The Art of the Possible
The scenario method and the 'Third Debate' in international relations theory

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Introduction

Myths are "the way things are" as people in a particular society believe them to be; and they are the models people refer to when they try to understand their world and its behavior. Myths are the patterns - of behavior, of belief, and of perception - which people have in common. Myths are not deliberately, or necessarily consciously, fictitious. (J. Robertson in P. Schwartz, 1996, p. 41) Story -telling in the form of myths can reveal something about what we feel, hope, expect, fear for the future.
(P. Schwartz, 1996, p. 43)

The following story is my attempt to contribute to one of the most powerful myths of present times: science, the seemingly never ending, ever changing story of knowledge production.

During my studies of international relations I have been mostly interested in theoretical questions, in particular those raised in what is called the 'Third Debate'[1]. Feminist and postmodernist approaches strongly appealed to me and still do. Most courses I have taken addressed questions raised by feminism and/or postmodernism or had these approaches as their central focus.

Last year I engaged in a course on: *Globalisation, gender and development.* This brought me into contact with Global Business Network (GBN). An organisation which is, among many activities, involved in the scenario method. In the light of our research we carried out a discourse-analysis on one of their scenario projects regarding women in the 21st century. (P. McCorduck and N. Ramsey, 1996) Thus I got acquainted with the scenario method and I am very enthusiastic about it.

I believe the scenario method is in line with current theoretical developments in international relations. In my opinion it manages to largely overcome what is criticised in traditional approaches, while at the same time it shapes ways to work with new ideas. Furthermore, scenarios combine and incorporate ideas from recent critical approaches, such as Critical Theory and postmodernism, without necessarily rejecting traditional approaches. The scenario method leaves room for multiple approaches.

The study of international relations is not unfamiliar with the scenario-approach. As far as I know, some scholars have participated in research - related to concrete topics and problems -, in which scenarios were written. An example of this is the project on structural changes in world trade flows and their impact on the Dutch transport business. (G. Junne, 1993). However, I believe the scenario method

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[1] The 'Third Debate' is concerned with the prospects of international relations theory in a post-positivist era.

has neither been discussed in the light of current theoretical debates nor has its scope of usage for the study of international relations been explored. Regarding the methodological consequences of recent theoretical debates I believe it is relevant to investigate alternative methods in general, and the scenario method in particular.

The purpose of this research is to discuss and slightly explore the use of the scenario-method in the study of international relations. I will begin with a literature review of recent discussions about international relations theory. In the second part of my thesis I will describe the scenario method: its history, approaches, assumptions, concepts and usage, followed by an illustrative case-study, in which I will write four scenarios about 'business' and 'social responsibility', based on GBN's 1997 WorldView Meeting about this topic. 'Business' and social responsibility' is a relevant social issue at present, for which attention is increasing. It is a field of discussion, which changes rapidly, developes in many directions, and which outcomes are uncertain. Furthermore, one of the main boundaries, which are discussed here, is the public/private divide[2], which links to my studies of feminists approaches. Therefore, I have chosen this theme for my illustrative case-study. In the third part of my thesis I will discuss the scenario method in the light of methodological consequences of the 'Third Debate' and scenarios as a possible post-positivist and postmodern method of research in the study of international relations.

Part One: The art of the possible

1. A search for thinking space

> There are neither beginnings nor endings to the turning of the
> Wheel of Time. But it was *a* beginning. (R. Jordan, 1996, p.43)
> Somewhere in the late nineteen-eighties of what was called the
> West of the world - it is said that students and scholars of
> international relations got involved in what was named the
> 'Third Debate'. It is at this time that my historical narrative

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[2] The public/private divide is used in scientific literature to refer to the perceived division between government (public) and business (private) and also to refer to the perceived division between the public and domestic sphere. The public sphere includes all social activity outside the domestic sphere. The domestic sphere includes the private homes of individuals and families. Thus, in the first division business belongs to the private sphere, while in the second division it belongs to the public sphere. Politics is part of the public sphere in both divisions. Many feminists oppose to the idea of politics as part of the public sphere. They claim that politics is also an essential part of the private sphere, that the division is not only artificial, but male biased and should not be

begins and of certain developments within the 'Third Debate' it tells.

Yosef Lapid[3] argued in 1989 that "international theorists are now engaged in a third discipline defining-debate" (V. Spike Peterson, 1992, p. 184). There have been such debates before. First between realism and idealism in the inter bellum and later about traditionalism and history against behaviourism in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 'Third Debate' meta-theoretical questions about the nature of thought, theorising, the acquisition of knowledge and how the discipline constructs itself are at stake. In short, this is a debate about 'foundations'. Mainly the foundations ascribed to modernism, thus the discourses[4] of modernity that have been dominant in western theoretical traditions since the Enlightenment are put to question. While former debates took place within the confines of the modernist discourse, the 'Third Debate' involves an attempt to move beyond these boundaries.

The 'Third Debate' in international relation can be said to be a spin off from dissent with modernist thinking in orthodox social theory and methodology. The perceived inadequacy of modernist approaches has led to a "search for thinking space" (M. Foucault (1973) in J. George, 1989, p. 273).

> Thinkers (...) have sought to open up space so that we might begin to think in different ways and to explore possibilities effectively closed off by orthodox notions of 'the art of the possible'.
> (J. George, 1989, p. 273)

This summarises the latest quest in western science of which the 'Third Debate' is part.

Later, I will argue that scenario analysis as a method provides a framework for the 'search for thinking space' in which a continuous extension and/or (re)conceptualising of 'the art of the possible' can take place. Through the usage of scenarios practical and theoretical boundaries can be explored and (re)drawn. (see Part Two)

First, this story continues with an account of modernist discourses and two influential approaches in the 'Third Debate': Critical Theory and Postmodernism.

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[3] Yosef Lapid, 'The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-positivist Era', *International Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 33, No.3, September 1989), pp. 235-54.
[4] Discourse is to be understood as "a system of possibility for knowledge" (Q. Skinner, 1990, p. 69)

1.1. Modernism

The distinctive discourse of modernity is one of prediction and
control. (A. Borgmann in J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 72)

Modernism assumes an objective 'Truth', a permanent, impersonal underlying reality which has no intrinsic meaning, exists independent from history and culture and which functions according to its own laws. These laws can be 'discovered' and thus 'Truth' can be revealed and known. In modernist discourse human intelligence accounts for human superiority and distinction from the rest of nature. Science then, perceived as the purest intellectual activity, has supreme intellectual authority. Science is the process towards the total revelation of Truth. Its goal is to be in correspondence with 'reality.' Through science human kind is to be freed from constraints such as tradition.

Another important feature of modernist thought is its binary logic. This logic creates "Western philosophy's characteristic dualisms" (V. Spike Peterson, 1992, p. 185). These are hierarchical dichotomies of paired, mutually exclusive oppositions, in which one term is preferred over the other, thereby marginalising and devaluating the subordinated term. A couple of examples are: culture-nature, mind-body, subject-object, self-other, masculine-feminine, fact- value and rational-irrational. One of the quests for some participants in the 'Third debate' is that "we should free ourselves form the grip of binary thinking" and make "a shift from oppositional to relational thinking". (V. Spike Peterson, 1992, 186)

Modernist methodology is largely based on epistemology, which is the philosophy of knowledge. Two major epistemological approaches that can be discerned are rationalism and empiricism. To summarise in the simplest terms: rationalism defines principles through logic reasoning in order to find a universal model which corresponds to 'reality' while empiricism relies on observation through the senses and the collection of data in order to discover Truth. The two combined resulted in logical positivism and pragmatism (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 99).

The positivist approach is believed to be a 'rational' and 'objective' one. Through 'objective observation', which means that the scientist observes without influencing the observed, and logical, rational reasoning value-free knowledge about 'Truth' is obtained. Consequently, this is the only knowledge that counts as such,

since it is perceived as 'true' knowledge founded on 'reality'. Humankind is believed to progress towards the final goal of 'total understanding and knowing reality' by accumulating 'true knowledge'. In Richard Rorty's words, positivism is a search for "Nature's own Language". (R. Rorty in J.W. Lacey, 1996, p.108)

Pragmatists set aside questions about the 'nature' of things. They deny that there are 'true' foundations for knowledge. Truth is instrumental in the sense that pragmatism tries to interpret each belief or idea by tracing its practical consequences. Pragmatism focuses on practical action. Moreover, pragmatists believe that truth and reality are created and it is this belief that most strongly separates them from logical positivists and pushes pragmatism beyond epistemology. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 115) Charles S. Pierce introduced the pragmatic maxim:

> "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." (C.S. Peirce in J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 111)

William James articulated a pragmatic method to choose between different ideas: One should try to interpret each idea by assessing its respective practical consequences. If there are no practical differences following certain notions, then discussion about which notion is 'true' is idle. When one notion or the other is 'right', one ought to be able to show some practical difference. James notes that "awareness of consequences is an important key to pragmatism's strength." (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p.112) Contemporary pragmatists assume that we can "never get beyond stories, narrative, illusions, because the 'analytic' or critical instruments through which we break their spell are not less figurative than the material of which they are composed."(G.B. Gunn in J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 120)

> Pragmatism is willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses and to count the most humblest and most personal experience….Her only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted.
> (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 114)

It is this attitude that added to the development of interpretative science, Critical Theory and to the 'linguistic turn'[5] which characterises the move to postmodernism.

1.2. Critical Theory

> The problem with Positivism and Empiricism is that they have the capacity to describe but not to understand and explain. The problem with interpretative social sciences is that they have the capacity to understand but not to critique the boundaries of understanding. It is this dialectical movement which gives rise to the need for critical theory to shift the bases of both empirical and interpretative knowledge. Critical theory, through the process of self-understanding and self-reflection, is able to provide a critique of the existing social order and point to its immanent capacity for change and for the realisation of human potential. (M. Hoffman, 1987, p.232)

Critical Theory "refers to a set of Marxist-inspired social and cultural critiques" (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 64) and was first developed by a group of individuals of the Frankfurt School[6] . In the classic Frankfurt text, *Dialectic and Enlightenment,* Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno attack "the doctrine of progress and the supposedly liberating effects of science and rationality."(C. Brown, 1994, p. 218) They continue by emphasising the connection between knowledge and interests. Knowledge always serves someone or something. Social changes are seen by Horkheimer as the most powerful forces for change in theory. Knowledge is a social and historical product, which cannot be separated from its context. Critical Theory recognises that it is itself a product of society, but at the same time it tries to distance itself from society in an attempt to understand and change it. By doing so it scrutinises the existing social order and the boundaries of knowledge, both of which it rejects to perceive as 'natural' and inevitable. To engage in Critical Theory is to perform a theoretical *and* a social act.

Later, Critical theory was further developed by Jürgen Habermas. In his effort to create an alternative foundation for knowledge he distinguished three 'knowledge-constitutive interests' which he derived from various aspects of social existence. The

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[5] 'Turn' is a term used in postmodernist writing meaning a change in direction or re-orientation. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 7) The 'linguistic turn' refers to the re-orientation of the foundations of knowledge from Truth to language. "(...) the foundationalist search for an objective knowledge external to history and social practice" is rejected and "the linguistic construction of reality is emphasised" (Jim George, 1989, p. 272).

[6] The Frankfurt Institute of Social Research set up in 1923 during the Weimar Republic.

first are technical cognitive interests. These are motivated by our material needs for existence which lead to an interest in prediction and control of the environment. This interest constitutes the empirical, analytical sciences. Secondly, Habermas distinguishes practical cognitive interests, which are generated by the desire for increasing mutual, inter-subjective understanding. This interest led to the development of historical, hermeneutic sciences, which are concerned with the *meaning* of language, symbols, norms and actions. The third category consists of emancipatory cognitive interests, derived from the human ability to reflective reasoning. Through the process of self-reflection we can perceive society as a site of power struggles and "become aware of the historical compulsions of the past"(M. Hoffman, 1987, p. 237), which constrain the realisation of human potential. Thus, human kind has an interest in liberation, "freedom, emancipation from domination and the achievement of rational autonomy."(C. Brown, 1994, p. 219) Emancipatory cognitive interests constitute Critical Theory.

Underlying Habermas' threefold division are his views on politics and the attempt to undermine the empiricist/positivist claim to 'true' knowledge. According to Habermas, nowadays the classical notion of politics is lost. Classical politics belonged to the realm of ethics and, most importantly it was open-ended. Which means that it was not part of a perceived linear historical process progressing towards utopia. The modern notion of politics is based on scientific rationality. Civil society is perceived as a structural order, which partially functions independently of its people. The state operates as its technical and functional institution. The existing order is taken for granted and is not reflected upon. In this order:

> Politics is reduced to management (…). Political problems
> become technical problems and politics is about who gets what,
> when and not *why*. Science and technology take on an
> ideological function reinforcing the image of society based upon
> a technical model. Technocratic ideologies come to dominate,
> depriving the individual of political consciousness. (M.
> Hoffman, 1987, p. 234)

Habermas' desire to redirect this technocratic view of politics to its classical perception motivates his attack on scientific reasoning and rationality as the sole foundation of genuine knowledge. He argues that other sources of knowledge, such

as Critical Theory, derived from different interests, such as emancipatory, are equally important.

Habermas' emphasis on emancipatory interests is not to say that any theory that promotes emancipation is 'true'. Because he does not accept that 'anything goes', some independent criterion of validity - a theory of truth - is needed. Habermas' truth is established by rational consensus. What is true is what is agreed to be true, but this consensus must have specific rational features; otherwise truth loses all meaning. Emancipation thus means the achievement of *rational* autonomy. He argues that rational consensus can be achieved through rational and logical argument in an 'ideal speech situation'. Habermas claims that an 'ideal speech situation' is not a theoretical construct, but something that is inherent to language. This is so, because human speech is not meaningless. Which it would be if we did not, by the act of speaking, make the claim to say something true or at least meaningful. In an 'ideal speech situation' everything which is said is fully understood, and communication is totally open. The goal for free language use underlies the usage of all language. Thus the fully emancipated society which Critical Theory is after, is inherently present in language.

1.2.1. Critical theory in the 'Third Debate'

Among others, Robert Cox has drawn on Critical Theory in international relations. Cox affirms the connection between knowledge and interests. Furthermore, he stresses the need for reflexivity. Theory must be able to scrutinise itself. Cox distinguishes two perspectives on theory depending on its purpose. The first is problem-solving theory in which theory serves as a guide to find solutions to problems from the point of view of and within its own framework. The second is critical theory, in which the presumptions of the theory itself and the process of theorising are reflected upon. To do so means to open up the possibility of choice; it is then possible to choose a different perspective which involves different presumptions, theorising processes, order, categories, problems and solutions to these problems. In combination with ideas from - particularly - Gramsci, he draws a framework of Critical Theory for international relations in which Critical Theory questions the dominant world order by taking a reflective stance on the framework of this order. By doing so it also questions the origins and legitimacy of political and social institutions and the way they change over time. It tries to understand

processes of change within both the whole and the parts of the political and social complex. In Cox' framework history is perceived as a continuous process of change. Critical Theory seeks to determine which elements are universal to world order and which are historically contingent. On the other hand Critical Theory engages in problem solving which takes the existing world order as a given and tries to find solutions to problems inside the boundaries of the system. Most importantly, it "contains a normative, utopian element in favour of a social and political order different from the prevailing order but also recognises the constraints placed on possible alternative world order by historical process: the potential for transformation exists within the prevailing order but it is also constraint by the historical forces that created that order." (M. Hoffman, 1987, p. 238) As such Critical Theory serves as a "guide for strategic action" (M. Hoffman, 1987, p. 238) and practising Critical Theory is thus a political act.

Because Critical Theory not only reflects on society, but also actively tries to change it, Habermas distinguishes two discourses. "[A] theoretical discourse that develops from challenges to truth claims and a practical discourse that deals with claims to normative rightness." (J. Haacke, 1996, p. 262) According to Haacke (1996) the theoretical discourse is important for international relations with respect to assessing strategies or technologies -for example in the scientific analysis of American military action against Iraq- while practical discourses are even more important since they relate to the practical day-to-day world we all live in.

Mark Neufeld links the emancipatory tradition of Critical Theory to interpretative approaches in social theory. He emphasises the importance of Habermas' 'in depth hermeneutics' which differs from 'traditional' hermeneutics through the addition of Habermas' theory on 'ideal speech'. Because of Habermas' conceptualisation of rational consensus which can be reached in the 'ideal speech situation' Critical Theory is sensitive to distorted communication, where hermeneutics is not. (J. Haacke, 1996, p. 275)

For Andrew Linklater questions of inclusion and exclusion are central to international relations. He is not in favour of the system of sovereign states, because of their exclusive character. Linklater advocates a community of mankind. Therefore, he wants to construct new forms of international political relations which are able to include all people on equal grounds. For him, "[t]he normative purpose of critical theory is to facilitate the extension of moral and political community in international

affairs." (A. Linklater, 1992, p. 93) He feels that the specific contribution that Critical Theory can make to international relation theory lies in its emphasis on emancipation, which, according to Linklater, should be more central to the field. Critical Theory - with its emphasis on communication - provides a way of supporting a tolerant universalism, which is inclusive without denying or extinguishing cultural diversity and difference.

Mark Hoffman shares Linklater's interest in the establishment of a post-sovereign society. He points to critical social movements as shifters of boundaries and challengers of exclusionary practices. He argues that Critical Theory represents the next stage in the development of international relations theory, but it needs to be combined with elements of former theories in the field. With the aid of Critical Theory international relations needs to be restructured towards a post-Marxist and post-realist focus. (M. Hoffman, 1987, p. 244) Hoffman follows Habermas' division of interests: practical, technical and emancipatory. Each interest leads to different knowledge production, which are all equally important. Former theories of international relations can be categorised under practical and technical interest based knowledge. Critical Theory adds an element of reflexivity to international relations theory, through its recognition of the emancipatory interest in knowledge production, but the other interests and the knowledge produced accordingly should not be disregarded.

1.3. Postmodernism

Another approach that raises its voices in the Third Debate is postmodernism. Postmodernism[7] is a container term for an array of ideas concerning an equal amount of topics ranging from architecture to social theory. Postmodernism is best described as an attitude and this attitude is best captured by Lyotard's definition of postmodern: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward

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[7] To elucidate the concept of postmodernism, I want to refer here to a description from Harry Kunneman (1988) He distinguishes three key characteristics of postmodernism. First, the conscious pursued combination of heterogeneous elements, which are not fused in a higher synthesis, but remain standing next to each other in their heterogenity. (H. Kunneman, 1988, p. 201) Secondly, the postmodern era is characterised by superior power of independent technologies and the powerlessness of culture, which is degraded to theatre, to an undistinguishable abundance of symbols, which no longer refer to anything. (H. Kunneman, 1988, p. 203) In other words: meaning and progress are overtaken and have become illusionary categories. Modern societies are beyond all purposes, and beyond differences, because we are overwhelmed by pluriformity, (H. Kunneman, 1988, p. 203)The third and last characteristic can be traced back to poststructuralist ideas. Postmodern philosophy totally rejects - in imitation of poststructuralism - 'subjectivity', 'rationality' and 'truth'. (H. Kunneman, 1988, p. 204).

metanarratives" (J.F. Lyotard in J.W. Lacey, 1996. p. 5) This incredulity towards metanarratives results in a general distrust of all grand theories, systems and foundations. Here, I will discuss ideas labelled as 'postmodern' on topics, which I feel, are relevant for this essay.

Most importantly, postmodernists reject the possibility of an underlying, unchanging, fundamental reality or, in another word: Truth. They argue that reality is constructed through language. "The best metaphor for reality is 'text'." (J. W. Lacey, 1996, p. 7) Language does not reflect 'reality', but reality is constantly (re)shaped and (re)produced through the use of language in an endless process of change. Truths are produced through power[8] struggles or 'power sensitive conversations' (D. Haraway, 1988) in this constant process of (de)construction.

All truths are formed with language. They are products of language. It is like a fantasy world created by a novelist. With words he/she draws the boundaries of his/her story. These boundaries describe and determine the framework of the story and within this framework what is right/wrong, true/not true and possible/impossible. In his/her story the author has the *power* to do so.

> The punch line is that postmodernism is the claim that all of our thoughts, theories, ideas, and perceptions are (...) different interpretations. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 12)

Postmodernists continue to argue that language itself is an interpretation from a certain perspective and that what is intended can never be fully said. Therefore *all* meaning is distorted and undecided. The truths language describes are thus normative truths. When the perspective changes, truths will change. Accordingly, there is no objective way in which knowledge can be produced or reflected. All knowledge is - in essence - normative, narrative, 'groundless' and incommensurable. It is incommensurable, because there is not one foundation or principle which can serve as a fixed starting point for measurement or - in other words - criterion for validity. Postmodernism is therefore non-hierarchical. The acceptance of incommensurabilty and undecidability of meaning prevalent in the postmodern

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[8] Power is "a relationship between individuals where one agent acts in a manner which affects another's actions. Power relations are to be distinguished from relationships based on consent or on violence. (...) Power operates to constrain or otherwise direct action in areas where there are a number of possible courses of action open to the agents in question" (Q. Skinner, 1990, p. 74) It is important to note that, according to Foucault, power is only exercised by and *over* free subjects and only to the extent that they are free. "Power is an inherent feature of social relations. (...) Because of this power relations are always potentially unstable and potentially reversible." (Q. Skinner, 1990, p. 75)

attitude has given rise to accusations of nihilism and relativism. I will discuss this in a next section.

Postmodernists defy intrinsic principals, foundations, a priori approaches and natural laws. Nothing is absolute. Theories are seen as filing systems and principles as supporting structures to keep a grip on experience. Instead of foundations there are only contexts. In accordance with its 'punch line', all observation is seen as an interpretation from a certain perspective. Perspective determines (de)constructions of truths and power struggles determine which perspective will be dominant. In this sense, both empiricism and relativism have a totalitarian character, because they both claim a universal perspective, independent of the observant; empiricism with its view from nowhere and relativism with its view from everywhere. I will return to this later when I will discuss 'situated knowledge.'
Science then becomes a site where knowledge is produced in a process of 'power sensitive conversations' where boundaries are constantly (re)drawn. Science is perceived as a form of creative art, which (de)constructs and applies realities.

From this point of view all truth and theory are a claim to power. Postmodernism is distrustful of all such claims. It focuses on deconstruction and disclosing tensions and power relations. It does not feel the need to resolve tensions or to make a choice between or resolve contradictions. This would only mean a new claim to power, which it does not want to make. Postmodernists emphasise that all claims to power are arbitrary and never fully rational, as modernists believe, but as much dependent on intuition or other feelings.

In sum, postmodernists reject the possibility of Truth. All claims to truth are normative and actually claims to power. They constantly try to unravel and destabilise all such claims, especially those which claim an absolute foundation. Postmodernists maintain that all grounds are equally arbitrary. They accept contradiction and inconsistency and contend that most questions are unanswerable. All human understanding is interpretation, and no interpretation is ever final. Postmodernism emphasises openness and leaves room for a pluralism of interpretation. Human beings are embodied in a social and cultural context. They engage in reality, which they create themselves through interpretation.

The constant questioning of boundaries postmodernism has engaged in led to (re)conceptualisations of many categories; a couple of which, I think, are relevant to discuss as I will continue to do.

1.3.1. Intertextuality

> (...) all texts are polysemic and self-subverting, the truth they
> attempt to convey being no more than a Nietzschean 'mobile
> army of metaphors'. (C. Brown, 1994, 224)

According to some radical poststructuralist[9] linguistics meaning only emerges in the relationship between signifiers in a language. This is to say that a text no longer represents its object (for example a bicycle) as described by the subject (the author of the text) and the author no longer determines meaning. "Understanding is independent of private meaning; the author offers no privileged assistance in comprehension."(P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 88) Poststructuralism establishes the dethronement of 'Man' from the centre of discourse.

As I mentioned before, the best metaphor for reality is text. Poststructuralism is utterly text-centred. Intertextuality refers to the relation every text has to every other text. All texts have multiple meanings. Therefore, no text has any concrete or inherent meaning. Meaning develops in the interaction between reader and text. It is created by the reader while reading a text and re-created with every reading. "Meaning originates not in the production of a text but in its reception." (P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 89)

1.3.2. History, time and space

> The contemporary is the only time-frame that counts because
> the only importance of the past and the future is the impact they
> have on the present. (P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 91)

"Postmodernists have developed a unique counterintuitive view of time, geography and history all of which are redefined and reconstituted in a mutually reinforcing perspective." (P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 90) For postmodernists history is non-essential. It is neither progressive or linear nor has it any logic continuity, which means it does not evolve along a Hegelian dialectic stairway leading to an ever increasing improvement of the human condition. Its only importance lies in the impact it has on the present. Since history is not perceived as linear and consistent, it does not make

sense to search for origins or use it "as evidence for direct causal understanding." (P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 90)

The above is in accordance with the postmodern view of time, which is also perceived as non-linear and non-chronological. Postmodernists argue that linear time is invented for technical reasons required by modernist methodologies that separate cause from effect. It is scientific, hierarchical and oppressive. Postmodernism views time as layered, fragmented, heterogeneous and misaligned. Again the example of a story serves well. One can experience one minute in the course of a chapter, while other chapters cover years. Things that are written chronologically can be happening at the same time and one can experience flash backs. In real life, too, time is not always perceived at the rate of the physical interval, which is assigned to it. When you are at your boring job forty seconds definitely take longer than when your in a roller coaster ride equally long. Postmodernists regard this perception of time as equally 'true/real' as the mathematical description of it. In other words time can never be captured or placed; we always live at this moment, this moment, this moment... Right on the constantly moving borderline of past and future. In this conception of time the "future is only an anticipation of the contemporary and the past a former presence" (P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 91), and the contemporary is the only time-frame that counts.

Finally, the postmodern mutation of space. The dominant perspective on space as, for instance, three dimensional is rejected. (I want to emphasise that this perspective is not rejected as such, but its dominance as the only 'true' perspective is.) Space is perceived as a multidimensional, mentally constructed set of relationships. For example, a room is not only a three dimensional space with a certain length, width and height in which you can move and pass time, but the social, cognitive and physical associations one has with this space form an integral part of it. All these associations construct a mental representation of space. It is thus that space is continuously (re)constructed in general; there is no 'true' space, since all representation is interpretation. Therefore it is never authentic and 'true' maps do not exist. All (re)conceptualisations of intertextuality, space and time as described above cast doubt on the adequacy of all sorts of representation, which I will address in the following paragraph.

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[9] See note 7. In this thesis, I refer to poststructuralism as part of postmodernism, because its ideas are incorporated in postmodern philosophy.

1.3.3. Representation, situated knowledge and the subject/object dichotomy

> Post-modernists assert that representation is inadequate in all
> its various forms because the images of the world cannot be
> constructed and exchanged between people with any degree of
> certainty.
> (P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 92)

Representation is not just felt to be inadequate, it is 'bad'. Since representation is never authentic it is inherently fraudulent. In the act of representation all difference is denied, since the re-presentation is assumed to be congruent with what it represents. Like a photograph of something. "It assumes the validity of a copy, which is only a simulacrum, a copy for which there is no original."(P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 92) This links up with Donna Haraway's[10] concept of 'situated knowledge.' (D. Haraway, 1988) She states that the goal of science should be to articulate instead of to represent. Here, to articulate means to formulate conditions of consensus. Conditions which need continuous (re)formulation. But there is more to 'situated knowledge'.

Scientists who engage in this process of articulation must situate themselves, because they are all subjects with a social, cultural and historical background, whose perspective is partly constituted by this specific position. As I have mentioned before both empiricism and relativism have a totalitarian character, because they respectively claim to perceive from nowhere (universalistic) or from everywhere (relativistic). By doing so they both claim to be objective. This means that both empirical scientists and relativists can not be hold responsible for the knowledge they produce, because one can not situate them. By doing so, they violate the volatile character of power relations[11] and transform them into general patterns of domination. (Q. Skinner, 1990, p. 75) Haraway pleads for recognition of the specific position/situation of every scientist; to her 'objectivity' is to take responsibility for what you see and from which angle.

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[10] In his thesis on postmodern economics J.W. Lacey mentions W.T. Anderson who describes three subgroups of postmodernists: constructivists, players and nihilists. Donna Haraway belongs to the first group and so do I. While 'players' live life according to the 'anything goes' attitude, and nihilists are ultimate relativists in the sense that because everything is equally valid, nothing has any value at all, constructivists try to engage in postmodern science as I described above.

[11] idem 8

Furthermore, she attacks the subject/object dichotomy. As is apparent in the above, it is impossible to passively observe an 'object', because all observation is an interpretation from a certain perspective. But even 'object's' are not passive. Once an 'object' (also a non-human one) is constructed through description it is used to construct other 'objects'. For instance in the negative sense of construction where boundaries ascribed to one 'object' differentiate it from others. Take, for example, the difference between a chair and a table. The chair is partly constituted by the boundaries that constitute the table, because they describe what the chair is not. Therefore, even 'objects' are not to be perceived as passive and static matter. The object makes its own contribution to the production of knowledge in this interactive process.

Both the embodied subject and the embodied object are fragmented, contradistinctive and discursive; both are never complete, always in motion and never original. The perspective of the subject is therefore always multidimensional. For Haraway, knowledge production is about the capacity to see and the power to construct realities. Through visual systems knowledge produces 'subjects' and 'objects' whose existence is always problematic in essence en whose boundaries are always capable of shifting. To see is to fragmentate. Situated products of knowledge are therefore no reproductions or representations of what is essentially there, but they constantly generate new, disputable forms.

These knowledge productions have ethical and political consequences, because they constitute claims to truth. The production of knowledge then, is not innocent, but develops from 'power sensitive conversations.' Therefore, Haraway suggests to converse with the world around us - to speak *with*, and not *for* this world - as knowing subjects[12] , which show a constant awareness of their responsibility in the production of knowledge. Thus, 'situated knowledge' is constituted, and with it the end of innocence in science. (R. Kenter, 1996, 4-5)

1.3.4. Postmodern methodology

> [W]hat distinguishes postmodern methods from modernist or
> positivist methods is that modern methods limit inquiry to

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[12] I think it is imported to note here that Harraway does not go as far as some post-structuralists in their notion of intertextuality, in which a 'knowing subject' no longer plays any role in the constitution of meaning or in the production of knowledge.

Postmodern methodology is post-positivist in the sense that it tries to move beyond modernism. It is not opposed to modernist methodology such as empiricism, but postmodernists do want to point out different ways of practising science, which they feel are equally important in the general production of knowledge. In contrast to modernist methods, they do not only rely on rationalism, but as much on intuition, personal experience, empathy, desires and imagination. "Poetry is as important as quantification."(J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 7) Postmodern methods are discursive, which means they "rely on and involve discourse and narrative explanation." (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 134) Most of them are aimed at the disclosure of tensions and power configurations, but not at their respective resolution or change.

> The postmodern methodology of interpretation confronts a
> post-modern world of plural constructions, diverse realities and
> a multiplicity of readings. There are no facts, no proper
> meaning to words, no authentic version of a text; in short no
> simple truths. Only an uninhibited, anti-scientific form of
> interpretation can stand as postmodern methodology. (P.
> Rosenau, 1990, p. 86)

A well known postmodern method is Derrida's deconstruction. Deconstruction is used to unsettle or - to use the postmodernist term - decentre concepts and conceptual oppositions which are otherwise taken for granted. Its main aim is to "try to demonstrate and displace the effects produced by settled oppositions," (R. Devetak, 1995, p. 41) which are not perceived as simply neutral, but as hierarchical. Later, I will try to introduce the scenario method as a postmodern method.

1.4. In conversation with postmodernism and Critical Theory in the 'Third Debate'

Although I adhere to the postmodernist acceptance of the essential incommensurability and undecidability of meaning, I believe it is useful to engage in

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[13] I want to note here that Lacey's distinction between modern and postmodern methodoly is debatable. Not all postmodernists extend their inquiries to policy and evaluation and at the same time non-postmodernist approaches do, such as Critical Theory. I believe that J. Lacey refers here to constructivist postmodernism (see note 7) In my opinion the distinction is simply that modern methods are characterised by the search for prediction and control, while postmodern methods are not, which automatically means that postmodern methods inquire in different directions. I feel, it is this difference in aim between modern and postmodern methods combined with

'power sensitive conversations' as Haraway puts it. In this section I will try to develop such a conversation with postmodernism, Critical Theory and scholars in the 'Third Debate'. Through this conversation I will, as a 'knowing subject', determine my position in discussed matters. This position is already influenced by my own history and continuous (de)construction as a subject. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to say that I am inclined towards a postmodern perspective. Furthermore, I have an interest in arguing for scenario-analysis as a postmodern method for international relations. I want to emphasise that the following paragraph should not be read as a discussion in which postmodernism and Critical Theory are mutually exclusive or opposed to each other. This might appear so, because I take a rather radical stand, especially towards Habermas' Critical Theory. I mean it to be like a discussion between two people, who are incommensurable in essence, but share elements of both sameness and difference and who *relate* to each other. Last, regarding truth, this conversation and the interpretations made are equally arbitrary to any others.

1.4.1. In general

Both Critical Theory and postmodernism reject the existence of an independent, unambiguous, a priori Truth/reality and discard positivist/empirical science as the only source of true knowledge. Furthermore, both emphasise that interests are an integral part of the production of truth/knowledge and thus that knowledge is never neutral and always normative.

I want to argue that Habermas' attempt to establish an alternative foundation, which he articulates through his concept of the 'ideal speech situation', distinguishes his Critical Theory most profoundly from postmodernism, because postmodernism is sceptical towards all foundations and does not want to rely on them. I agree on this with James Lacey (1996, p. 66) who asserts that Critical Theory is a modernist rather than a postmodernist approach. With his attempt Habermas creates another fixed, one-dimensional criterion for validity, namely rational argument in the 'ideal speech situation', with which knowledge can be evaluated and upon which knowledge can be accumulated. Although, Habermas recognises the normativity - and thus essential groundlesness and arbitrariness - of his alternative foundation for knowledge, it

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constructivist's postmodern inquiry into policy and evaluation, which appeals to Lacey and to which possibilities he wants to draw attention.

provides a framework for a grand theory, which postmodernists would criticise. I will comment more on this in the next section on boundaries.

Furthermore, Habermas' starting point for this alternative foundation is diametrically opposed to the basic assumptions of radical poststructuralism. Since he argues that language is inherently meaningful and directed to free communication in which everything is fully undistorted and understandable, language operates as a relation of sameness. For poststructuralists all language is meaningless in itself. Language acquires meaning through its relation to other language (intertextuality), but since all language is interpretation, meaning is always distorted and undecidable. Here, language operates as a relation of sameness and difference at the same time. Derrida describes this in his concept of différance (combining difference and deferrence) which articulates that:

> (...) meaning can never come to rest on absolute presence, its determinate specification is deffered, from one substitutive linguistic interpretation to another, in a movement without an end.
> (J. Derrida in P. Rosenau, 1990, p. 93)

1.4.2. Boundaries

As I have mentioned before, Habermas wants to return to a classical notion of politics. The open-endedness of this 'politics as ethics' appeals to Habermas, because it leaves room for emancipation and change. The absence of assumptions about what society should look like provides openings to move away from the modernist, technocratic view on politics and society.

I would like to argue, though, that Habermas' conceptualisation of rational argument with which rational consensus - and thus truth - is to be established in the 'ideal speech situation' is not fully open-ended. By establishing a new criterion of validity (or - in other words - a theory of truth), namely *rational* argument, Habermas reinforces the superiority of rationality over non-logical argument, intuition, imagination etc. In this hierarchical order, knowledge, which does not stand the test of rationality will be of less or no value for Critical Theory. All consensus reached on a different basis than rationality will thus be disregarded or excluded. The outcomes of consensus reached in the 'ideal speech situation' are thus not fully open-ended, but already partly determined by the boundaries drawn around the concept of 'rational consensus', which define what kind of consensus is valid.

Another question I would like to raise is how exactly rationality is defined and more importantly *who* will define it. Since there is no essential foundation for a finite conceptualisation of any term, rationality would also have to be defined in Habermas' 'ideal speech situation' by rational consensus, reached through rational argument. To me, this seems problematic. As I have interpreted Habermas, it seems that - for him - the definition of rationality is obvious and can thus be taken for granted. This is exactly the kind of reasoning which postmodernism puts to question. To speak in Foucauldian terms: the conceptualisation or construction of a term such as rationality takes place at a site where *power* is exercised. The constellation of power relations at that moment determines the final definition or construction. In turn, this final definition determines the boundaries of the concept and eventually what will be in- and excluded. This links to criticism that postmodernists make to Habermas, mentioned by Jürgen Haacke (1996, p. 268); postmodernists accuse Habermas of ignoring that all aspects of communication and social life are permeated by power relations. Habermas maintains that it is possible to overcome the discrepancies in power that define social relations. He can do so, because of the idealised qualities he ascribes to language. According to Habermas, both powerful and powerless have an interest in free speech if their interactions are to be successful for either one of them. (J. Haacke, 1996, p. 268) By assuming that language is inherently meaningful - for which there is no essential foundation either, Habermas excludes the possibility of the opposite; the essential meaningless of language.

Because Habermas does not want to accept just any sort of consensus, he needs a theory of truth; a criterion for validity. I want to argue that Habermas does not want to accept just any consensus, because of the implicit, normative goal he has set by his adherence to emancipation.

> There is, as a result of [Habermas] view of politics, an underlying conception of the nature and purpose of society. There is a substantive background normative theory which is unarticulated but which is grounded in the discovery, through an understanding of historically determined forms of society, of the realisation of human potential. These norms are not external to what humans do, but are immanent to the historically determined forms of action by which men shape themselves. The normative foundation of critical theory is implicit in the structure of social action and discourse it seeks to analyse. (M. Hoffman, 1987, p. 236)

The implicit, normative goal of the realisation of human potential gives direction to Critical Theory. Habermas does not only assume that there exists such a thing as human potential that can be realised, but also that society can move progressively towards this realisation, which he self-evidently claims to be a universal desirable goal. Habermas believes in social evolution and ethical progress through learning. "[He] argued that societies have evolved by learning how to use universal moral principles to resolve conflicting claims about the organisation of social and political life."(A. Linklater, 1992, p. 80) To postmodernists notions of ethical progress and moral universality are wholly arbitrary. They feel that the perceived self-evidence of moral and ethical progress and universality have led to structural exclusion of groups and ideas and to totalitarian truth claims. Habermas aims for progression towards the realisation of human potential by trying to find a way to overcome differences through 'rational consensus' based on 'rational argument', reached in 'the ideal speech situation'. Therewith he constructs a framework for a grand theory with a point of departure: dissatisfaction with the current situation, a goal: realisation of human potential, and a method to reach that goal: 'rational argument' in 'the ideal speech situation'.

Postmodernists, who are always sceptical about grand theories because of their perceived exclusionary character and inclination towards totalitarian truth claims, try to disrupt attempts to reach final conclusions, avoid to transcend diversity through synthesising and aim at heightening "the perception of crisis so that arbitrary constraints on human improvisation are challenged and broken down." (A. Linklater, 1992, p. 88) In other words, they try to leave as much room for thought and action as possible. Both Critical Theory and postmodernism refrain from detailed prescriptions for the future, but postmodernists also withhold from general comments or ideas concerning a preferred destiny of human kind.

In Sum, the 'art of the possible' described in Critical Theory is limited. Although, it is open-ended in the sense that it makes no assumptions about a final utopian society, it is limited by its own set-up, which sticks to ideas of human progress, commensurability of knowledge and superiority of rationality in order to reach its implicit goal for society, namely the realisation of human potential. Postmodernists are opposed to closure in general, therewith infinitely stretching the boundaries of the 'art of the possible'.

The infinite stretching of boundaries, the emphasis of radical postmodernism on the arbitrariness and incommensurability of all conceptualisations and the perceived essential meaninglesness of language have led to accusations of relativism and nihilism. I would like to address this in the next section on reflexivity.

1.4.3. Reflexivity

> Specifically, it has been argued that enhanced reflexivity in International Relations theory is a central contribution of the current post-positivist theoretical restructuring associated with the Third Debate. If true, this is certainly a welcome development, especially given that '[f]or many years the International Relations discipline has had the dubious honour of being among the least self-reflexive of the Western social sciences'. (M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 53)

Scholars such as Jürgen Haacke (1996, p. 271) tend to opt for versions of Critical Theory as the best way out of the 'Third Debate'. They fear that postmodernism will prove to be empty, because it refuses to evaluate, judge or point out desirable possibilities. From this point of view postmodernism only allows discussion but no action, since no choices can be made on the basis of equal desirability. Critical Theory, on the other hand, provides a clear framework to work with. It adds to traditional international relation theory a dimension of meta-theoretical reflection and gives it a more interdisciplinary character. At the same time, it maintains the possibilities for practical problem solving and attributions to (structural) social change.

Pauline Rosenau (1990, p. 100) asserts, with reference to the postmodernist rejection of representation, that postmodernist international relations can evolve in two directions. A nihilistic one, which is characterised by pessimism, despair and resignation to the perceived undecidability of most social questions, and a more optimistic one, which will aim for the reconstruction or replacement of representation and science in general.

As I have mentioned above (see p.4), both Critical Theory and postmodernism have roots in pragmatism. J.W. Lacey notes that pragmatists' attitude towards 'truth' has "led to the charge that pragmatists embrace relativism". (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 120) He continues to discuss a number of responses from pragmatists to this accusation. The first is from Stanley Fish, who maintains that:

> […] relativism is a position one can entertain, it is not position
> one can occupy. No one can be a relativist, because no one
> can achieve the distance from his own beliefs and assumptions
> which would result in their being no more authoritative for him
> than the beliefs and assumptions held by others, or for that
> matter, the beliefs and assumptions he himself used to hold.
> (S. Fish in J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 120)

Richard Bernstein argues that the charge of relativism is based on what he calls the 'Cartesian Anxiety', which he perceives as a false dichotomy between objectivism and relativism. The difference between an objectivist and a relativist is that for a relativist a permanent, ahistorical framework, metalanguage or 'Truth', against which we can measure and evaluate competing ideas, does not exist. The perceived need for such a framework stems from René Descartes, who has seduced us in an Either/Or situation by arguing that there is *either* a fixed foundation for knowledge, which provides reason to our being, *or*, if such foundation cannot be found, we will fall pray to madness, irrationality and moral chaos. It is fear for chaos and madness that makes humankind cling to foundations, epistemology and positivism. Bernstein feels we should exorcise the Cartesian Anxiety. This should be done through practical action and hermeneutics: the art of interpretation. Hermeneutics is put on stage as an alternative and a supplement to epistemology. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 121)

In his text on 'Reflexivity in international relations' (1993) Mark Neufeld refers to Bernstein's 'Cartesian Anxiety' when he describes full reflexivity. Neufeld argues that international relations theory should search for a fully reflexive orientation. He distinguishes three core elements of full reflexivity, which he discusses in contrast to postivisism. The first is theoretical reflection which involves awareness and disclosure of self-evident presuppositions. The second is to recognise "the inherently political-normative content of paradigms and the normal science traditions they generate"(M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 55) and thus to see that all standards are human made and not given, or imposed by nature as positivists believe. As mentioned before, Truth as the 'Mirror of Nature' or 'Truth as correspondence' is a basic assumption in positivism. The third is: "the affirmation of the possibility of reasoned judgements in the absence of objective standards." (M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 58) While positivism - through separation of the object and the subject - tries to establish a 'neutral observation language', which will allow for detailed comparison of competing

ideas, reflexive theorists accept incommensurability. For positivists this would mean to adhere to what Popper called 'The Myth of the Framework'. This means that one accepts that communication between and judgement on different frameworks of ideas is impossible, since one is always tied up in the set-up of one's own theories, expectations, experiences and language. While, as Neufeld argues that

> In contrast, reflexive theorists accept incommensurability as the necessary consequence of the fact that paradigm-specific knowledge-defining standards are themselves intimately connected to and embedded in competing social and political agendas, the politiconormative contents of which are not amenable to any neutral observation language. (M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 58)

Neufeld argues, however, that both 'Truth as correspondence' and the 'Myth of the Framework' are expressions of the 'Cartesian Anxiety' and hence, that full reflexivity involves recognising the essential incommensurability of competing paradigms, while, at the same time, maintaining that reasoned assessments are possible. In order to be able to make these reasoned assessments, the concept of reason must go beyond the limits of episteme. To do so is vital for a fully reflexive orientation. Reason should not depend on a "fixed Archimedean point outside of history or the existence of a neutral observation language." (M.Neufeld, 1993, p. 59). This is what - among others - Critical Theory and constructive postmodernism have tried to do. They emphasise a dialogic form of reasoning, without linking it to an eternal, universal standard. They try to develop and employ what Neufeld calls a 'language of qualitative worth', which can be used to consider normative claims and judge competing ideas by making reasoned assessments of the politico-normative context they rise in, serve and correspond to. (M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 60)

Finally, Neufeld defines reflexivity as:

> a meta-theoretical stance involving (i) a recognition of the interrelationship of the conception of 'facts' and 'values' on the one hand, and a community-specific social and political agenda on the other, and (ii) an openness to engage in reasoned dialogue to assess the merits of contending paradigms. (M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 60)

With this conceptualisation of reflexivity in mind he continues to assess contributions to the 'Third Debate'. He distinguishes three stances with regard to contending paradigms: 'commensurable and therefore comparable'; 'incommensurable and

therefore uncomparable' and finally - the only fully reflexive stand, which focuses on dialogic, non-foundationalist conceptions of reason- 'incommensurable and yet comparable'. Both Critical Theory and postmodernism are discussed as examples of the third stand. Neufeld regards Cox' adaptation of Critical Theory for international relations theory (see p. 8) as the best example of a fully reflexive orientation. Postmodernism's contribution to full reflexivity is mixed. Neufeld argues that postmodernists have been very reluctant to acknowledge the politico-normative context of their own approach. The more radical postmodernists refuse to choose between rival politico-normative claims. They withhold all judgement. All they attempt to do is deconstruct boundaries and decentralise knowledge-systems in order to avoid closure and totalisation. By doing so, they fall under Neufeld's second stance: incommensurable and therefore incomparable. Furthermore, Neufeld argues, a lot of postmodernists have made totalising critiques on reason and therefore it seems that "postmodernism is better suited to undermining the role of reason *in toto* than to expanding the notion or reason beyond the confines of positivist *episteme* in a way consistent with reflexivity." (M. Neufeld, 1993, p. 75)

I find Neufeld's notion of full reflexivity a useful tool for assessing theoretical contributions to international relations theory and the 'Third Debate' in particular. I agree with him that we should adhere to the notion that ideas are in essence incommensurable, strive to stay away from nihilism and search for ways to be able to *discuss* different paradigms. But I disagree that - on a theoretical level at least - it is necessary to compare and make a choice between different paradigms. Only in practical situations, where certain problems have to be solved and thus decisions have to be taken and choices have to be made, it is necessary to privilege, although only for the moment, one idea or another.[14] But on a theoretical level, I believe, the 'art of the possible' should be constantly stretched to its furthest and all attempts to theoretical or disciplinary closure should be distorted. On this level there is no need for decision making, choice or system building. To me this is exactly what is so wonderful about theory. It is the site where imagination rules and where there are no practical limits. (Imagination is already limited enough as it is, by each person's historical, psychological, socio-politico-normative context.) Through the maintenance

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[14] In my opinion one can not prescribe on which basis this choice is to be made. It is a choice that will differ according to circumstances, people involved, preferences, knowledge, background, space and time. In its ultimate essence it will always be arbitrary, because one is never all knowing.

of openness on the theoretical level, it remains fully dynamic and highly adaptable and thus able to provide as many options to choose from - when needed for practical situations - as possible.

Another point I want to make is, that, as Habermas, Neufeld tightly links comparability of ideas to reason. Although both are trying to broaden the concept of reason by taking it beyond the limits of episteme, neither of them is willing to let it go altogether. This I will call 'Rational Man's Anxiety': the fear that if one no longer relies on rational reason - whether of the epistomological, hermeneutical or any kind, irrationality will take over and all will turn into anarchy and chaos. Again, on the practical level, it might be a good idea - at least for now - to opt for rational reasoning, but on a theoretical level one might try to explore what 'part of the possible' surfaces without reason, or with combinations of reason and 'unreason'.

1.5. The Limit

Here, I want to end my conversation with Critical Theory and postmodernism in the 'Third Debate'. To me it seems that it is not necessary to prefer one approach over another as a solution or a way out of the 'Third Debate'. Actually, international relations theory should always remain in the 'Third Debate'. That is to say that the discussion on ideas, perspectives and their basic assumptions should be a continuous one, which leaves room for multiple approaches. I do not believe it is necessary to try to create a theoretical uniformity in the field. Together with, as V. Spike Peterson noted, "a shift from oppositional to relational thinking,"(V. Spike Peterson, 199, p.186) I believe that a focus on reflexivity, boundaries and innovation, which are all apparent in both Critical Theory and postmodernism, is enough to keep international relations going.

Both on a theoretical and methodological level (which I will discuss in a later section (see p. 63)) I think ways can be found to balance elements of different approaches. As for instance, elements of Critical Theory, which is a very constructive approach in the sense that it leaves room for reflexivity *and* for political action and change, can balance with certain elements of radical postmodernism, which tend to sink into nihilism and apathy. The other way around, postmodernism leaves more space for other forms of reasoning than rationality, which balances with certain elements of Critical Theory which tend to suffer from, what I have termed, 'rational man's anxiety'. Another element of the postmodern attitude which is important is the

constant aim to avert closure of any kind. This attitude encourages theoretical reflexivity and ensures the continuous questioning of final answers.

In my opinion reflexivity in international relations theory, 'The Third Debate' and the 'art of the possible' are all best served with what Foucault has called the 'limit-attitude':

> We must always remain in the position of beginning. We must always be prepared to rethink our most cherished versions of the future.
> (M. Foucault in R. Devetak, 1995, p. 46)

This is where scenarios comes in...

Part Two: Scenarios; practising the art of the possible

2. The Scenario method

> Scenarios don't predict the future so much as they illuminate it, preparing us for the unexpected. Scenarios are multiple approaches to the future, stories of the inevitable and necessary (...) recombined with the unpredictable and matters of choice. The best scenarios aren't necessarily those that come true; they're the ones that subvert expectations, providing deep insights into the changes happening all around us. The better scenarios are, the more they penetrate to the deepest possible understanding of the present.
> (P. Mc Corduck and N. Ramsey, 1996, p. 18)

In the following section of my thesis I will describe some of the scenario method's history, concepts and approaches and work out an illustrative case-study.

2.1. History

Scenarios have their roots in the military, where it was used in war games by the U.S. Air Force. During and after WOII it was taken up by the RAND corporation and further developed by the Hudson Institute, established by Herman Kahn, after his resignation from RAND. In his most famous book on scenarios, *The Year 2000* (1967), Kahn reworked scenarios to a tool for business strategy. From the 1960's

onwards the scenario method found its way into the corporate world in which it further evolved.

Shell was one of the first corporations which started and continued to use scenarios. Pierre Wack introduced them at Shell. Together with Ted Newland and other colleagues from Group Planning (a newly formed department at Shell) they used scenarios to warn Shell's executives for a possible dramatic rise in oil-prices. Although their warning was understood and taken seriously, no one responded to it by an actual change in behaviour. Pondering on the reasons for this lack of action, Wack realised he should aim at changing the executives' view of reality. Because oil prices had been stable for so long and would remain fairly stable according to the prevailing economic logic, Shell's executives simply could not conceive of the possibility that this might change. They were locked in their own mind-set.

Instead of just presenting simple tales about possible futures, Wack worked out a new type of scenarios which aimed more directly at the 'mental models' of managers. These scenarios focused on current forces in the world, which were already affecting the industry or would definitely do so in the near future. By elaborating on the possible implications of these forces, linking them directly to today's reality and from there onto possible future realities, these scenarios - following their own internally consistent logic - led Shell's executives step by step out of their mind-lock. Because they were set-up as stories, the readers actually 'felt' or 'lived' through the scenarios. Caught by the stories they were lured to *imagine* situations hitherto believed to be improbable or impossible. This turned out to be Wack's breakthrough and when the oil-crisis occurred in 1973, Shell was prepared.

Out of Group Planning in Shell originated Global Business Network (GBN), an international think-tank and consultancy firm. At the moment GBN is the most prominent organisation in the world on scenario-activity. Its leading figure is Peter Schwartz, whose *Art of the Longview* (1991) is currently the leading text for the scenario method. In essence, Schwartz and Jay Ogilvy (once both members of Group Planning), created a new type of organisation which "does for other clients, what Pierre Wack has done for Shell."(P. Schwartz, 1991, p.92) GBN is a network of, what they call, 'remarkable people'[15] . Its purpose is to establish "a highly focused

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[15] A 'remarkable person' is defined by the French philosopher G.I. Gurdjieff (a close associate of Pierre Wack) as "someone who stands out from those around him by the resourcefulness of his mind, and knows how to be

and filtered information flow and reorganise [members'] perceptions about alternative futures through the scenario method."(P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 92) With its set-up as an open 'information-gathering company' (P. Schwartz, 1991, p.92) GBN differs from closed 'traditional' consulting companies, which do not want to share their knowledge and information.

> We saw this new "Global Business Network" as a company based on openness. People would share their insights and knowledge, and take away our insights and knowledge in return. Some companies would hire network members to tackle special projects; others would simply pay to participate. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 92/93)

This approach has, on the one hand, led to the gradual spread of the scenario method to a wide variety of fields and professions, such as this thesis, conflict mediation and the film industry, in which the scenario method was recently used to develop the script of the film "Deep Impact". While, on the other hand, through the network construction, users of the scenario method are encouraged to stay in touch with its source: GBN.

2.2. Approaches and Concepts

> He who predicts the future, lies even when he tells the truth. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 6)

It is important to emphasise that scenarios are *not* predictions about the future. Rather, scenarios help to perceive different futures in the present. Schwartz defines 'scenario' as: "a tool for ordering one's perceptions about alternative future environments, in which one's decisions might be played out." Or, in other words: "a set of organised ways for us to dream effectively about our own future." (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 4)

The scenario method is based on the assumption that the future is unpredictable. Therefore, it is necessary to accept uncertainty, to understand it and make it part of reasoning. Through the creation of a few consistent pathways into the future, which take the form of stories (scenarios), the complexity of uncertainty is reduced to manageable proportions and it is structurally incorporated in thinking. (P.

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restrained in the manifestations which proceed form his nature, at the same time conducting himself justly and

Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 96) Kees van der Heijden[16] and Pierre Wack relate that in the beginning, scenarios were only an extension of the traditional 'predict-and-control' approach to planning used by corporations. The only difference with single-line forecasting was that scenarios provided a 'most likely' projection through the assessment of different futures. (K. van der Heijden, 1996, p.15)

Single line forecasts work reasonably well during relatively stable periods. What makes forecasts so dangerous is that they are constructed on the assumption that tomorrow's world will be much the same as today's. Consequently, forecasts fail when they are needed most, namely as major changes suddenly occur. Instead of trying to perfect forecasting techniques, which aims at getting 'the right' forecast, a new assumption was adopted that led to the use of scenarios. This assumption is that the future is no longer stable; it is a moving target for which no single 'right' projection can be deduced from past behaviour. (P. Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 28) Therefore, the scenario method - as it is used by corporations today - is no longer based on probability, but on qualitative causal thinking. It provides a method with which decision makers can work out their intuitive needs and enhance their understanding of current changes in society. (K. van der Heijden, 1996, p. 15)

Wack distinguishes two kinds of scenarios: first generation scenarios, also known as learning scenarios, and decision scenarios. The purpose of learning scenarios is not action, but gaining understanding and insight. They are exploratory and map out the future context. They aim at perceiving more clearly the connections between various forces and events driving the system. But good learning scenarios are not enough:

> Scenarios can be successful in structuring uncertainty only
> when (1) they are based on a sound analysis of reality, and (2)
> they change the decision maker's assumptions about how the
> world works and compel him to change his image of reality. (P.
> Wack, 1996, p. 32)

The realisation that changing the 'mental models' of decision makers was necessary for the scenario method to be effective led to the development of decision scenarios.

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tolerantly towards the weakness of others." (Gurdjieff in Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 9)

[16] Kees van der Heijden is Professor of General and Strategic Management at the Graduate Business School, Strathclyde University, Glasgow, U.K. and Visiting Professor at Nijenrode University, Holland. He used to be in charge of Royal Dutch/Shell's scenario planning, as head of the Group's Business Environment Division. He is a co-founder of Global Business Network, Emeryville California and is currently a Principal.

Mental models are based on past experiences and information which have been internalised. Wack calls this mental model or internal map the decision maker's 'microcosm'. Where learning scenarios just deal with the 'outside world', decision scenarios deal with two worlds: they explore the world of facts and they aim at the world of perceptions, existing in the microcosm of decision makers and companies. (P. Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 94) Wack's concern from then on was not so much predicting the future, but enhancing people's ability to gain new insights through reperception.

I believe, that Wack's approach towards and development of the scenario method paved the way for its usage in other fields than the military and corporate world. Not only corporate executives perceive the world through their own 'mental models', but so do scientists and as a matter of fact, all individuals. Especially scientists and perhaps all individuals have an interest in gaining new insights through reperception.

2.2.1. Story telling

Basically, using the scenario method means you write three or four[17] in depth stories about the future, evolving around different combinations of a number of plots or logics. The stories have to be internally consistent and they have to contain elements of present reality. All scenarios evolve around the same issue, which you want to gain insight about and/or decide upon. Thus, you start with isolating and formulating a question or a decision upon which you want to build the scenarios. This can be a question or decision concerning your organisation, a society or any other unit of interest. To give some examples: scenarios have been written on the future of South Africa (A. Kahane, GBN, 1993), the futures of women (N. Ramsey & P. McCorduck, GBN, 1996) and organisations in the 21st century. (GBN, 1995)

As Schwartz explains: stories add a psychological dimension, which empirical data lack, namely, *meaning*. They give a more all-round explanation of *why* things can happen in a certain way. This is a crucial aspect of understanding possibilities. Furthermore, stories allow simultaneous perspectives on the meaning of events from

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[17] Three scenarios is better than two, because two might not capture reality and they tend to become both extremes of the same line of thinking: the worst case scenario and utopia. With three this danger also exists, because the third scenario tends to become the average between the two extremes. One never uses more than four, because the mind cannot handle so many possibilities and the whole exercise will become too complex. When you make three, the third has to follow a different logic/perspective than the other two. (Schwartz, 1991, p. 140)

different characters. In other words: "stories help people cope with complexity." (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 38) Writing scenarios is writing myths of the future. You try to imagine the attitudes of key players (which can be individuals, groups, institutions etc.) who will influence the shape of events. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 39)

2.2.2. Reflection and knowledge

Following the assumption that we all perceive the world through our own 'mental models', it is important to be consciously aware of this 'microcosm' and of the responses we make accordingly - not to reality, but to our *image* of reality.

> It's all part of the process of self-reflection: Understanding yourself and your biases, identifying what matters to you, and perceiving where to put your attention. It takes persistent work and honesty to penetrate our internal mental defenses. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 59)

A self-reflecting attitude is important through the whole process of the scenario method. Since observations from the 'real world' must be built into the story, scenarios require research. While you are gathering information it is important that you are constantly aware of your own assumptions and prejudices. Thus you have to look for disconforming information.[18] This is important, because people tend to pay attention to things that fit the perspective they hold, while you should try to open up to the unexpected. You must not only try to become aware of your own filters, but constantly readjust and challenge them to manage increasing amounts of information without becoming overwhelmed. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 61)

> Scenario researchers train themselves to look at the world as horses[19] do; because new knowledge develops at the fringes. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 69)

Schwartz argues that people and organisations often 'store' their most basic and cherished beliefs in a protected centre. Next to this centre are the fringes, containing ideas which are not completely rejected, but also not legitimised (yet). Then, at the outer edges roam ideas which are commonly rejected. Innovation poses a threat to the centre. Existing centralised power-structures and institutions all tend to be

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[18] Poppers' *falsification* (hypotheses are not proven by verification, but can be rejected through falsification) made this common practice in science.

[19] Horses' eyesight is sharp at the edges and blurry in the centre.

inherently conservative - giving preference to the status-quo over dynamics - therewith suspending innovation and driving unorthodox thinkers to the margins. In social and intellectual margins there is more room for imagination, but there also it is constrained by "a sense of current reality." (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 69)

2.2.3. Driving Forces, Predetermined Elements and Critical Uncertainties

In the process of gathering information you have to look for 'driving forces'. In order to find these driving forces it is useful to cluster ideas and combine them into a smaller number of broader concepts which can be related to each other. While forming and studying these clusters, you should be able to detect the driving forces of the system you are dealing with. Kees van der Heijden defines a driving force as "a variable which has a relatively high level of explanatory power in relation to the data displayed in the cluster."(K. van der Heijden, 1996, p.189) Driving forces "are the elements that move the plot of a scenario." (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 101) Driving forces are usually outside our direct personal control. They can consist, for example, of certain political or economical trends, technological developments or large scale environmental degradation. To deal with one's own question or to make one's own decision, however, it is important to recognise and understand these driving forces and their impact.

For instance, when you are writing scenarios about labour in the future, a major driving force will be the size of the work force. This size is dependent on a number of variables, some of which are *predetermined* while others are *uncertain.* The number of people which will reach their twenties in ten years time is a predetermined element which can be derived from demography. But the size of migration flows and their directions are uncertain. Since migration partly determines the size of the work force, this variable is a 'critical uncertainty'. Both predetermined elements and critical uncertainties are closely related. By questioning assumptions about perceived predetermined elements they might turn out not to be as predetermined as they seemed and the other way around. This process might lead you to change your 'mental map' on reality. Or, at least, you will be able to consider your actions when something you never thought would happen, does occur. Driving forces, predetermined elements and critical uncertainties are termed scenario building blocks by Schwartz.

(P. Schwartz, 1991) They help to structure the exploration of the future in scenarios.
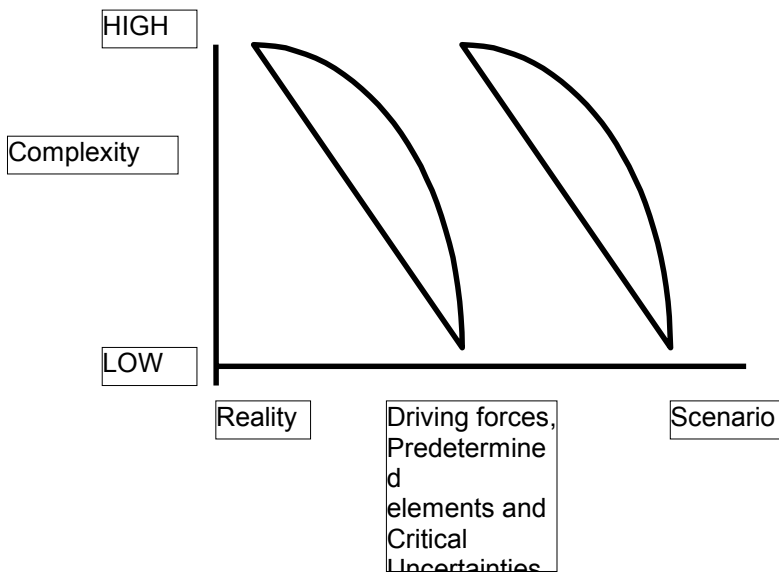
The above figure was drawn out for me by Paul de Ruijter (GBN) to show the process of writing scenarios. You start by reducing the complexity of reality through the clustering of your ideas in driving forces, predetermined elements and critical uncertainties and then you increase complexity again while writing the scenarios. This increase in complexity at the end is an essential element of the scenario method. By doing so you are able to write an in depth story, which allows for the advantages of storytelling mentioned above (see p. 30) and for the inclusion of more variables than the ones you identified as driving forces - whether predetermined or uncertain- thus creating a more all-round image. In other words: you start with reality in all its complexity, then you continue to reduce reality's complexity to a model of it in order to make it manageable, which you then develop into a number of new complex portrayals of reality. (Of course, you are never able to grasp the full complexity of reality to begin with, let alone develop fully complex scenarios, but the attempt to approximate it is arguably more useful than basing your thoughts and actions on reductionist models.)

2.2.4. The Plot

Each level - political, economic, social - ha[s] its own version of what scenario-planners call: "logics": the plot which ties together the elements of the system. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 135)

Scenarios are built around plots. According to different possible plots or logics they describe how driving forces might behave in the future. The plots relevant for

scenarios are mostly derived from real-life economies, political systems, technologies and social perceptions. Usually, several plot lines intersect, based on the scenario-planner's understanding of forces and the way they relate to each other. By extending this through imagination in two, three or four coherent portrayals of the future, scenarios emerge. Schwartz distinguishes a number of plots that can be followed. The first is 'winners and losers'. This logic originates from the perspective that the world is essentially limited. It operates according to the 'zero-sum game': if some people become richer, others become poorer. If humankind continues to usurp the earth's resources, the environment will collapse, etc. In this plot there is always conflict. It is about survival of the fittest. Compromise is a balance of power. Following this logic it is more important *who* you stand with than *what* you stand for. (P. Schwartz, 1991, 141-144) The second plot is 'challenge and response'. The term is derived from adventure stories, in which the heros of the story face several challenges on a row. Every time they have faced a challenge and overcome it they have been changed by it. Thus facing and passing the test is important for the enrichment of the heros' character. The perspective here is that challenges give meaning to life and are as such desirable. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 144-147) Another plot is 'evolution'. Change occurs, mostly slowly, in one direction: growth or decline. An example of an evolutionary plot Schwartz gives is technology. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 147-151) Then there is 'revolution', which stands for sudden change in an unpredictable direction. This is also called 'discontinuity' (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 151) Others are 'cycles', 'infinite possibility', 'lone ranger' and 'my generation'. 'Cycles' refer mainly to the cyclical logic of market economies. 'Infinite possibility' refers to the perception that the world will improve infinitively. 'Lone ranger' is based on the romantic plot of individuals who go their own way regardless existing conventions and rules. Last, 'my generation' which pays attention to the impact on society of large groups of people forming subcultures.

Schwartz warns against the unbroken line in a plot. This means that some changes or events do not have to evolve to their logical consequences. "The threat of war, breads resistance to war." (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 159)

2.2.5. Learning and language

People engaged in the making of scenarios have mainly referred to 'learning' as the learning process in businesses or other organisations. From this perspective

'learning' or 'institutional learning' as it is called, is aimed at survival and/or growth of the business or organisation. In other words 'learning' is used for planning. Peter Schwartz argues in this context that you "can make better decisions by learning about each other's understanding of the world."(P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 204) Learning and language are closely related. Arie de Geus, who has written an article in *Harvard Business Review* on 'Planning as Learning' writes:

> When people play with [mental models of the world], they are actually creating a new language among themselves that expresses the knowledge they have acquired. And here we come to the most important aspect of institutional learning (...): the institutional learning process is a process of language development. As the implicit knowledge of each learner becomes explicit, his or her mental model becomes a building block of the institutional model.
> (A. de Geus, 1988, p. 74)

Scenarios are such language.

2.2.6. Memories of the future

Scenarios have been described as 'memories of the future' or its usage as 'rehearsing the future'. (P. Schwartz, 1991) This means that what you are basically doing, while using scenarios, is already living through simulated events. Thus sensitising yourself to unfolding dramas in the future. By doing so we

> suspend our disbelief in all the futures: [allowing] us to think
> that any one of them might take place. Then we can prepare for
> what we *don't* think is going to happen. (P. Schwartz, 1991, p.
> 195)

2.3. Summarising ...

" [The s]cenario [method] is a disciplined way to <u>think </u>about the future."(P. Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 95) Its basic assumption is that the future is unpredictable. Therefore, understanding of uncertainty should be a structural part of reasoning. One of its main objectives is to gain understanding of the driving forces that will influence the shape of future-systems. Scenarios are in depth narrative portrayals of the future which structure the future-context into predetermined and uncertain elements. Scenarios are no quasi-forecasts. "Instead they describe different 'worlds', not just a different outcome of the same world." (P. Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 96)

> Scenarios are (...) an effective device for organising a variety of
> much seemingly unrelated information, economic,
> technological, competitive, political, societal—some
> quantitative, some qualitative, and translating it into a
> framework for judgement.
> (P. Wack in GBN, 1996, p. 97/98)

Peter Schwartz says his *Art of the Longview* is about freedom. To him uncertainty is "the handmaiden of freedom. For freedom to have meaning, our choices must have consequences" (Schwartz, 1991, epilogue) and we must take responsibility for them.

Scenarios aim for 'aha'- experiences; rediscovering and structuring the original (...) power of creative thinking in contexts of great complexity, rapid change and uncertainty. By doing so the scenario method attempts to bring into practice Foucault's 'limit attitude' and 'the art of the possible'. I will elaborate on this in part three of this thesis.

2.4. Illustrative case-study

On November 17-19, 1997 GBN held their annual WorldView Meeting in the Kurhaus in Scheveningen. At these meetings subscribing members (companies) and Network members from business, science, arts etc. come together to exchange ideas about an actual theme and its implications for the future.

This year's topic was*: business and social responsibility.* The key question was: "Is business *for* society or is business *of* society?" In other words: Is business an outside force that operates according to its own dynamics, without regard for the concerns of our societies? Is it an insertion, an intrusion, or is it a companion, a participant in society, and can business collaborate with the communities within which it operates? (Jim Cowan (eds.), 1997, p. 1) I will elaborate on this when I discuss the set-up of my scenarios.

One of the meeting's main objectives was "to create an appropriate language for articulating wider values than those currently dominating the language of business." (J. Cowan (eds.), 1997, p.1) Further meeting objectives were "reperceiving business as a civic activity in a civil society, and in doing so reframing the mental models of business; creating a framework for considering and 'deconstructing' dilemmas between business and social responsibility; identifying the skills that companies and organisations must develop to deal with these dilemmas; identifying socio-politico 'inventions' needed to resolve the dilemmas, i.e., ways of looking at, talking about, and mediating between different sets of values and identifying a small number of robust issues on the topic of business a social responsibility that we believe will emerge in the future." (J. Cowan (eds.), 1997, p.1-2)

In order to achieve these objectives meeting attendants divided themselves in seven groups around clustered themes deduced from a whole list of topics, questions and experiences which had come up in the preceding plenary discussion. The seven clusters formed around: "motivations for being socially responsible (spirituality, product liability, and safety); new contexts, new stake holders (global corporations, the media, governments); employment (responsibilities to employees, subcontractors, the learning society); developed and developing countries (NGO's, Third World); technology (the Year 2000 problem, R&D, technology as an enabler, access), politicians and governments (infrastructure, self-regulation, home vs. host governments) [and] financial systems (privatisation, investment criteria, the arts as

value)" (J. Cowan (eds.), 1997, p. 3-4) These groups spent a large part of the rest of the meeting together to discuss their respective topics. In the end all was brought together in a closing plenary session. Afterwards, a written account of the meeting was made.

Since I was present at large parts of the meeting and had done some research on the topic beforehand, I have chosen this meeting as the basis for my illustrative case.
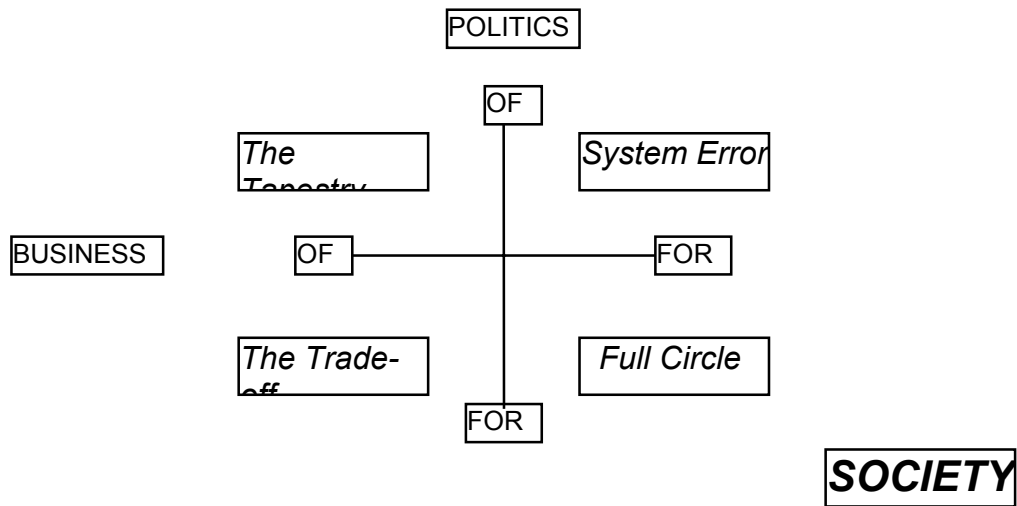
2.4.1. Set-up

For the purpose of this thesis I decided that it would be appropriate to work out an illustrative case-study, in order to provide a concrete example of the scenario method put to practice. I want to emphasise that it is no more than illustrative. My scenarios only give a superficial glance of their relevant usage in international relations. More in depth and scientific use of the scenario method would involve a group of people who go through a whole process, including brainstorming, more research and specific research on the topic and finally the draft of scenarios. This was beyond my abilities for the purpose of this thesis. Therefore, I have chosen a general approach to the topic and accordingly have written four general, exploratory scenarios. This type of learning scenarios can be used to determine further, more specific research on a topic or certain aspects of it, or to develop decision or focused scenarios involving questions for which a topic or parts of it are relevant.

The data I have used for my scenarios are the report of the meeting, some literature research on business and social responsibility and interviews I held with some meeting attendants.

2.4.1.1. Aim and driving forces of the scenarios

The following scenarios aim to explore in general the relation between business and social responsibility as it was brought forward at GBN's WorldView meeting on business and social responsibility. What - in this context - can social responsibility possibly mean and how can it possibly relate to business? And what can business possibly mean in relation to social responsibility?

After some contemplation and discussion with Paul de Ruijter (GBN) I set out to explore four different future directions of the relation between business and social responsibility set up along the following axes:

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                    ┌─────────┐
                    │ POLITICS│
                    └─────────┘
                       ┌────┐
                       │ OF │
                       └────┘
   ┌──────────┐                    ┌────────────┐
   │ The       │                   │System Error│
   │ Tapestry  │                   └────────────┘
   └──────────┘
┌──────────┐   ┌────┐           ┌─────┐
│ BUSINESS │   │ OF ├───────────┤ FOR │
└──────────┘   └────┘           └─────┘
   ┌──────────┐                    ┌────────────┐
   │ The Trade-│                   │ Full Circle│
   │ off       │                   └────────────┘
   └──────────┘
                      ┌─────┐
                      │ FOR │
                      └─────┘

                              ┌──────────┐
                              │ SOCIETY  │
                              └──────────┘
```

The 'business'-axe is chosen in accordance with the main question of the meeting.

Although the above was not further elaborated on in the report of the meeting, the concepts used need some clarification. I draw on Gramsci, who distuingished three spheres, which partly overlap. These are civil society, the political sphere and the economic sphere. (K. Biekart, 1998, p. 21) He added the notion of 'political society', which is "a separate sphere of actors and institutions mediating, articulating and institionalising the relations between the state and civil society." (K. Biekart, 1998, p. 23) The above is visualised in the following picture:

```
        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
        │           State              │
        │                              │
  ┌─────┼──────────┐                   │
  │     │Political │                   │
  │     │Society   │                   │
  │     └──────────┼───────────────────┘
  │                │
  │ Civil society  │
  │                │
  └────────────────┘
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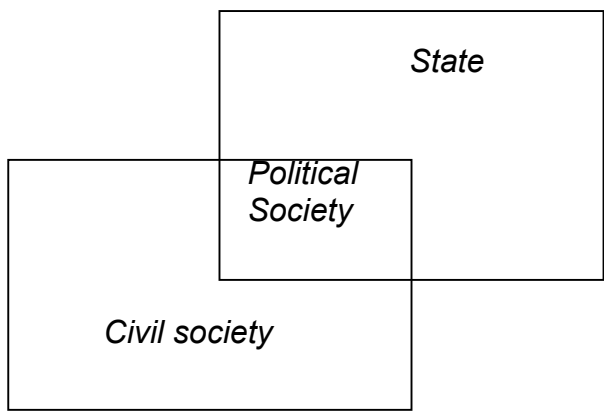
(K. Biekart, 1998, p. 24)

The same picture can be drawn regarding the relation between the 'economic shpere' and 'civil society', with business in between:
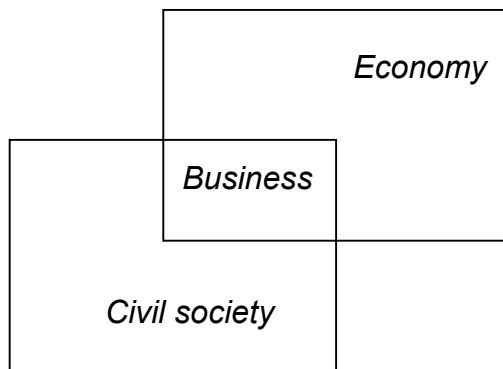
With this in mind, I have interpreted the key-question asked in the meeting and have constructed the other axe.

The 'politics'-axe is chosen, because I perceive 'politics' to be one of the main driving forces regarding business and social responsibility. How will 'social responsibility' be defined and by whom, which norms and values will be discussed and competed and, again, by whom? What legislature will be developed regarding business and social responsibility and by whom? All questions involving politics, exercised by societal forces, such as pressure groups, NGO's, individuals, etc. and by governmental forces, such as regional authorities like the European Union, national governments and local authorities, etc. Perhaps not only 'business', but also 'politics' might be restructured in the process. Therefore, I feel it is appropriate to ask the same question about politics as about business: Is politics *for* society, or is it *of* society? In other words: Does politics belong to the Political realm of national and other governmental authorities? Is this Political realm a separate force in society, which operates according to its own dynamics -whether democratic or otherwise - controls and regulates society from the outside via rules, legislature and its monopoly on armed force? Or, is the 'personal political' as many feminists claim; is politics everywhere residing in all human interaction? Might the public/private divide in this context be obsolescent and might politics be integrated in society along different lines and exercised through different structures than the governmental ones? exercised through different structures than the governmental ones?

From the data (see p. 37) I derived a number of other driving forces that play a role in my scenarios. These nearly overlap with the seven categories that were identified at the meeting and around which the group had divided itself. (see p. 36) The first, which is the most diffuse and uncertain is 'motivations for being socially

responsible'. This force refers to the interaction of, among others, experiences, ideas, awareness and interpretation of problems and developments, incentives, impediments, perceived gains and losses which underlie motivations of individuals and groups in their various - and often multiple- roles in society. The second is 'glocalisation' which refers to the simultaneous process of globalisation and localisation. Glocalisation is a container term which includes, on the one hand, the development of a world economy based on capitalism, the expansion of (free) trade, the growth and therewith increasing impact of multinational corporations on global society, the development of an international division of labour, the globalisation and liberalisation of finance, the growing accessibility to information world wide through internet and other information technology, the inter- and transnationalisation of pressure groups, such as Greenpeace and other social and cultural organisations. On the other hand, it includes, among others, the rise of grassroot organisations and local parties dealing with issues concerning small geographical areas and (renewed) interest in nationalism, ethnicity and local culture. The next two driving forces can actually be included in glocalisation; privatisation, which refers to the transfer of responsibilities - such as health care, social insurance, etc.- traditionally held by government or public institutions to private businesses, and the increasing role of NGO's (non governmental organisations), which are usually single-issue and non-profit organisations. The last is technology and then mainly communication and information technology. The millennium problem is taken as a key event for the developments regarding this driving force.

Last, I want to say something about the perspective of writing used in scenarios. You can choose many different perspectives and styles for writing scenarios, which have different effects on the reader. To illustrate this, I have written the first two scenarios from a general perspective and the last two from a personal perspective.

2.4.1.2. In short

In the first scenario, *The Tapestry,* both politics and business are eventually *of* society. In other words they are both fully integrated in society, they coincide, and can no longer be categorised as separate realms or parts of society. This involves a reorganisation of both. The national state system will decline and eventually disappear. Decisions concerning social responsibility as well as other issues will be

taken in networks which are formed around topics, pressing problems and themes. Participation in these networks is free and accessible to everyone, which means that people from all over the world and from different parts of society such as business executives, students and environmentalists can be member of the same network. Networks are linked and information flows freely between them. All this is made possible by communication technology. In this non-hierarchical order, both politics and business are fully integrated into society and cease to exist as separate realms.

In the second scenario, *The Trade-off*, business will eventually be *of* society and politics *for*. This means that business will reorganise and integrate with society at large, while politics remains in the separate, Political realm, unable to transform totally. This will lead to a gradual marginalisation of the Political realm. Governments continue to privatise and business fills the gap, but not in the way as expected and feared by people who oppose market-regulation of social issues. In this scenario I have tried to integrate some of the socio-politico inventions that were made in GBN's WorldView meeting.

System Error, is the third scenario*.* The millennium problem has not effectively been dealt with and gets totally out of hand. In reaction to this a world government is formed to overcome the crisis. The shock of events transforms public opinion and shifts priorities. The Political realm is reorganised and becomes *of* society. People turn away from material wealth, economic and technological progress. They value and prioritise human relations and social interaction of which politics is an inherent and integral part. Economy and technology are separated from, and subordinated to society at large. The purpose and role of the economy are strictly defined. Although the working of the capitalist market is left intact, it is heavily regulated and only allowed to operate in its own separate market space. Thus, business becomes *for* society as society is de-economised and re-politicised.

The last scenario is *Full Circle*. Despite people's efforts nothing changes much. The circumstances are simply not right. The world economy enters a downward spiral and political turmoil increases. People stick to themselves and hang on to what they have in these difficult times. In this conservative period, in which there is little trust, ideas about further integration of the economic, political and social realm are abandoned. The division even widens. Accordingly, both politics and business become *for* society.

2.5. The Scenarios

1. The Tapestry

When, according to the dominant calendar, the world stood on the verge of entering the 21st century, it was as complex and problematic as it always had been. But awareness of its complexity and problems had risen among the earth's human inhabitants. This awareness in combination with great uncertainties and rapid change shifted perspectives and redraw the boundaries of being human. What now has become known as Delightment started in this very turbulent period just before the year 2000. Major changes had upset the world system, which shattered beliefs people had had so far and left most of them in a continuous state of anxiety and fear. In this period people had to learn how to cope with what we became to understand as the delights of change, uncertainty and differences. They had to let go of their inclination towards security and control. Inventive solutions and approaches developed by a great variety of groups and individuals from all over the world to loads of problems led to the creation of the Tapestry and eventually to the (Un)ravelution.

Delightment, though no more than an attitude, surely facilitated the process. To live Delighted means that you take the responsibility to continuously (re)create your own identity through participation in human society. Most of today's people enjoy ongoing fragmentation, (de)construction and negotiating of boundaries. Through our everybody-online network - and of course simply with our mobile phones - we can communicate with literally every single person on the globe and are directly involved in every decision making process we want to be part of.

Of course, the weaving of the Tapestry did not happen overnight. It involved a huge reorganisation of the structures of human society. Notably in the realms of politics and business. A number of things coincided here. There was the year 2000 problem which had to be dealt with. There was the process called glocalisation, which pointed to the simultaneous, but seemingly contradictory development of globalisation on the one hand and localisation of certain issues, companies, organisations, policies etc. on the other. Simultaneously, a lot of national governments embarked upon the process of privatisation. Therewith abdicating a lot of their traditional responsibilities as guards of social welfare, such as healthcare. Furthermore, some national governments started to decentralise by allocating tasks

to local authorities and by transferring legislative power to larger institutions such as the European Union. This processes had started in the last century and continued while time passed. By the time the first couple of decades of the 21st century were over the power of national governments had decreased enormously. The following picture illustrates the above:
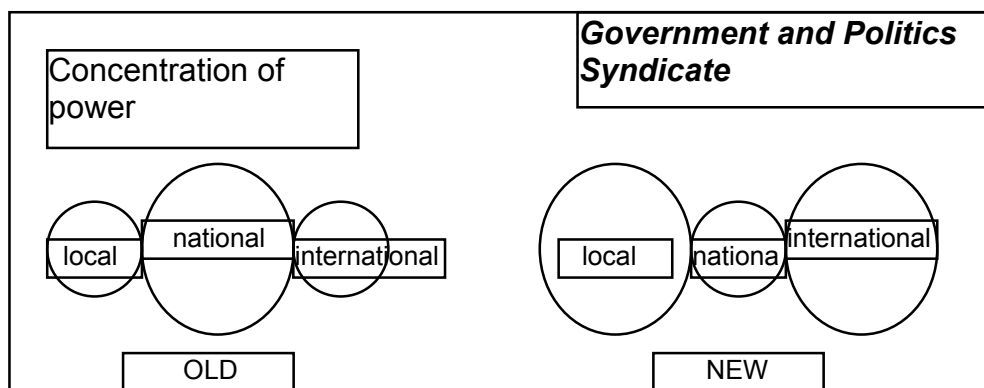
Many people had lost interest and trust in national politics during the 1990's, because they felt that their national governments were no longer able to satisfyingly influence the social economic situation. Politics was largely seen as an untrustworthy business, in which politicians were only after personal success involving themselves in the most atrocious scandals in the meantime. In the face of many issues, such as environmental degradation, which needed global solutions, but local implementation, traditional national political parties started to lose legitimacy and support. In the search for solutions to practical problems their identities started to diffuse and overlap, and they made way for more issue-focused groups and networks.

NGO's gained support in the beginning of the 21st century, since most of them dealt with issues, such as environment or human rights, which became increasingly important throughout the world. NGO's impact was widely felt sometimes, not in the least by business. Large corporations came increasingly under attack from NGO's with the support of customers and often mass media with regard to their behaviour or involvement in situations where environment or human rights were at stake. Business, which had traditionally relied on national governments to deal with such issues, found a vacuum there and started to develop its own response in co-operation with NGO's, local and international organisations and all sorts of networks.

Pressed by the need for change because of the problems and developments described above, ideas, perspectives and beliefs on which direction to take developed simultaneously. Out of this process Delightment emerged and evolved. The seeds for this approach can be traced back to thinkers of the last decades in the former century. Looking back, the ideas of Hannah Arendt proved farsighted regarding the restructuring of , what was then termed, the public (political) and private (business) sphere. Her ideas formulate the perspective on human society which prevails up to the present and on which today's 'normality' is based.

In her work she suggested a different conceptualisation of the human condition and accordingly redraw the boundaries of both spheres. She emphasised the potential plurality and the ability to act of humanity, which she believed to be given by the fact of natality: the birth of new individuals. She argued that plurality can only be realised through political association. "It is in their acting and speaking together that unique individuals emerge out of the sameness and eternal recurrence of the species. And it is only when living together as acting beings in political association that human beings encounter other human beings, that plurality is realised."(H. Arendt in P. Saurette, 1996, p. 7) Arendt saw that traditional politics and business were stuck in the realm of mastery, protection and control. She argued that "the purpose of the public sphere is to create the condition of unmediated human interaction as the realisation of the human condition through political action."(P. Saurette, 1996, p. 7) In her view all human interaction had been part of the process of political action. Through political action the paradoxical individuality and universality of existence[20] is reconciled. Arendt concluded that community through difference and plurality is necessary and that political action is not a mean but an 'end in itself'. She had reconceptualised political action as "a process which can create meaning and justify a renewed ethic of community through difference."(P. Saurette, 1996, p. 26) By making the process of political action an 'end in itself' and locating it in all human interaction Arendt ensured the "possibility of fluid and mobile identity through creative and shifting action."(P. Saurette,1996, p. 27) Therewith foreseeing and weaving Delightment.

Arendt had been opposed to the hitherto dominant structure of politics: parties based on a shared and stable identity. She felt that such identities closed the political

space and homogenised and repressed the potential plurality required by political action.

Futhermore, she had challenged hierarchical rule in all forms of human organisation. To her it seemed that political action requires equality and freedom. Because without equality individuality would be established through domination, instead of distinction. Then individualisation would become atomisation through autonomy, which annihilates the possibility of the realisation of spontaneous creation of community and thus universality, which is vital to political action. Freedom and equality are not goals in themselves but rather constitutive elements of the participatory process of political action. Further developments in the world showed how fruitful her ideas turned out to be. For instance in information technology, which is probably the first realm where Delightment was put into practice and from which the Tapestry emerged.

Luckily, the year 2000 problem with computers was quite effectively dealt with. Most probably because so many people linked their abilities and exchanged information while working on it. This is only one of the many examples where networking and sharing information proved successful. All over the world new networks emerged, greatly aided by ongoing computer technology. There were, and still are, small and large networks, focusing on local and global problems, freely exchanging information. Most of them were, and again still are, issue-based obtaining information on related issues from other networks and giving information the other way around. Business largely engaged itself in those networks. Large multinational corporations increasingly used the world-wide-web to get opinions, start discussions and provide information regarding issues concerning their branch. Simultaneously they joined networks themselves, which were discussing new ways of dealing with ethical questions regarding business. More importantly, perhaps, corporations opened up to other stakeholders than shareholders and started to do some self-reflection. Their own employees from different levels in the corporation and people from NGO's, local governments, international organisations and scientists were invited to join discussions on business' strategies and practical decisions concerning economical, ecological and ethical questions. Banks also joined and opened up their organisations. Decisions on investments and the allocation of funds

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[20] The paradoxically individuality and universality of existence consists of the fact that we are all the same in

were more and more frequently made through consensus by the networks involving all stakeholders. A lot of corporations institutionalised some form of scenario-analysis, which proved a successful method for addressing a variety of issues and for implementing an ongoing learning process. Results of these projects were made available to a large audience through mass media and internet. Competitive advantages were mainly gained through the degree in which corporations were involved in society.

In the meantime people started to learn to open up to differences. They could explore different identity roles through virtual reality and through live role-playing games - you can be a medieval king for a weekend or a twentieth century politician for instance- which became increasingly popular and still are. In their working lives they were increasingly asked for their opinions on broader issues concerning the company and society. This led to a sense of empowerment, because they were given, gave and thus shared more responsibility on a variety of issues, which involved diverse aspects of their being. They regained a sense of community, without social pressure to conform to a group identity. Discussions were entered by individuals and maintained by individuals as they related to others.

Social scientists, whose disciplines had been going through major theoretical debates at the end of the 19th century, started their own (interdisciplinary) networks and joined others. They developed new methods for research and moved away from 'what was' to 'what if' questions. In other words, a shift occurred towards anticipatory research. Simultaneously, large parts of scientific terminology were reconceptualised. Useful notions, such as Hannah Arendts' and Delightment were taken up in anticipatory research to test their applicability in practice. Most of the networks are very successful. Their number and links have expanded enormously over the years. Since almost all parts of society were involved from the beginning - business, governments, science, international organisations, NGO's, pressure groups, individuals, etc. - a lot of society and its institutions reorganised into network structures, therewith shifting boundaries and making traditional divides obsolete. Society has become much more integrated, while simultaneously its diversity has increased. The boundaries between scientific disciplines faded in the sense they did not matter much

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being humans and yet all unique because nobody is ever the same as anybody who ever lived, lives and will live.

anymore, people with different expertise work together through networks on all sorts of issues. There is nothing anymore that was not thought upon from many angles and in an interdisciplinary way.

The same thing happened with the divide between what was known as the public and private sphere. Government institutions and business corporations were part of the same networks which also involved scientists, former pressure groups, etc. Already before the (Un)ravelution politics referred to all human interaction and no longer just to Politics. Power is no longer concentrated or thought of in terms of control. Power relations hold up the Tapestry and power resides in all human interaction. It is integrated in a continuous process of (de)construction.

The networks have a dynamic of their own, an invisible hand - as once used to be said of the free market. The networks' ínvisible hand' is a very pragmatic one. Because of their set-up networks attract and keep people who want to be part of it. They have a personal interest in the problems or issue(s) the network addresses, because of their work, their background, or simply their interests. Everybody is free to move in and out of the network and reached agreements can always be (re)negotiated fairly easy without delay or hierarchical procedures. Since society became more and more shaped through decisions made in networks on both the local and global level, people joined to be part of the process. Actually, not only to shape society, but also to shape their own lives.

Apart from a practical impact, the networks also have had a great psychological impact. People not only explore different identities, their feeling and perception of their identities have changed. In the old days they would have said they were Dutch, muslim, woman, or perhaps gabber. Perhaps they would have combined three or four of those categories. Today, when asked about their identity, people will not know what you are talking about. You can ask for their threads or fluidities, though, and when you do they might just casually say they are weavers in the Tapestry. This term came into fashion just before the (Un)ravelution when the world wide web and the networks were increasingly referred to as the Tapestry. People surfing the net and participating in networks were called weavers. Both are metaphors which capture the perception of the world as a huge tapestry in which individuals, events, etc. weave and consist of threads, therewith raveling and unraveling the tapestry and (de)constructing patterns.

On the day of the (Un)ravelution a huge ripple ran through the tapestry. People all over the globe who had access, were glued to their computers interacting in the largest online conference ever held by humanity. That day it was 'consensed' to start dropping the last boundaries of the traditional, state-centred world order. Most national governments dismissed themselves that day. They transferred their last authorities to local and international, relevant networks. The national state-system ceased to exist. What replaced it was neither a world government, nor a global federation, but an enormously complex system of linkage - largely virtual ones - called The Tapestry.

We probably all very vividly remember the hectic period that followed (Un)ravelution. Despite all preparations and experience there were still many critical uncertainties that developed in unexpected ways and had to be dealt with. There have been multiple occasions in which the Tapestry was nearly ripped apart. There were huge celebrations both virtual and real, but also many conflicts, aggression and violence, also both virtual and real. Although the (Un)ravelution was no revolution in the old meaning of the world -since it is an ongoing process of change - a new global structure was laid out.

Today, the world is as complex and problematic as it always has been. But peoples awareness is Delighted now, which sounds better, but is just different. Today, the world is as delightful as it always has been.
That is all.

2. The Trade-off
When, according to the dominant calendar, the world stood on the verge of entering the 21st century, it was as complex and problematic as it always had been. But awareness of its complexity and problems had risen among the earth's human inhabitants. This awareness in combination with great uncertainties and rapid change shifted structural power relations in the years to come.

This week's European newspapers -that is, the ones which still have a political section - reported on the European election. All quite boring, really. Hardly anybody had voted anyway. The council of ministers, which really runs the show, would be filled with appointed experts on finance, infrastructure, etc. depending on the ministry allocated to them. These people would come from the world of business or science

and would not belong to any political party. This has been the case for the last decade or so. Nowadays governments merely exist to provide the framework for and facilitate the market. That is only regarding the small areas in which it is not self-regulatory. It is hard to imagine that people once have actually fought for their right to vote. But of course, governments and politics held different authorities and responsibilities -especially in the social sphere - in those days. While today business deals with most of these.

One newspaper has used the occasion to write an historical article on business and politics. Its narration of events starts in the nineties of the former century. It tells about the slow shift of power relations between business and politics up until today. They basically have been trading places, especially concerning social responsibility. Accordingly, the article's heading exclaims:

THE TRADE-OFF:

It continues:

"Already in the 1990's most countries had introduced some form of capitalism as their economic system. In its wake followed a wave of privatisation. Many national governments transferred traditional tasks such as health care, transport and education to private businesses. Therewith advancing the 'economisation' of society. Businesses were investing all over the world and the global economy became a fact. National boundaries were increasingly reduced to lines on a map, because they were perceived as obstacles to the simultaneous processes of glocalisation (= globalisation and localisation (eds.)). They were overruled to establish a free, unconstrained flow of trade. Therewith transforming the world into one giant market.

Financial institutions, the size, amount and influence of which increased immensely, were the forerunners in the process of globalisation. Aided by modern technology and mostly unconstrained by law, enormous flows of capital freely went, and still go, around the globe every day. The rapid internationalisation of business and finance, which were tightly linked through their pursuit of financial objectives, pre-empted much of the direct social control of business. The traditional link that had existed between formerly national business and national society had been severed. Institutional investors played a large role in this. From now on, they were the proxy stakeholders as well as shareholders representatives of society. As mentioned before, they operated in a global sphere, which was remote from the influence of society or from national governmental regulation, but their impact on society was widely felt.

Peoples' reaction to these developments went in two directions. They increasingly lost faith in national politics, because they felt that national governments could no longer adequately shape the social and economical situation. National political parties were abandoned en masse. Instead people joined NGO's, pressure groups, trans- and international organisations and local parties. Through these organisations and with their influence as customers and consumers they forced business and finance to reconsider their social responsibilities. This often happened with the support of mass media.

Business, which hitherto looked to national governments to deal with such issues, found a vacuum there and decided to take the lead themselves. The role of

business in society was redefined. Corporations opened their doors to new stakeholders. Managements' bias towards the wishes of economic shareholders shifted to a balance between the wishes of NGO's, employees, socially oriented shareholders, government, the media, those representing society generally, intellectual groups, those with artistic interests and customers. Those stakeholders were invited to discuss problems and issues. The stakeholder group varied according to the issues discussed. Some of these organisations were reluctant and sceptical in the beginning, because they had traditionally been opposing business. But, as successful progress was made, trust and co-operation increased and fruitful relations and partnerships developed. Corporations and financial institutions joined networks which focused on issues such as environmental degradation and started sharing their knowledge within these networks. Business, which had traditionally guarded their knowledge and had maintained relations with society mainly via public relations-departments, provided more and more insight and information on their organisations and were increasingly trusted as serious partners in debates on non-economic issues. This was reflected in mass-media, therewith changing public opinion on business and financial institutions. As we know, today's business not only operates socially responsible but is socially responsive as well.

In the ongoing dialogues with varying stake holder groups, which have become a structural part of business processes, all sorts of questions are raised and problems are tackled, which hitherto had not been part of the realm of business, but of politics. Today's structure of society has been wholly set up in this process. New language developed to incorporate and articulate values and issues formerly not addressed by business and finance. New trans-, international, local and regional institutions were set-up and existing ones transformed. These include the World Bank, United Nations and IMF, old institutions that have been reorganised to be able to effectively address issues such as social welfare, employment, and human rights, which are nowadays dealt with on both a global and a local level. All these issues are no longer confined within the boundaries of domestic regulation of the nation state. They are discussed on the global level and practical implementations are negotiated and executed on regional and local levels. New institutions, albeit already familiar, include for instance regional investment banks, Socially Viable In-corporations (SVI's) and the International Committee of Conflict Mediation.

The United Nations in close collaboration with Amnesty International and numerous other organisations, networks and the legal community focused on the further development of international law. Which resulted among others in the Universal Declaration of Business Rights and Responsibilities. It took years of negotiation since nearly all parts of society were involved: businesses; financial institutions; NGO's; grassroots-organisations; local, regional and national authorities, the legal community, religious groups, cultural experts etc. Referenda were held on many issues all over the world among different groups. It is probably the most complex declaration ever made by humanity and together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it forms the first universal and global constitution of human society.

Furthermore, the United Nations transferred its authorities on peacekeeping and conflict mediation to the International Committee of Conflict Mediation. As you might know this Committee is basically a network which includes all the world's military organisations, and many other groups, organisations and individuals. Since conflicts between nation states have been extinct for decades now, most national armies have been dissolved and regrouped in other smaller and larger military units, which are all represented in the Committee. This network keeps track of tensions in society in order to attempt the prevention of conflicts. Furthermore, a lot of research is done on conflict mediation, preventive methods and other related issues. When conflicts do arise, the Committee implements and monitors processes of conflict mediation, negotiation, arbitration, etc. and starts the international legal procedure all conflicts are subjected to. In the extreme case of armed conflict and violence, the Committee has the authority to decide on military intervention, but only when it can be done in such a way that further violence is prevented. No more, no less.

The World Bank and IMF in collaboration with business, financial institutions and other stakeholders in these processes, have concentrated on the all-round implementation of the socially viable business idea, which helped corporations to take up their tasks as socially responsible and responsive organisations. They encouraged the set up of Socially Viable Business In-corporations. The following graphic shows one of the first drafts of what we all take for granted now: the socially viable business idea.

SOCIALLY VIABLE BUSINESS IDEA
(as drafted by GBN, 1997)
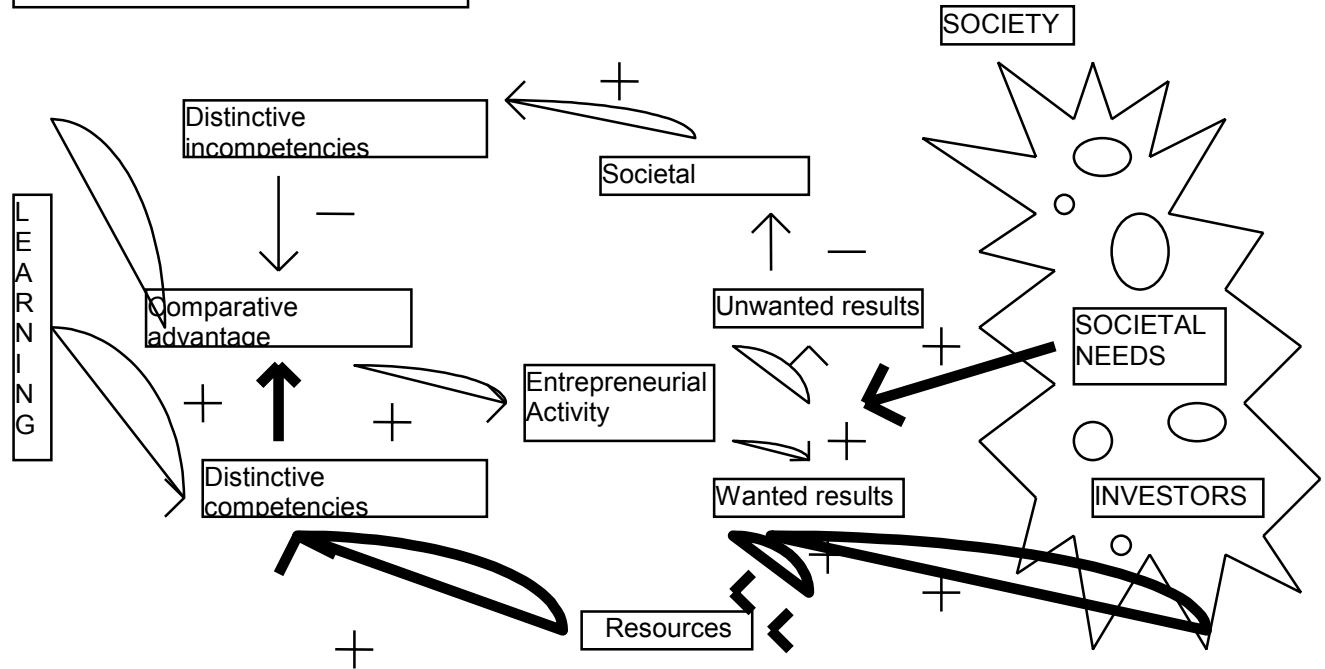
At the time the Social Viable Incorporation was thought of as a potential solution, a social-politico invention, which it - when further developed - turned out to be. Its structure, as an institution, provides relief to those individuals, governments, NGO's, businesses and other organisations, desiring to collaborate in a mutually satisfactory, socially responsible effort. It includes multiple shareholders, as a corporation does multiple owners. It represents those as the management and board of a corporation represent the owners. None of the members are individually liable or responsible for the day-to-day actions of the company, but all have a vote in the general charter and policy to be implemented by the management. The SVI is used to spread individual membership organisations' exposure by sharing 'ownership' of its actions - NGO's, employees, citizens, as well as businesses - and also to limit the 'risk of conspiracy' of any one organisation's participation. Over the years many organisations, individuals and businesses joined SVI's. A lot of businesses linked their brand to an SVI, because back then large competitive advantages could be gained by getting a 'Seal of Good Housekeeping', which was provided for by SVI's and basically still is, although it is common now. SVI's continue to give strong political support for business with competence in social investment, evaluate organisations through its

index of Sustainable Economic Welfare and management of human and ecological capital.

Another 'new' institution which the World Bank, IMF, financial organisations and other business networks helped to set-up was the Regional Investment Bank. Especially during and after the Asian Crisis, which started in the 1990's, the need for such reform and new institutions was widely shared throughout the financial world. The model of the Regional Investment Bank was created to provide statistics and stories for politicians and governments, to exercise a catalytic role for socially responsible investments, to push aggressively for media exposure and to move the public and financial debate from quantity to (social) quality. These banks establish regional forums that included the physical infrastructure, which has an inevitable regional dimension. They stimulate regional and international debates which aim at generating competent regional and local actors. Research and development is a structural aspect to investment banks' activities, which is part of their set-up as learning organisations. Research includes questions on the creation of wealth made by a corporation's investments and the return of profit to different stakeholders, the set-up and evaluation of ongoing dialogues between investors and local stakeholders on cultural and social matters, evaluation of relationships between governments and industries. Plus assessing and advising corporations on social and cultural (internal=within the corporation and external= the environment in which they operate) values and their Codes of Conduct. The research of regional investment banks provided a lot of the material used at the negotiations and drafting of the Universal Declaration of Business Rights and Responsibilities. The banks maintain strategic alliances with social actors, green investments and social/human development groups. They also use the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare, which deals with natural capital (minerals, energy, water, air, bio-diversity and land), human capital (health, education, knowledge, housing), man-made capital (infrastructure, trains, trucks, etc.) and social capital (security, civic society, political and economic institutions and courts) to decide upon and evaluate the allocation of funds. At the moment banks, SVI's and institutions such as IMF and the World Bank are working on the development of a currency that includes emotions, learning and trust. Because of all its qualitative implications it probably will still take a couple of years before 'humaney' is introduced to the market.

The developments of the last couple of decades, as described above, have reorganises society in an unexpected way. The so-called, neo-liberal ideal of a minimal governmental sphere has been realised with the almost total economisation of society, but the much feared effect of economic self-regulation on society has been evaded. The free market, business and financial institutions have gained a new dimension, of which they were thought incapable by nature. They have created their own regulatory structure embodied in many institutions, networks, codes of conduct and law. Remarkable is that all those organisations, including corporations themselves, have achieved an openness and transparency, which governments and political parties never did. Accordingly, economy is re-integrated in society through a large interchange of responsibilities with political authorities.

Today, the world is as complex and problematic as it always has been. But peoples awareness of its complexity has given rise to a reorganisation of responsibilities, captured mainly by the trade-off between business and politics. A different structure in a different time. That is all.

3. System Error
When, according to the dominant calendar, the world stood on the verge of entering the 21st century, it was as complex and problematic as it always had been. But awareness of its complexity and problems had risen among the earth's human inhabitants. Unfortunately, awareness alone is not enough...

'Adaptability is the key-word for human kind,' Françoise was thinking, 'in the end it is more important than control, cause when you lose control you must be able to adapt in order to regain it.' She took another bite of her sandwich and continued working. But her thoughts started drifting again. She vividly remembered the first week of the century when things got badly out of hand. In retrospect it seemed all very logical. Actually, tension had been building up in the world for months. Before her mind's eye the problems summed up for the thousandth time. 'The economical crises in Asia and Russia, which slowly evolved into a global economic crisis. Added to this, the implementation of the Euro, which was due right before the end of the 19th century. Spreading conflicts in Africa, Kosovo... Scandals around world leaders, which distracted attention from 'real' problems. Massive flows of refugees everywhere. And, the millennium problem...'

But as Françoise had just finished her studies and was busy starting her career she had not paid much attention. She had been in her mid-twenties by then and her life had always been easy-going. Her parents were well-off and still married. She had grown up in a small town in France. After secondary school she went to study in Paris, but even there she had always felt confident. They were kids of the nineties. Focused on their personal development, both economical and emotional. No burden of ideals or religion, just trying to have fun. She had enjoyed going to house parties. They had taken extasy on those occasion, but only a couple of times. It was just another experience, and a good one, but not something to lose control about.

They had decided among a group of friends to go to the huge skate-rave that was going to be held in Paris at new year's eve. It had been great fun and they had partied all night. Françoise remembered she woke up the next afternoon, still feeling a bit dizzy and hung over. She had turned on the television. Basically to see about the other parties in the rest of the world. 'That must have been the last afternoon of life as she had always known it,' she realised. Françoise shook her head and concentrated on work again. 'Adapt'.

It took people in the world - especially in the western world - about a week to fully realise what was going on. The problems had started right after everybody had slept off their intoxication of the turn over to the next millennium. Computer networks went down everywhere. The Year 2000 problem had not been effectively dealt with. The energy supply for transportation and other infrastuctural functions was interrupted. There were plain crashes, train collisions, accidents in power plants - some of which were nuclear - and communication systems failed as computer directed satellites stopped transmission. Stock-exchanges closed down, trade stagnated and the financial system collapsed. Human society, which had moved into the year 2000 full-speed, grained to a halt.

Françoise felt a shiver through her spine, as she recalled the atmosphere on the streets of Paris in those days. People were shocked but optimistic. There was a strange feel of excitement in the air. Together with people from her student home she had bought loads of food, candles and wine, because prices were going up fast. They spent days and evenings discussing events and collecting as much news and

rumours as they could. Everybody thought things would be solved in a couple of days and all would go back to normal. But first, things got worse.

News came of riots and looting in cities in the United States, Europe and Asia. Then of mysterious missile attacks in the Middle East, China and Russia, which were not so mysterious after all. Computer directed military systems, which had been neglected had simply started to launch missiles. Other attacks were probably on purpose aiming at military gain from the chaos. Most countries' governments had declared the state of emergency by now.

'World War Three has started, and yet it has not,' Françoise startled herself as she noticed she had said her thoughts out loud. 'God, unbelievable that she had let herself been carried away like this.' She took a deep breath, jumped around her office a little and smiled at the world through the window. It was still there. People had reacted on the situation and regained some form of control. Things had changed and normality was different now, but normal it was. 'Adaptation, a-dap-ta-tion,' funny how words start to sound ridiculous when you say them too often.

Françoise works at the parliament office of the world government, which was created at the time of crisis. It was set up as a temporary government by political leaders to conjure the crisis, but it has been in operation ever since. People have different ideas about politics these days. They demand strong political leadership which is directed toward the spiritual and social needs of people and which can properly control the economy.

After the worst shock had subsided, public demand for a reorganisation of politics and business was enormous. People had not only lost faith in the market and technology, but also in governments which were geared towards facilitating the global economy instead of human well being. They had been living in a dream. Chasing after material wealth in an economised society in which individuals were all atoms in competition, linking mainly out of economical motivations. A society in which many people felt isolated despite their contacts, whether physical or virtual. They had been chasing the wrong goal, building their lives along the wrong line, articulating the wrong language. But the spell was broken.

The world government was established by leaders from all over the world in an emergency conference. The former 'Third World' nations were equally

represented in it for the first time. They had gained advantage because their reliance on (information) technology had been much less than in the western world. At the same time local organisation in many areas in the world had increased immensely to deal with the immediate impact of the crisis on the community level. Both levels of organisation were legitimised by an increased awareness of interdependence and the importance of constructive collaboration.

The first task of the world government had been to stabilise the situation - mainly in the West - and to keep the global community from collapsing into some sort of world wide anarchy, civil war-like situation. Later they started to reorganise the global economic and technological infrastructure. They established new networks with business, NGO's, consumer organisations, universities and other groups on all levels. International legislature was developed to provide a new framework for economy, finance and technology, which were to occupy a subordinate position in society at large. Strict rules were worked out and implemented globally. Business was forced to restructure according to the new law. The capitalist system of free enterprise and profit maximisation was maintained, but limited.

The laws cover employment, environment, profit, taxes, technological innovation, trade relations and wages. In Europe, a basic income-system is established for all persons over 18. This is an experiment which, when it works, is supposed to be implemented world wide. Furthermore, the world government actively engages in the redistribution of wealth with measures that include geographically allocated annual growth ceilings and taxes on profits; tax on loans according to risk and purpose; the maintenance of a stable ratio between the value of the 'real' economy and the value of assets, shares and other financial means and a global minimum wage. Non-environmentally friendly production methods and technologies are either prohibited or heavily taxed. Capital flows are strictly monitored and also subject to new law. People and companies who own over an annually determined amount of capital are obliged to invest a certain percentage of this in social projects or to donate money to social security and development funds. A special committee is set up to organise and monitor this.

The new law is laid down in a Universal Declaration on Economy. There is also one on technological innovation. Everything is monitored politically through economy and technology parliaments on the local, national and global level. These

parliaments are the link between the economy and the rest of society. The new philosophy behind it all is that the economy is a separate realm of society, the final purpose of which is to facilitate social interaction and to provide material needs for human kind, without pursuing any other goal than to be of service to human kind and to enhance well-being in a sustainable way for the planet as a whole. In order to fulfil its purpose the economy is conceptually located in the 'market',which is kept separate from the rest of society through regulation and the parliamental system. In the 'market' the economy is allowed to function according to its own rules and logic, but in its dealings with the rest of society, the political rules of society prevail. In other words, since a system in which society coincided with a free market did not work, a system which frees society from the market is tried.

'A lot of people are more interested in politics now than before the change of millennium,' Françoise was thinking. She figured that had to do with a now commonly held belief that you had to be actively involved in politics in order to have some influence on how things were being arranged. 'If you left it to others or to the 'system', look what could happen. Everybody has to take responsibility in political matters. You have to be involved in community, at least locally.' There were loads of small political groups and meetings held everywhere in Paris now. She knew it was the same in other cities all over the world. Tonight she would visit a group who was going to discuss the meaning of politics as power relations in human interaction. Next week, she would organise a meeting herself about politics as communication. They would discuss mediating techniques, rational argument, association games and language creation. She had to ask her friend about this book... Françoise clicked to the email-program on her computer. It bleeped and flashed 'system error' on the screen. 'You had your "system error", all right, she giggled and walked over to her friend in the next room.

Today, the world is as complex and problematic as it always has been. But people's and recently Françoise's particular adaptability survived yet another 'system error'.
That is all.

4. Full Circle

When, according to the dominant calendar, the world stood on the verge of entering the 21st century, it was as complex and problematic as it always had been. But awareness of its complexity and problems had risen among the earth's human inhabitants. However, awareness does not necessarily lead to change.

- It is the year 1998 and Bobby sits in front of his computer. He has to finish his thesis today. After all these months, years really, it is finally going to happen. No more school. He is ready for 'the real world' now. Prospects are good. There are loads of jobs and plenty of opportunities for young, highly educated people like Bobby. He is only a few pages away from the start of his career. Bobby can not think of anything to write, though. He has got this weird feeling. It is some sort of anxiety or, worse, fear. He loathes fear. It paralyses and inhibits. He has got to stay in control. He shrugs his shoulders, concentrates and a mental train starts rolling before his mind's eye.

The first compartment contains a meeting of business executives and strategists. They are talking about social responsibility. Voices buzz in the air. It is the high frequency buzz of awareness of problems, but confidence in the ability to solve them. The fast rhythm of sharing knowledge and the promise of progressive change. The lyrics are about motivation, learning, social inventions, practical problem solving, empowerment and trust. The base line tells about future challenges and problems, which will be faced with a clear head, a straight backbone and two legs placed firmly on the ground. It is a powerful concert, without rigidity, but with a clear melody of realistic, carefully composed hope.

The second compartment contains a newspaper article about a company which is attacked by the public for its acceptance of a business order from a country which is weighed down by an oppressive military regime and where human rights are daily violated. The general manager of the corporation, when interviewed, defends himself by referring to the laws of the capitalist system in which his business operates. Laws that speak the language of profit maximisation, but have no words for human suffering.

More compartments follow. There is one where a management training is held. Consultants lecture about leadership, employability and human resources management. There is one with a television screen, which shows a news report. A voice over tells about a drunken president and a president who talks about his sex

life in court. Poverty. War. UN meetings where nothing is decided. Peace talks. War. People in space. War. There is another one, and yet one more… It all becomes a blur. The train picks up speed and heads on in no particular direction. Bobby pulls the emergency break and jumps off. -

"What do you think?" Robert asks Mike after reading out loud what he has just written. "I thought this might be a good way of starting my new book". "What the hell are you talking about," Mike exclaims. Robert's eighteen year old son is staring over his father's shoulder at the computer screen. "Is this autobiographic, or something? I am sorry, dad, but it sucks. Like, who cares about all these things. It is not even funny!" Robert sighs: "Thanks for your sincere criticism, I will continue on my own for a while now. I will read it out to you later."

"Autobiographic, indeed." Robert clearly remembered how he had felt in 1998. Annoyed by his own insecurity, which made him nervous. And at the same, full of expectations for the future… "Funny, really. He had known already back then, that nothing would ever really *change. There would always be poverty, war and crime." Remembering a line of a song from back then, Robert starts singing softly: "Trying to make ends meet, you are a slave of your money and then you die." He had liked the line, but he had also secretly expected that he would be able to avoid this trap. He had thought that people had a choice; to be either realistic and depressed - but then it was certain that nothing would ever change for the better -or to dream and be happy. He had felt you had to choose the last. So, he had done so."*

- At that time, Bobby could never have known that his feelings of anxiety were a resonance of times to come. He successfully finished his thesis and started his career as a consultant filled with positive energy. So did many people of his generation. The next century would be theirs. -

Robert relives his past, while he is typing his story. While they were busy to set up networks between companies, universities and other organisations, the Asia crisis spread across the world crashing stock exchanges everywhere. The implementation of the Euro only added to the crisis. Despite hundreds of plans from the IMF, the situation in Russia got worse and worse. In China, a whole generation was lost in extreme poverty, while politicians were trying to transform the economy. War continued to ravage large parts of Africa. Millions of refugees flocked from one country to another. In the United States and increasingly in other countries people

started to build and live in fenced-off communities. There were no political institutions in the world which could effectively deal with the economic deterioration and increasing social chaos. Political leaders continued their expensive election campaigns, but most people had lost all interest in politics, occupied by their personal struggles to earn their livelihoods. Unemployment levels in Europe rose immensely again after the Euro was implemented. In short the future looked bleak. The new century had not brought most people what they had hoped for. Life was hard, especially in the large cities of the world. People did no longer trust anyone but themselves. Most people developed a very pragmatical attitude towards life. You just had to take good care of yourself, cause no one could and would do it for you. They were tired of talking. They had enough of political rhetoric. The world in which political leaders fought each other for power to the greater honour and glory of themselves, was a separate dimension from everyday life of most people. While the economy further deteriorated world wide, the global village started to fall apart. Nothing had come of the plans for better human resources management, employability, knowledge sharing, political reform, integration of minorities, peace talks, etc. If you were so lucky as to have a job, you had to work real hard to earn a living. Discussions about socially responsibility in relation to business faded away, as corporations were forced to cut costs in order to stay in business.

“ Basically, nothing ever really changed. Whether there were right or left wing parties in power, whether the economy was ran by a capitalist system or planned, it never really mattered. Poverty, war and other atrocities of life continued to exist. Over time they only shifted from one region and social group to another.” Robert leans back in his chair and continues to recall past times. “He once read an article by a top executive of one of the worlds largest multinationals. This man turned out to be quite right. He had made a sharp distinction between politics and business. There were discussions at the time about business, which should take over some political tasks such as diplomacy.(C.A.J. Herkströter, 1997) The author of the article had strongly disapproved of this. His key question had been, whether politicians or multinational corporations should rule the world. His answer had been clear cut: politicians. He had said that multinationals neither had the power, the moral - though sincere and respectful, corporations do not represent a single culture of a single nation state-, nor the mandate - multinationals are undemocratic institutions.

However, he did think that multinationals could support universal values, which is a laugh, really," Robert thinks, "so much is clear, if universal values exist at all, multinationals are definitely not the ones to support them."

- Bobby and his contemporaries tried to shift balances through their networks. They had visions of a fully integrated world, which would look like some sort of tapestry, intricately woven connections between members of all kind of groups, openly communicating through their networks. Hierarchy would disappear. All sorts of decisions would be made by the networks, based on consensus and free access to the decision making process. Information technology would make all of this possible. After successfully tackling the so called 'millennium problem' they thought the road was clear. Basically, they were as idealistic as their parents' generation had been, but their ideals were different. Disappointment was the same, though. In the face of a world in which gaps between rich and poor were widening and political turmoil increased, they had set themselves an impossible task.

The world economy was tight, people did not trust each other and retreated to their separate territories. It was a world in which everybody chased after their own interests, no matter at what cost. It was a world of opposites and competition, in which the strong win and the weak lose. Long term ideals were exchanged for short term gains. It was a divided world, in which different realms coexisted, but operated separately according to their own laws.

Already, after a couple of years working, Bobby started to realise that his Tapestry would not see the sunlight in his life time. Nevertheless, he continued the struggle for a while longer. Full realisation about the world being an uncontrolable place, came when he got in touch with the new generation through his daughter, who was in her early twenties. These people had grown up in this world, which Bobby perceived to be hard. They did not mind, though. Seemingly effortless they competed for jobs, in which they were only interested for the money. As long as they earned enough to live a good life, it was o.k. They did not expect their employers to be socially responsible. They generally did not expect anything from anyone. They did not care at all for politics. They did not expect anything from politics as well. They had acquiesced, without even noticing, to life as a struggle. It was their basic truth. People with ideals were considered dumb and escapists. You had to be careful of those people, cause they would try to claim you and pose a threat to your autonomy.

Bobby had trouble understanding all this, even though his daughter was happy enough and not bothered by it. Bobby felt like humanity was always running through the same circles in time. The general mood dependent on where in the circle they were. Optimism, disappointment, cynicism, acquiescence. Perhaps his daughter would become more idealistic as she grew older. Or her children. They would only run into the next disappointment, though. The paradox of stability and dynamics: Everything changes, yet all stays the same.

By the time Bobby retired he decided to write a book about his life. It would be some kind of diary, basically to try to come to grips with life himself. He sat down behind his computer and started. -

-It is somewhere in the beginning of the 21st century and Robert is sitting behind his computer. He wants to write a book about his life. Robert can not think of anything to write, though. He has got this weird feeling. It is some sort of calmness, or even stranger emptiness.-

"O, why bother," Bobby thinks, "my dear daughter is right. What the hell am I talking about. It sucks. Like, I do not even care myself anymore, and it is not even funny." He stands up, and presses one last button on his computer: Delete.

Today, the world is as problematic and complex as it always has been, is, and will be. That's all.

Part Three: Wrap up

3. Scenarios and the 'Third Debate'

The theoretical developments discussed in the 'Third Debate' ask for the usage and development of alternative or post-positivist methods. Those methods have to conform to requirements following those theoretical developments and also be applicable in practical situations. From the discussion between Critical Theory, postmodernism and the 'Third Debate' I described above, a number of methodological requirements can be distinguished.

I want to argue that in the 'Third Debate' international relations theory incorporates the 'linguistic turn'(see note 5, p. 5), which requires discursive methods, that is, methods which rely on and involve discourses or stories and narrative explanation. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p.134) Another requirement of post-positivist methods is that they should be able to extend inquiry to interpretation and policy in an attempt to move beyond the modernist methodological limit of prediction and control[21] . To do so means to shift the emphasis on explaining and understanding - which nevertheless remain a crucial part of the process - to (multiple) interpretation and evaluation through communication and language. I think that the focus of these methods should mainly be on the present and future, in and for which they should aim to provide ways for concrete and constructive action.

This shift of emphasis is related to the theoretical focus on boundaries and innovation. A post-positivist method should, instead of determining which data fit in which category, provide a way of exploring and questioning the boundaries of these categories and of the theories which construct(ed) them. The latter requires room for reflexivity on theories the method draws from - and on ideas and assumptions upon which it is based - as an integral part of the method itself. In addition to this, reflexivity on the scientist's 'situation' (see p. 14)

In order to be able to find innovative solutions to current, practical problems, to develop policies which deal with actual situations and to maintain the 'limit attitude' in

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[21] According to J.W. Lacey, the extension of inquiry to policy and evaluation, instead of just prediction and control is what distinguishes postmodern methods from modernist or positive ones. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 133) (see also note 10) Lacey places Critical Theory in the modernist category, because it is based on Marxism (a metanarrative or foundationalist theory). But at the same time, he believes, Critical Theory makes a great move towards postmodernity, because of its critical view of positivism. (J.W. Lacey, 1996, p. 67) Taken this into

praxis and theory, a post-positive method should provide a framework with which it is possible to assess/interpret multiple options involving certainties, supposed certainties and uncertainties. In order to be able to be innovative/creative, I believe that imagination, instinct, personal experience etc. should be taken up as important tools with which these assessments/interpretations are to be developed.

The focus on present and future combined with the one on boundaries and innovation has consequences for the kind of questions asked. The main question added will be: 'what if?' Peter Schwartz experience in this context is that:

> Social scientist often have a hard time [using the scenario method], they have been trained to stay from "What if?" questions and concentrate on "What was?" (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 31)

I believe, the scenario method qualifies as a post-positivist method. It meets most of the above made requirements. It is a discursive method, which involves storytelling. It moves beyond modernist 'prediction and control', because scenarios do not try to predict the future. If they did, the future would be presented as a certainty over which there is total control. Instead they try to structure our perceptions and interpretations of it, therewith aiming at a broader understanding of the present, but leaving it open at the same time. The future remains uncertain and one can only try to think through possibilities, without having total control. There is an element of control, though. By using scenarios you try to get prepared for and to get some grip on uncertainties. So, while the future unfolds you will be able to respond adequately. Especially focused and decision scenario's provide ways to determine a concrete course of action.

The stories provide the space in which boundaries of both category[22] and theory can be explored and (imaginatively) be (re)drawn. Stories are not bound or restricted by 'reality'.

The scenario method aims at being reflexive, and it can be argued that 'good' scenarios can only be written when they are preceded by a deep-searching reflexive process. However, 'deep- searching reflexivity' is hard to define. Just looking for 'disconfirming' information and maintaining a self-reflective attitude (see p. 30) might

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account, I think it is right to argue that in the 'Third Debate' the *general* direction is to move beyond the limit of prediction and control and to increasingly extend inquiry to interpretation, policy and evaluation.

[22] With 'category' I mean the linguistic - mainly dualistic and mutually exclusive- categories in which we divide, frame and (re)construct 'reality'. For example, male/female, nature/nurture, subject/object etc.

not be enough. In order to further integrate reflexivity in the scenario method, I want to argue that parts of other methodologies could be attached to it. I will elaborate on this later (see p. 67) Another required addition is a section in which the people who have taken part in the making of the scenarios elaborate on their personal situation.

The scenario method is set up to structure uncertainties and make them an integral part of thinking. Again stories provide the perfect framework to do this in. Multiple options can be assessed, interpreted and intersected. The perceived certainties and uncertainties involved can be combined in multiple ways, which enables people to structurally explore and think them through.

Scenarios leave plenty of room for imagination, personal experience etc. They also leave room for the incorporation of empirical data or results acquired with other (scientific) methods. All can be addressed in the stories. Thus, the scenario method can easily be combined with other research. Added to this is the scenario method's adaptability to scale. You can make scenarios on your own or with a small/large group of people. You can use them for all sorts of topics ranging from very broad to very specific. Depending on the combination of the above mentioned variables you can determine in what part(s) of a larger (research) process scenarios are useful or what kind of conclusions/actions can be drawn from them. Pierre Wack tried to do so by distinguishing learning and decision scenarios. (see p. 29)

3.1. Scenarios and postmodernism

As I have argued before, (see p. 25) elements from Critical Theory, postmodernism and other approaches might be combined and balanced[23] . The scenario method can be said to have elements of both Critical Theory and postmodernism. It tries to be reflexive, it is geared to (political) action. I would even like to argue that scenarios, or 'strategic conversations' - as Kees van der Heijden (1996) calls them - can be a practical filling in of Habermas' 'ideal speech situation', although, the question of 'rationality' would pose a problem. In his book *Scenarios, the Art of Strategic Conversation*, (1996) Kees van der Heijden discusses scenarios in the light of business strategy; a field in which they are often used. He argues that

It is in my experience that scenarios are the best available language
for the strategic conversation, as it allows both differentiation in

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[23] I use the word 'balanced' to emphasise that the process of knowledge production is a continuous process, which is never finished. The answers found are never final. I believe that (elements of) ideas, perspectives and theories are continuously readjusted, weighed against and (re)combined with each other.

I have interpreted this as an approximation of what Habermas intends with the 'ideal speech situation'. (see p. 8) Except that Habermas includes 'rational' argument as a condition, which Van der Heijden does not.

Despite the elements of Critical Theory which, as I maintained, can be found in the scenario method, I would classify scenarios as a postmodern method. The main reasons to do so is because the scenario method is not based on a metanarrative or foundationalist theory - it does not involve a theory of truth - and because it is a pragmatic method in which change or emancipation are not a primary goal in themselves. In scenarios 'change' is a given. It will always occur, no matter what we do or not do. Ultimately, nothing is fixed. Scenarios explore and evaluate practical and/or theoretical boundaries. At a certain point in space in time constraints imposed by current 'reality' are accepted, but the continuous exploration/evaluation of boundaries goes on. You can *imagine* them changing, which *might* contribute to their actual change. At the same time boundaries will change anyway because of a continuous complex of developments. At a certain point in space and time it will always remain partly uncertain what changes will occur and, perhaps more importantly, how they will be perceived. From this perspective what *is* true or possible, is not what matters so much, but what is *perceived* to be true or possible. Language and the creation of language play a vital role in the scenario method. The creation of language is equated with learning and with the production of knowledge. Through the usage of language and the creation of new language the boundaries of 'reality' are continuously (re)perceived and simultaneously 'reality' is (re)shaped. The above reflects a postmodern attitude.

Another postmodern element that is present in the scenario method is its usage of history, space and time, which is congruent with what I have described above (see p. 13). The scenario method does not treat history as linear or consistent. Neither does it assume that the passing of time will inevitably lead to an ever increasing improvement of the human condition. Scenarios are not representations of the future, but interpretations/perceptions of alternative futures in the present. The scenario method is focused on the here and now. It uses past and future mainly for

the impact they have on the present. The scenario method is about "making choices *today*, with an understanding of how they might turn out." (P. Schwartz, 1991, p. 4) As I have mentioned before (see p. 65) scenarios leave plenty of room for non-rational ways of thinking. This adds to their postmodern attitude and distinguishes them from Critical Theory with its emphasis on 'rationality'.

3.2. A critical note

So far, I have described the scenario method, have tried to give an example of it, have discussed it in the context of the 'Third Debate' in international relations and have put it forward as a postmodern method useful for international relations. Now, I would like to take a closer look at the method itself.

In a previous research I have done with a fellow student, we have performed a discourse-analysis on *The Futures of Women; scenario's for the 21st century* written by Pamela McCorduck and Nancy Ramsey (both members of GBN). We found that the four scenarios in this book structurally revealed how the authors did not enough stretch their own mental maps. Despite their creative stories and inventive ideas, the scenarios lacked deep-searching reflexivity, because the authors had not questioned (or questioned enough) their own perspectives on the topic. We concluded that if they had performed a discourse analysis on the concepts and associations they were going to use in the scenarios beforehand, this lack of reflexivity could have been avoided. More literature research on 'gender and development' or women's studies, the fields closest related to the topic, might also have solved this flaw. I believe that the scenario method gains value when users would perform a discourse analysis (or another analysis aimed at reflexivity) on the concepts, perceptions, associations and descriptions, which form the building blocks of their scenarios. In order to further expose prejudices and assumptions which can accordingly be studied more in depth, before writing the actual scenarios. Nothing should be taken for granted in the process.

From a postmodernist perspective Wack's distinction between the world of facts (reality) and the world of perspective (mental map) is problematic. He stresses that scenarios can only be successful when they are based on a sound analysis of reality, and they change the decision maker's assumptions about how the world works. (see p. 29) If 'reality' is continuously (de)constructed through language, then every analysis of it is only another interpretation and (re)construction of it, which is always done from (a) perspective(s) anyway, since 'objectivity' in the modernist sense of the

word is rejected. Nevertheless, I believe this to be a matter of discourse. Wack has described the scenario method within a modernist discourse, the basic assumptions of which he did not question in the way postmodernists do.

Related to this is the 'causality' to which relations between driving forces and their outcomes are easily submitted. Modernist approaches have been preoccupied with causal relations. It would suit the reflexive attitude of future users of the scenario method to be aware of the above and to think about their stance in these matters.

Which leads me to the last remark regarding Harraway's 'situation'. (see p. 14) Scenarios are knowledge products and as such not innocent. Therefore, I would like to propose that users of the scenario method add a description of themselves and the process they went through in creating the scenarios, which might include their thoughts, feelings, and changes of their own mental maps during the process of their knowledge production.[24]

3.3. Conclusion

In this story I have discussed recent developments in international relations theory's 'Third Debate' and the methodological consequences hereof. In this light I have discussed and slightly explored the use of the scenario method as a possible post-positivist and mainly postmodern method in the study of international relations, followed by some critical notes on the method itself.

To me, to practice science means to practice 'the art of the possible' and to maintain 'the limit attitude', while taking responsibility for and reflect on the continuous (re)creation of our powerful and not innocent myth. Scenarios are about 'possible meaning'. They are an exercise in practising the 'limit-attitude' and the 'art of the possible' in their effort to subvert expectations and to open minds to different perspectives. I believe the scenario method qualifies as a post-positivist method and can be a useful tool for knowledge production regarding international relations. That's all.

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[24] I want to note here that this is allready happening in some scenario projects.

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