one who forgives than one who is forgiven (Lévinas, 1968; 1977). It takes away the negative thoughts and one is able to open oneself up. One may or may not revive the relationship with the other person but at least one is able to see the other differently and stop wasting energy on aggression and negative thoughts.

Reflecting on coupling autoethnography and philosophy – writing and reading

One lesson I have drawn from Lévinas is that the existence of my self is based on my encounters with Others. That is perhaps why autoethnographic research complemented

reading Lévinas so well. I constantly moved between myself and the Others around me. I could see how the thoughts of Lévinas took shape in business (and personal) practice in my own experiences. The movement back and forth between reading Lévinas and reflecting on personal experience helped me to understand Lévinas better. In turn it offered me a way to see myself and Others differently.

This process is an ongoing deconstruction of concepts. The Other poses a constant challenge to me, to my picture of the world and to my thinking. Again, one may regard this as aggression, but the way I understood Lévinas, it is the positive scepticism that the Other offers me. The constant challenges are the breeding ground for a deconstruction from within (Grosse, 2018). Deconstructing and dismantling concepts is closely related to both Levinas and autoethnography. As a practitioner, it offers me a much deeper understanding of the processes and relationships I find myself in.

This in turn makes my management more flexible. To know that my concepts are only one limited way of interpreting a situation may induce some insecurity but after a while I got used to it and drew on this different understanding. I felt much more prepared or equipped for change since I understood that nothing is unchallengeable.

For me autoethnography was the way of translating philosophy and research into managerial practice. It was drawing on the two different ways researchers and practitioners think (Bartunek, 2007). I could offer a way of translating Lévinas' thought into practice, yet drawing on other thinkers can offer equally valuable insights. As I have emphasised elsewhere already (Grosse, 2017b, 2017c, 2018), I think that autoethnographic research benefits the researcher first and foremost and only then the wider academic community. This is why I recommend (as I do with my students) reading research and writing about personal experiences. It is worth every second.

Thoughts on Trust

The literature shows that to trust someone entails taking risks, making oneself vulnerable to the action of the trusted, and a lack of knowledge about whether the other acts as trusted. However, when trusting one another, both can achieve more together than alone. Despite the possible benefits and risks involved, neither trusting or not trusting is rationally defensible. Therefore, it is argued that trust is a mode of interaction distinct from rationality [see 'Trust' p. 49].

The treatment of trust as non-rational and as a different mode of interaction requires trust not to be objectified. Although common in the literature, it rejects a utilitarian view of trust. It is here that the power of Lévinas' thought becomes apparent. Lévinas makes a strong distinction between Saying and Said [see 'Saying and Said' p. 112] which is the framework I used to think about trust. The Said is rational thought whereas the Saying is interaction prior (primordial) to rationality. I think it is this way of interacting which best describes trusting. Before I think or rationalise, I trust. Therefore, an objectification of trust is pointless and attempts to argue rationally for or against trust are bound to fail. Trust is the urge, the desire and what drags or pushes us towards the Other without considering rationality. I trust the Other because she or he is there. I speak to the Other and this Saying entails trusting this Other.

Yet the power of this consideration lies in its ramification. For Lévinas, Saying is taking responsibility for the Other. I am responsible to and for the Other without being allowed to claim reciprocity. This suits my experiences with trust up to a point. I care for the Other without hope of getting anything back. Yet this genuine care for the Other, for no particular reason, might also make this person trust me. It is, therefore not care without accountability, but one that reaches way beyond what I am accountable for. It is exactly this being beyond accountability, or more than what is rationally arguable, that makes up a big part of a trust relationship.

But it is also something else: the desire for the Other. Prior to rationality, humans are social. We have an urge to interact with others which drives us to trust them – independent of any rational argument. We then willingly accept vulnerability. To care and to take responsibility without being able to claim reciprocity makes us vulnerable to the Other's actions. This again connects Lévinas' thoughts about Saying to the literature on trust. Yet I could demonstrate many different examples of the pure desire for being trusted or being valued as a person.

The Saying also entails an inherent scepticism, which has a recurring nature. Something strange and non-rational happens during the rational choices we make when interacting with other people. As soon as I act and decide rationally, operating within the Said, the encounter with the Other sheds doubt over this decision. This encounter is to see the Other as 'face' (Lévinas, 1961) or as a vulnerable human being. This sensing of the Other touches me beyond rational thought. Hence the Saying questions the Said. This mechanism also operates when it comes to trust. I may decide not to act trustingly but as soon as I do there is a nagging doubt about this decision. This scepticism does not go away but resurfaces again and again. I argue that the force behind it is my desire to be with the Other.

We cannot avoid such decisions, and neither I nor anybody else can care for every Other. In order to care for the Other, I have to disappoint the third. I cannot trustingly interact with every person, and therefore I must be prepared that my offering is rejected more often than not. Still, the desire to be with the Other (or Others) drives me to trust them over and over again.

When I open myself up to the Other and engage in Saying, I can make trust possible and vice versa, I can avoid it when I deny the Saying to operate. However, to act trustingly and to be rejected can be very painful [see 'Deadlines' p. 189].

It is difficult to engage the Other in conversation or to trust them, yet actively trying to forgive opens up the opportunity for me to trust again and be trusted. I emphasise the

contribution of the Saying to understand trust within this play of rational thought – the Said – and the non-rational response to the Other. Trust is never pure, and control always comes alongside. I would like to trust and I know that together we can make things happen, but I make myself vulnerable, and hence I am reluctant to give in to my urge to trust. There is a tension between desire, and sociality on the one side and vulnerability, fear, and pain on the other. One faces this dilemma in business and perhaps in life in general. Therefore, my thinking about business practice focussed on this dilemma and autoethnography was the best way to reveal my insights.

Thoughts on Autoethnography

I am a practitioner and always will be. Autoethnography is the method that allowed me to observe and understand, read and contemplate as I wanted to. I could take action when I felt ready to do so but there was no necessity from the very outset of the study as there would have been in action research (Grosse & Rose, 2016).

I might be criticised for following my personal preferences and focusing on my own interests and approach to trust. I have a strong inclination to trust others and one could argue that it is not surprising that I have seen what I reported here and that I understood Lévinas in the way I did. This argument is difficult to reject. However, one could also argue that it is the nature of autoethnography to reflect the subjective view of the researcher. I am both researcher and researched and cannot be someone else or be neutral. However, I can be honest about myself, reflect actively and account for the researcher impact on the study. The easiest measure was to write in the first person singular. Therefore the reader is not tricked into believing some omniscient person is talking. However, this is by no means sufficient and I also tried to weave into the work what I felt, thought, and did to give an impression of who I am and where I am coming from.

One could also argue, that the whole study is too ‘Lévinasian’. My thoughts are certainly strongly influenced by him. It was a choice I made and argued for [see ‘Trust’ p. 49, and ‘Emmanuel Lévinas’ p.84]. Lévinas’ thought fitted my approach to doing business very well. For me it was natural to follow up on his thought. It is another case of the researcher’s influence and how to account for this influence.

Again, I am a practitioner. It is a limitation that this study is written from the distinct perspective of a construction industry insider but it can also be regarded as one of its biggest assets. To put it bluntly: the only people who have first-hand access to what practitioners think and feel are the practitioners themselves. Everybody else relies on secondary sources – interviews, observation etc. Elsewhere I could make a case for autoethnographic research done by construction practitioners and the insights only practitioners can provide (Grosse, 2016a, 2018).

The potential of this approach only surfaces when practitioners engage reflexively with their experiences. Only then are the deeper patterns revealed, the questions behind the questions asked, and the uncomfortable issues explored. This is when the different modes of reflexivity – on, in, and of practice – are at work (Grosse, 2018). The importance of reflexivity stems from the deep involvement the practitioner brings.

My understanding is that being a researching practitioner is completely different from being an academic ethnographer (without the ‘auto’ prefix). I always talk as one deeply involved in the issues I explore. It is my livelihood, my life, and myself that I am talking about and so I will never be detached from the things I explore or the things that affect me. They certainly do more to me than they could do to an outsider ethnographer or anybody else. The understandings I gain about my business affect how I see the last 19 years of my life because they are closely related to what I did, thought, and felt during that period. I cannot imagine that some outsider could establish such a connection.

This strong involvement should provide a lot to reflect on for other researchers. I talk about my take on trust and how I feel and think about it. I talk about it as one who is dependent on others trusting him and vice versa. I talk about my role in my construction business and how I feel and think about it and about my engineering background and its effect on me. Others may use these insights to enhance their own thinking – whether as a previously unexplored route, a contradiction to reflect on or to support and further their own ideas. I offer three perspectives to support the thoughts of others: my inclination to trust, my emphasis on Levinas and my insider's view.

Thoughts on my Business Practice

I would like to emphasise two points about the impact of my research on my business practice. The first is how Lévinas relates strongly to my thoughts on trust and the second is an excerpt of my last two conference papers on the benefits of autoethnographic research for practitioners and businesses [see 'Appendix H' p. 366 and 'Appendix I' p. 374].

The tension between Saying and Said in Lévinas' thought is what started my own thinking about business practice. On the one hand, there is control, knowledge, accountability, rational thinking and calculation, i.e. the Said, and on the other hand there is the pre-conscious human interaction or the face of the other that demands care and responsibility from us, i.e. the Saying. My observations show that both features belong to human interaction. However, an overemphasis of the Said at the expense of the Saying is detrimental.

An overemphasis on the Said creates a climate of pure accountability which leads a person to strictly abide to the norms and laws required of them. Yet social life is much more complex than any set of norms and rules might be able to reflect. In other words, the Said is limited, but sociality – human interaction – is the breakthrough or overflow of the infinite Saying [see 'Emmanuel Lévinas' p. 84]. We simply cannot reduce our interactions with others to

the Said. We must be prepared for the fact that we do not understand everything. If we are not prepared, we constantly struggle with our limitations.

But when I realise how limited I am, I cannot expect perfection from others. And so, I begin to balance Saying and Said and to forgive others for what I regard as their failure. I understand that perhaps it is only me who regards it as a failure. I may begin to see beyond the personal traits, be it capability or skills, and see the human being – the face. This is a human that seeks to do her or his best yet sees the world differently from the way I see it. That is the biggest value of this Other.

The Other might show me a different view of the world but I must allow for that to happen. The Other, for example, a business partner coming up with an apparently odd proposal (at first sight), can be a source of creativity for me. He or she gives me inspiration as I cannot see the world as the Other does, but I can embrace one or two of the Other's views. For that to happen I have to welcome the Other. I have to open myself up and I have to trust. This is when trusting people can achieve more than each on their own.

Yet one must be aware of the risk involved. The Other might not be welcoming or may exploit my offer. That happened to me, and I learned how painful it is. However, I engage in Saying and trusting others again as I know that I cannot achieve much on my own and the alternative is not promising. Not to trust at all would mean to control everything. This is impossible and to set oneself the goal of full control puts immense pressure on this person. I am highly critical of ever tighter control measures in management because they push the members of the respective organisation towards an emphasis on the Said and suggest that full control would be possible. This creates immense stress in these people.

I suggest a more balanced approach. Some control is of course necessary, but also a freedom to reach beyond control. However, this freedom must be accompanied by a strong emphasis on responsibility – in Lévinas' sense - beyond accountability. I have stressed throughout this work that there is an underlying sense of responsibility in the people I work

with [see ‘The Cracks’ p. 109, ‘Acting Ethically Costs Money’ p. 151, and ‘Pricey Bricks’ p. 186]. As I have summarised above, forgiving the Other for their failures inextricably belongs to this balancing, just as the nagging scepticism about my own thoughts does [see ‘Thoughts on Trust’ p. 263]. Again, my categories - my Saying, is limited and one should always be humble about one’s claims and always willing to question one’s thinking.

The tension remains between making a decision based on the knowledge I have and knowing it is based on limited knowledge. Yet decisions have to be taken ‘here and now’, even not deciding is a decision which can be unjust.

This ‘here and now’ also refers to the second point - it stands for a practitioner’s thinking – thrown into the situations – as opposed to the reflective stance of an ethnographer. This opposition forms the very tension in which my autoethnography took place. When working in business I was faced with the immediacy of the situations I was thrown into, whereas the ethnographer could sit down in the evenings and reflect on what had happened. I have outlined above what a researching practitioner may contribute to research and here I would like to suggest what researching might contribute to personal, professional practice.

While writing my research I inevitably gained insights for my practice because I wrote about the very events that touched me as professional. Often, I had the feeling that the contribution to my practice was bigger than that to research because I could test the knowledge immediately (e.g.; Grosse & Rose, 2016). This side-effect of autoethnography makes it a good recommendation for practitioners embarking on a research journey. Yet it should also be approached with caution. Autoethnography requires the researcher to question almost everything and this is not always comfortable. A deconstruction of assumptions can cause some severe insecurities for the practitioner. There is also a need for the researcher to problematise rather than to solve the problem. In order to deeply understand a matter, the researcher must not jump too fast to a conclusion but rather keep on wondering and asking.

This runs against typical business practice where the fast solution is often regarded as the best one.

Yet, although it puts the practitioner (turned researcher) under more pressure, the problematizing is helpful as it enables a widening of view. One begins to understand the deeper causes and the wider implications of one's thoughts and actions. And most importantly, I understood how little I knew and still know. It is this impact on the practitioner doing autoethnographic work that I have sought to emphasise. This view on autoethnographic research is unseen so far, at least in the construction industry, but is starting to evoke some interest.

Final Remarks

When I started, I wanted to learn something about my business practice. I wondered how to negotiate better and more effectively. In some ways I have attained this goal. I think I negotiate better now and perhaps more effectively. But it did not work out the way I initially thought. In 2012 I believed that I would search for the right way to negotiate and so would achieve my desired outcomes (or at least the closest to them). However, throughout the journey, I turned more and more to myself. Thinking reflexively about my actions, feelings, and thoughts did not reveal the best way to negotiate – like a silver bullet – but a way of thinking about, reflecting on, and reframing the situation I find myself in. As my counsellor likes to say, one may understand my ethnographic journey as climbing to the balcony in the theatre where I can see myself acting on the stage. However, I do not stay at the balcony but go back on stage. It is only in the midst of the play that I really begin to understand how what I am doing on stage looks from elsewhere.

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Appendices

In the following, I enclosed the papers I presented to conferences and published during my doctoral journey.