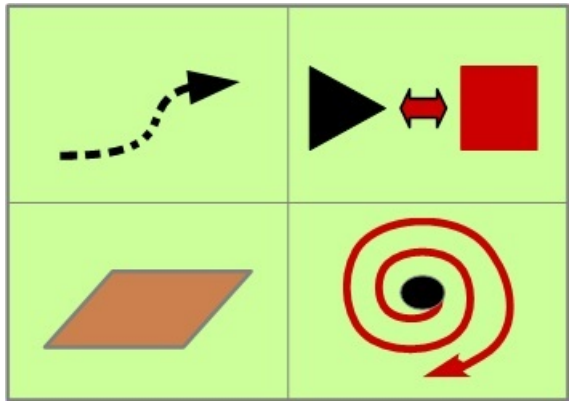
28 Dialectical

Thought-Forms



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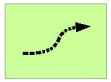
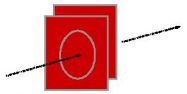
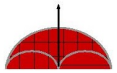
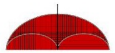
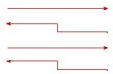
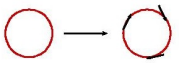
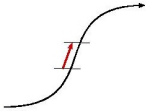
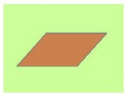
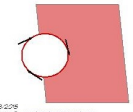
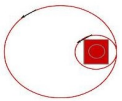
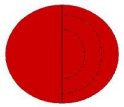
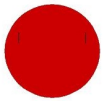
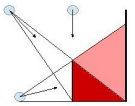
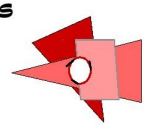
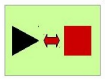
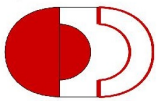
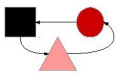
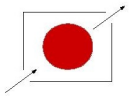
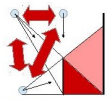
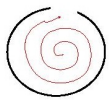
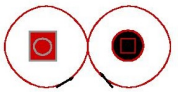
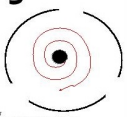
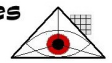
Process (Quadrant I)  Thought-Forms 1-7	1 - Unceasing motion 	2 - Inclusion of Antithesis 	3 - Composition by opposites 	4 - Patterns of Interaction 	5 - Active knowledge	6 - Critique of arresting motion / reification 	7 - Embedding in process 
Context (Quadrant II)  Thought-Forms 8-14	8 - Parts within a whole 	9 - Equilibrium of a whole 	10 - Structures of a system 	11 - hierarchical systems	12 - Stability of systems 	13 - Frames of reference 	14 - Multiplicity of contexts 
Relationship (Quadrant III)  Thought-Forms 15-21	15 - Limits of separation 	16 - Value of relationship 	17 - Critique of reductionism 	18 - Relatedness of value systems 	19 - Structural aspects of relationships	20 - Patterns of interaction in relationships	21 - Constitutive, relationships
Transformation (Quadrant IV) Thought-Forms 22-28	22 - Limits of stability	23 - Value of conflict	24 - Developmental potential 	25 - Evaluative comparison of systems in trans-formation	26 - Coordinating systems 	27 - Open, self-transforming systems 	28 - Integration of multiple perspectives 

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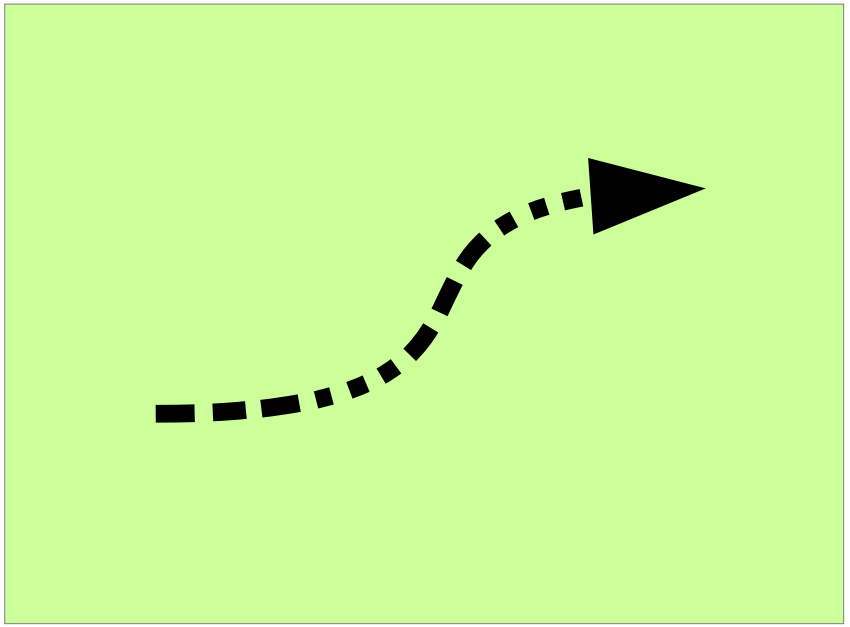
Process
(Quadrant I)



Thought-Forms 1-7

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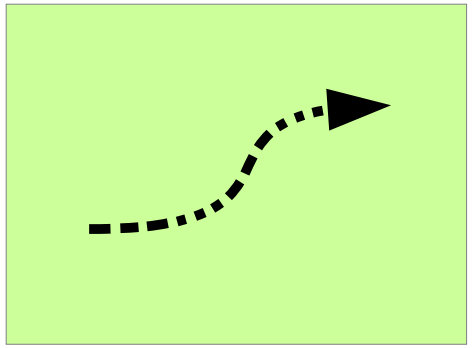
Process - Quadrant I

- Love / fear / development - nouns that mean processes: somebody who loves something, somebody is afraid of something, something develops from A1 to A2.
- beings and „things“ are never static - they stay the same because of ongoing processes that keep „being“
- The same is true for cultures: organizational culture, cultures of relationships ... they stay stable because of ongoing processes
- Everything that emerges comes out of the absence, the void ... composed of elements that form a new whole ...

The 7 Process-Thought-Forms

1) Unceasing motion
2) Inclusion of Antithesis
3) Composition by opposites
4) Patterns of Interaction
5) Active knowledge
6) Critique of arresting motion / reification
7) Embedding in process



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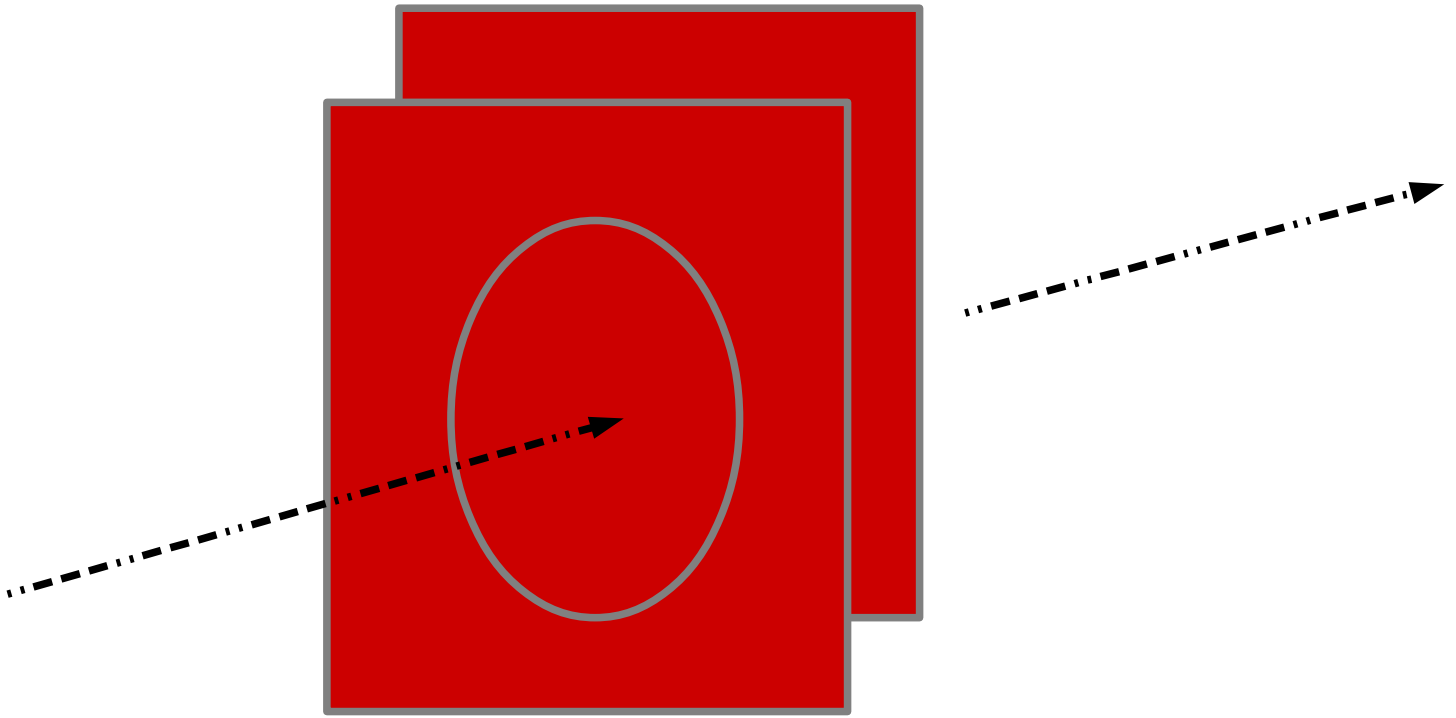
1 - Unceasing motion



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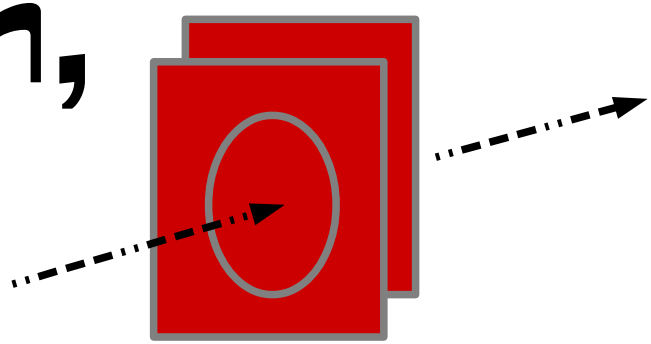
1 - Unceasing motion, negativity



- Which observations might tell us that in addition to the stability of the situation, things are moving / changing?
- Can we see that things can develop towards transformation - or towards non-being?
- Which things should especially stay the same? What do we apprehend?
- What is the impact on us if circumstances change constantly? How could that prove problematic?
- What would happen, if things develop towards the direction the have moved already?
- Which events of the past continue to have an effect?
- Which trends "pull" the change?
- What does it mean for our thinking if we accepted that live is determined by constant flux?
- How can we realize that there are no "states", but only snap-shots of movements?
- In which areas do we succeed in perceiving things as "flowing"? What helped us?

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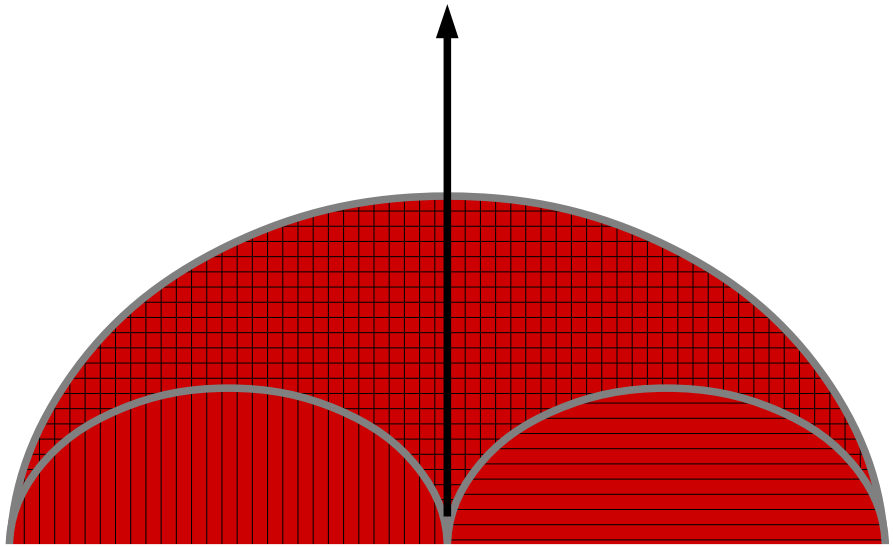
2 - Inclusion of Antithesis



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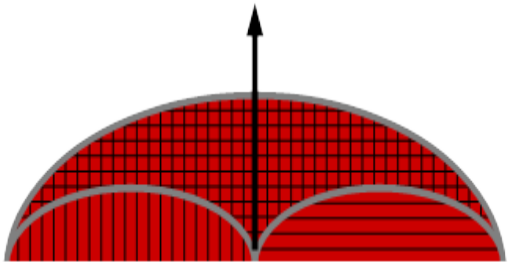
2 - Preservative negation, inclusion of antithesis or „other“ (non-A)



- There is a dominant movement in the system - are there also impulses towards the other direction?
- If we look at what the system is emphasizing now - can we perceive what is missing?
- What is excluded so far, neglected and rejected?
- How would it look like, if this “non-A” was integrated? Can we imagine a new whole that joins the previous and the new elements?
- If we look back to the past of the system: How did the system manage to integrate new elements formerly?
- How do we need to dignify the previous elements? How do we need to adapt the new elements to make them fit into the system?

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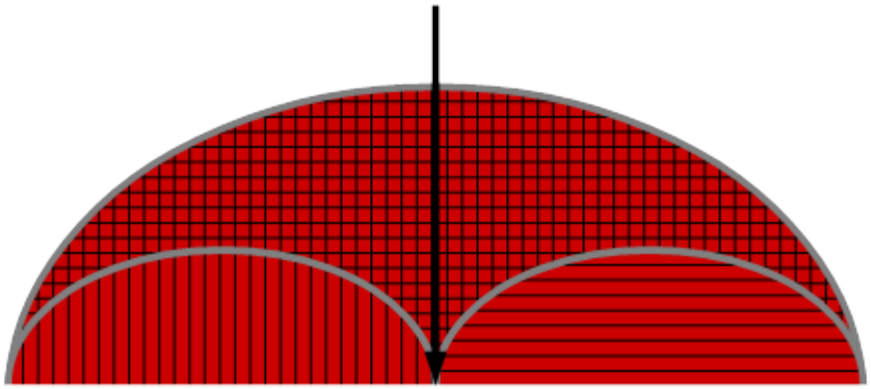
3 - Composition by opposites



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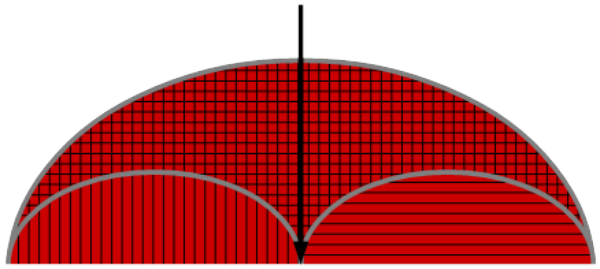
3 - Composition by interpenetrating opposites, correlativity



- The reciprocal perspective to “Inclusion of Antithesis”
- Looking at a whole we ask: How did this come into being? Which forces enabled the emergence of this system?
- What do we know about the history of the system? Which tensions stood at the beginning: distress, problem, desire, ...
- Which phases of development can we discern?
- What was already here, what were the new elements, what could be integrated, which elements changed their internal functions?
- What about elements that were rejected, brutally expelled, honorably put into the “museum”?
- How did we establish this perspective for discerning constitutive opposites? Which concepts helped us to establish this mental lens? Where did it help us see more options?

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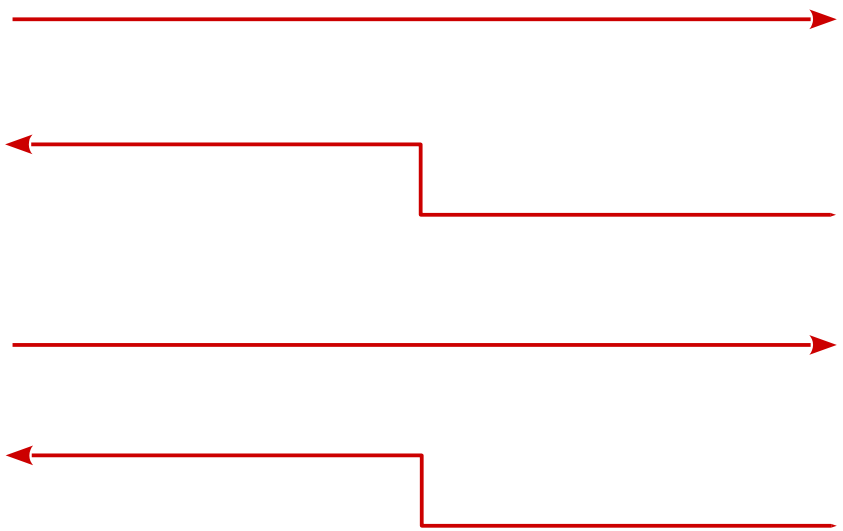
4 - Patterns of Interaction



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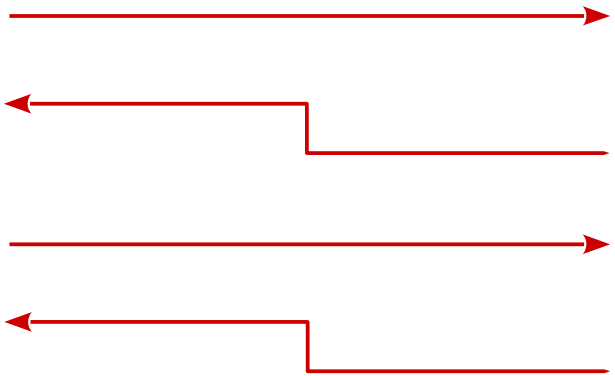
4 - Patterns of interaction



- Which patterns emerge out of new constellations?
- Can we see some kind of "give and take" that brings about a shift in social reality?
- Is there influence? Who influences whom - how?
- Are there shifts in energy that show regularly?
- Are these patterns really new - or do they remind us of ... ?
- How are the protagonists changed by these interactions?
- Do the interactions stabilize the form and identity of the protagonists?
- In which fields can we distinguish patterns already? How come? Which new possibilities emerged out of this competence?

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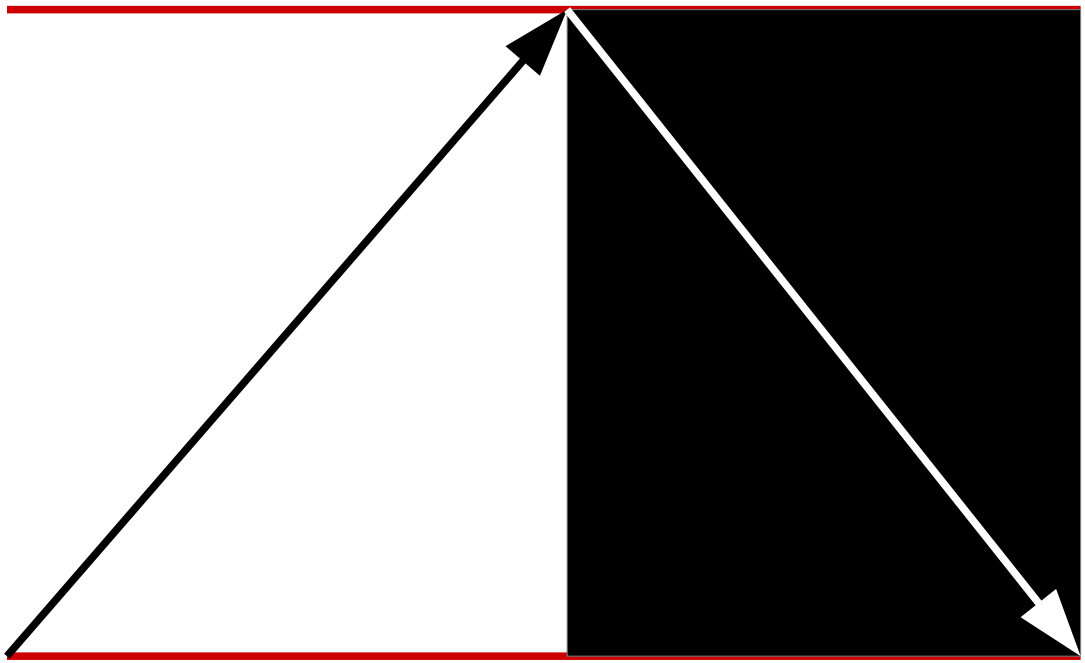
5 - Active knowledge



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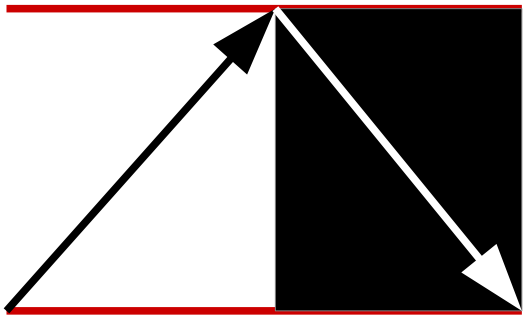
5 - Active, practical nature of knowledge



- Do we realize that information for itself is “dead”, interesting at the most, and that what counts is some kind of application?
- How do we verify if information is “correct” and if it is useful?
- How do we create practical knowledge: trying things out ... importing external expertise ... translating it to our special circumstances
- Do we have a shared understanding of how the process of knowledge works: Irritation, question, hypothesis, testing, feedback, adaption, ...
- Do we have a clue about our white spaces on our “map”? Do we feel a need to fill these gaps? What could be gained from it? What is the effort / the risks?
- Are there concepts we need to “un-learn” in order to make space for new fresh thinking?
- How could we think fresh thoughts by combining concepts not yet linked?
- Do we remember the filling of knowledge-gaps? How did we manage to do that? Were there hurdles to overcome? What did we learn from this process?

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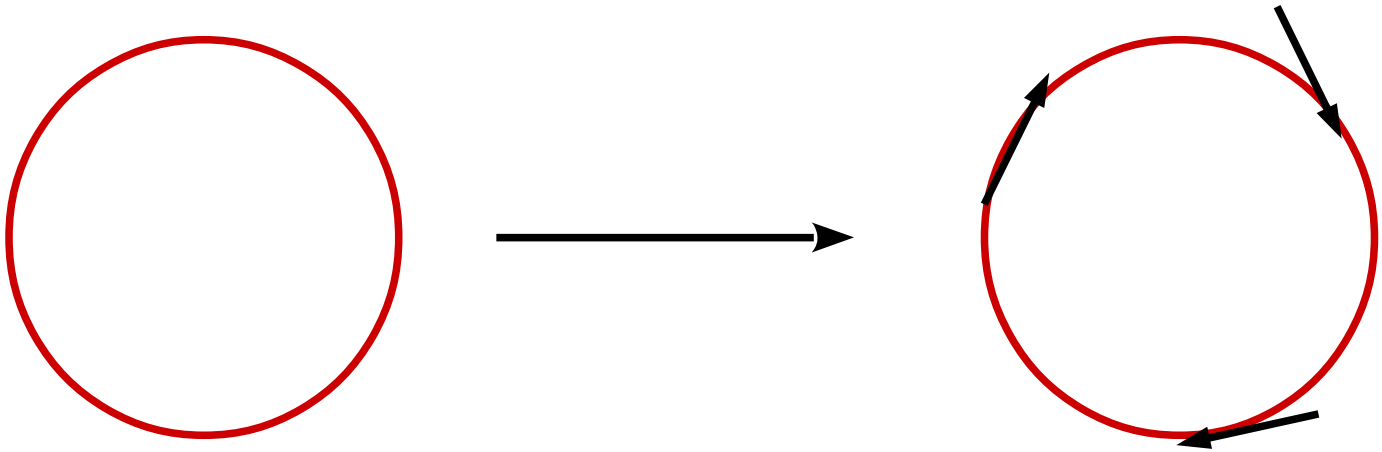
6 - Critique of arresting motion / reification



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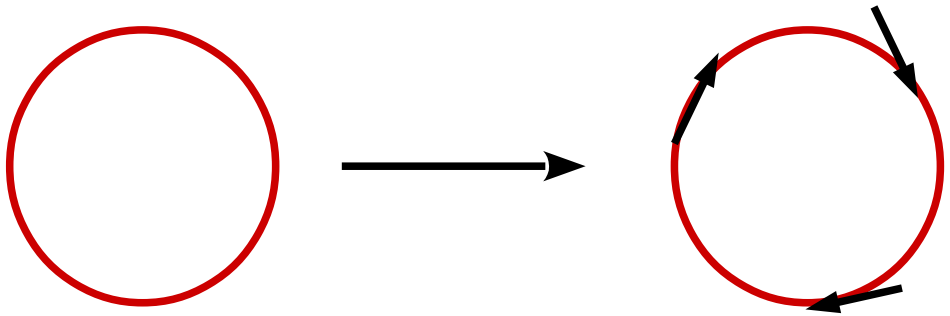
6 - Critique of arresting motion / reification



- Are there "things" that we view as objects, but that should be seen as processes instead?
- If we look at the "object" as a process: Can we see the stages of the past and the potential "futures"?
- What effects could the change of perspective from object to process entail?
- Where do we protagonists "vanish" through reifications?
- What would happen if these protagonists (we? others?) came into view again?
- Have we made this shift in perspective before? Was it more a step-by-step-process or more a sudden "Ah!"? What made it possible? What was possible because of it?

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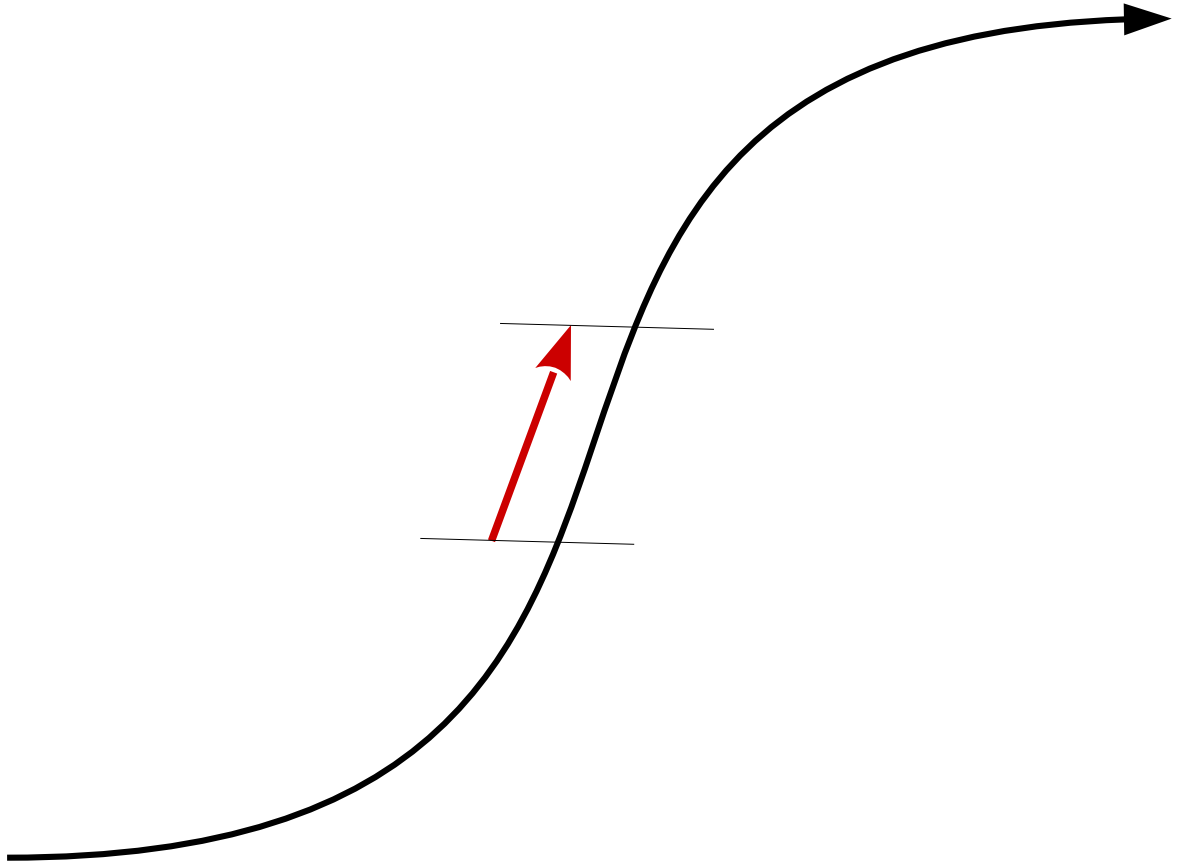
7 - Embedding in process



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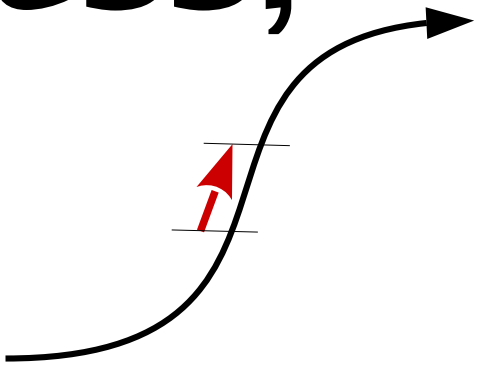
7 - Embedding in process, movement



- If we look at ongoing processes: Of which larger movements are these part?
- Which larger processes can we perceive "outside"? Can we discern a pattern?
- Do we possess enough "lenses" of perception: political / sociological / economical / ... ?
- What were early indicators for later events that we could (or could not) decipher? What would be indicators for which future events? How would our early recognition change our behavior?
- Is there a larger process also inside the system: away from ... towards ... more ... less ... ?
- Which time horizon do we take into account? Is it long enough? Are there patterns in the history of the system and/or its environments?
- Which qualities are ingrained into the "DNA" of the system, unfolding from its beginning?
- If the developments continue - what could be the next events?
- In which areas can we see processes as part of larger movements already? What helped us to see that? Which metaphors are helpful? What became clearer thereby?

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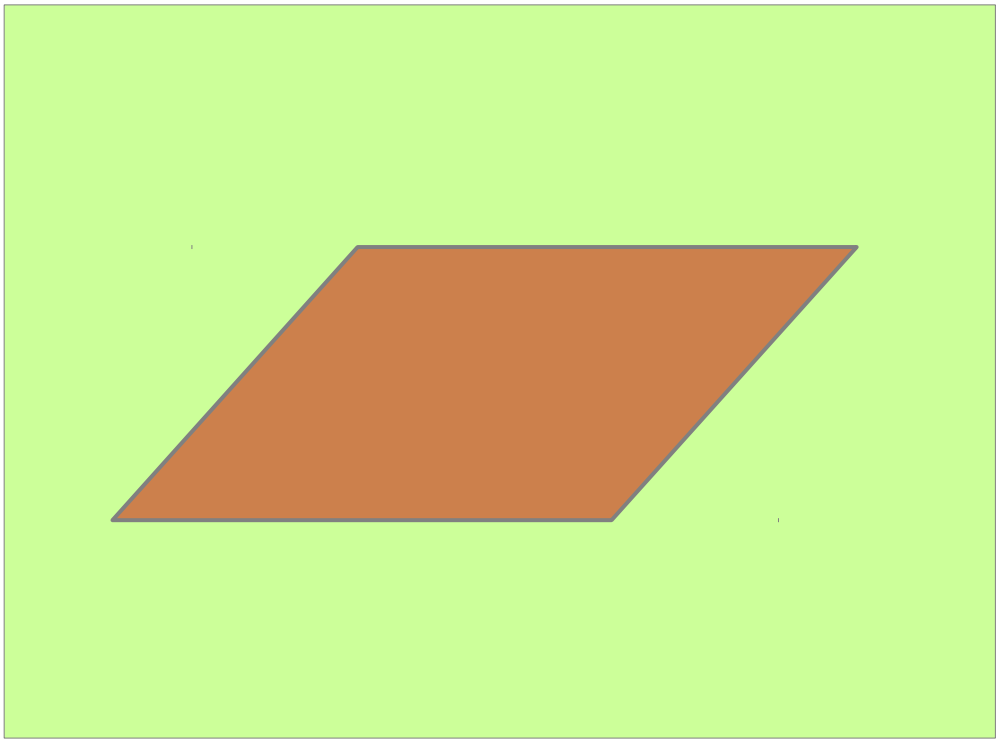
Context (Quadrant II)



Thought-Forms 8-14

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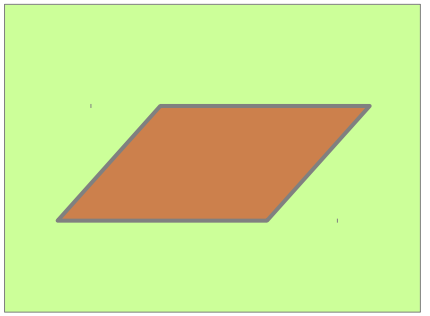
Context - Quadrant II



- Everything that happens happens within a context / within many contexts.
- A sharp ax derives its meaning from its context: firewood-store or bedroom?
- Contexts are the spatial and temporal surrounding, but also culture, community, events before (and afterwards); the national history of Germany before Hitler cannot be read today without the context of Auschwitz.
- "Context" also looks at the form of systems: structures, hierarchies - inner composition: The contexts for what happens inside systems.

The 7 Context-Thought-Forms

8) Parts within a whole
9) Equilibrium of a whole
10) Structures of a system
11) hierarchical systems
12) Stability of systems
13) Frames of reference
14) Multiplicity of contexts

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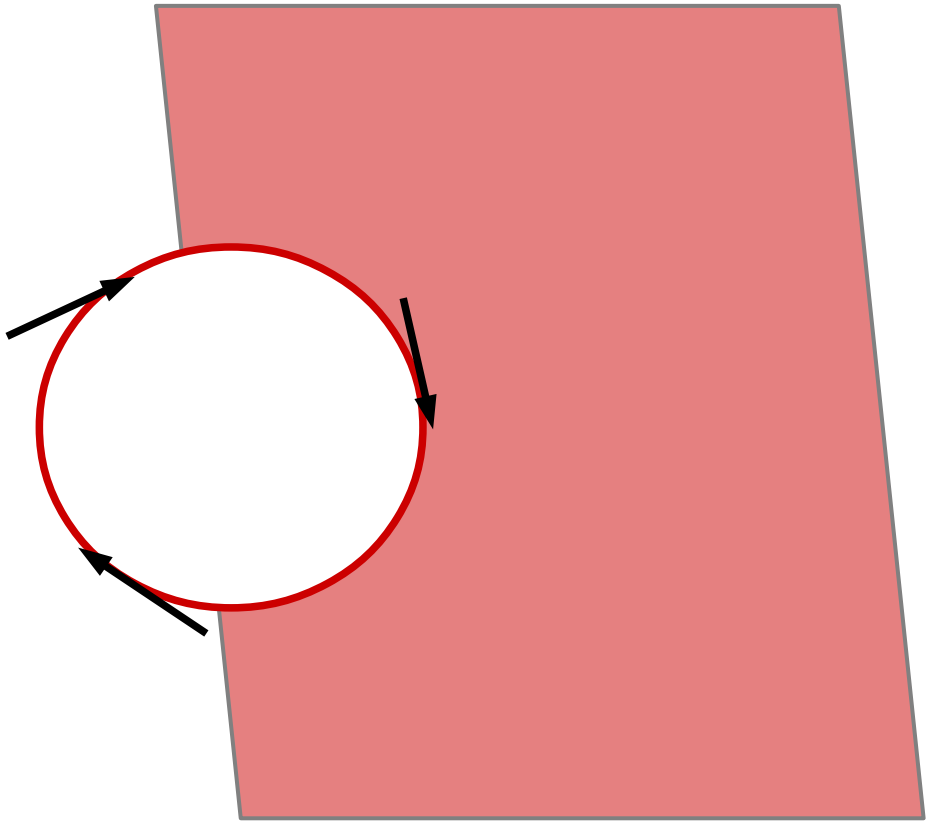
8 - Parts within a whole



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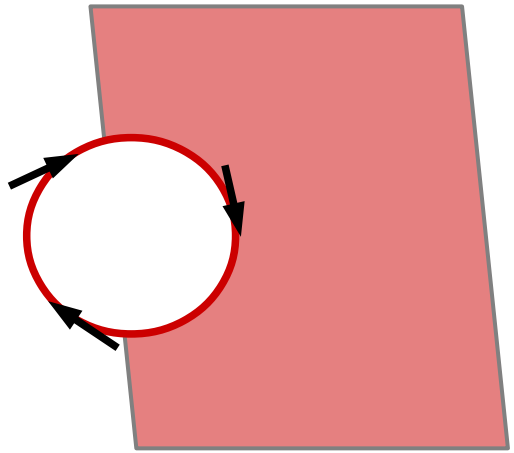
8 - Contextualization of part(s) within a whole (emphasis on part)



- Which are the contexts of our system?
- In which ways do they influence the system: active, reactive, ...
- Which "lenses" do we use to look at the various contexts? How can we provide for more perspectives?
- How do aspects gain meaning through context? Where does a change in meaning occur?
- Is it because contexts changed or because other contexts became emphasized?
- In which contexts do we need to be especially careful? What can we test safely?
- Can we arrange contexts to realize specific effects?
- In which areas are we already able to see forms/relationships/processes against the background of larger contexts? Which meanings emerged? Which metaphors do we use: stage design, landscape with horizon, ...

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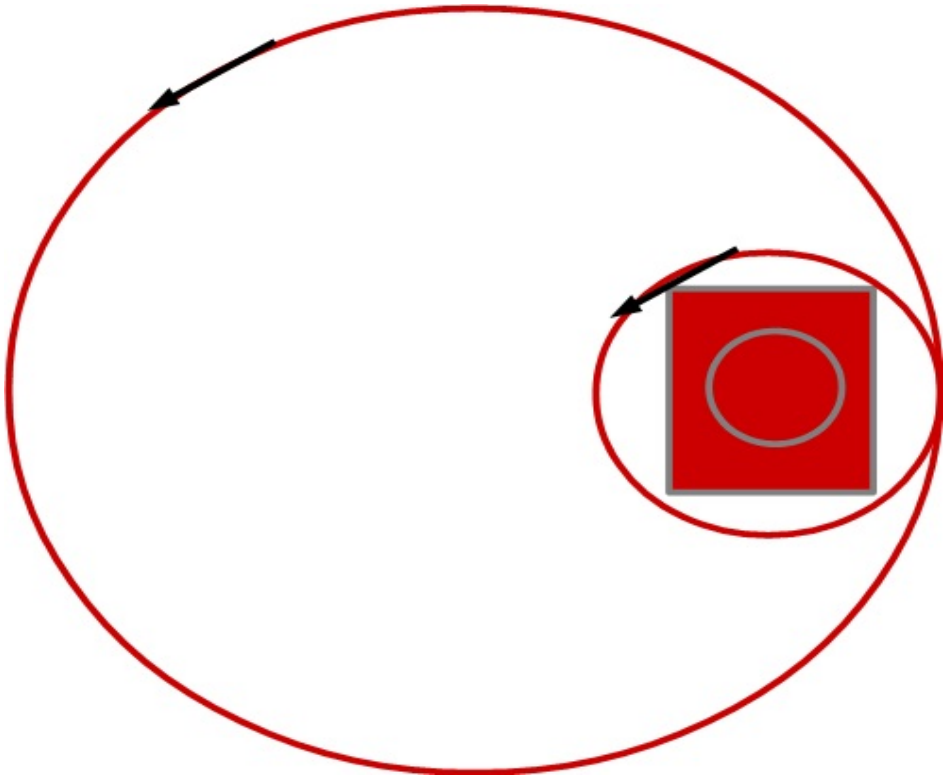
9 - Equilibrium of a whole



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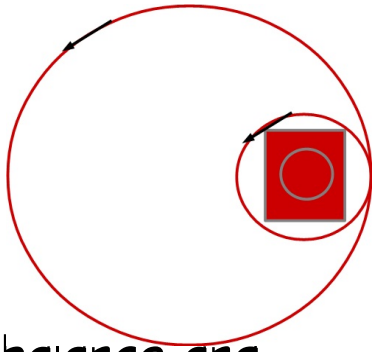
9 - Equilibrium of a whole (emphasis on whole)



- What is the "larger whole" of our system?
- Is this larger whole balanced? What indicators make us distinguish between balance and imbalance?
- Which factors and effects of environments ... determine this equilibrium?
- How does our system influence the balance of the larger whole? Which effects on the whole could a transformation of our system have?
- How does our system depend on the larger whole? What transformations / changes are plausible for the larger whole? Which events could cause a disequilibrium of the larger whole? Which effects could these imbalances have on us?
- How could our system support the larger whole and its development?
- How do we mentally represent systems being part of a larger whole? What enables this view? Which metaphors are helpful: A body with organs? Gear-wheels of a machine? Do we realize that these metaphors are never neutral, always transporting ideology and limitations? How can we develop mental concepts that do justice to our situation?

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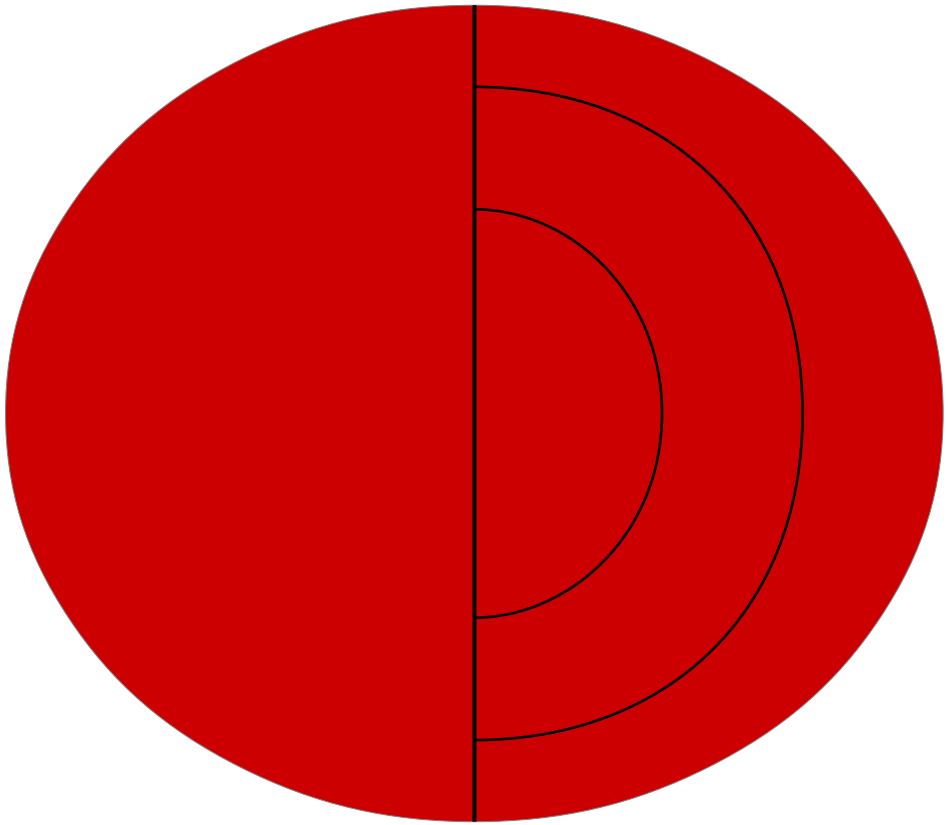
10 - Structures of a system



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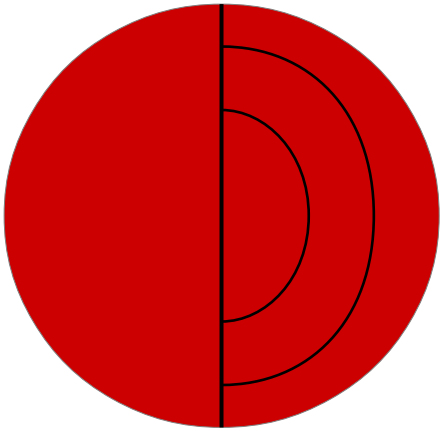
10 - structures, functions, layers, strata of a system



- Does our system contain "parts"? How do they relate to each other? How do these parts form a whole? What enables integration?
- Which structures can we discern from outside, which from inside the system?
- How does the system work? How do impacts accrue? How does the system ingest impacts from its environments?
- Are there special heuristics, standard procedures for similar situations?
- Can we distinguish sequences / phases / steps? Are there similar outputs for different inputs?
- Where can we discern structures / tiers / layers / functions of systems already? How did we learn that? Which mental concepts are instrumental? How do we visualize these concepts?

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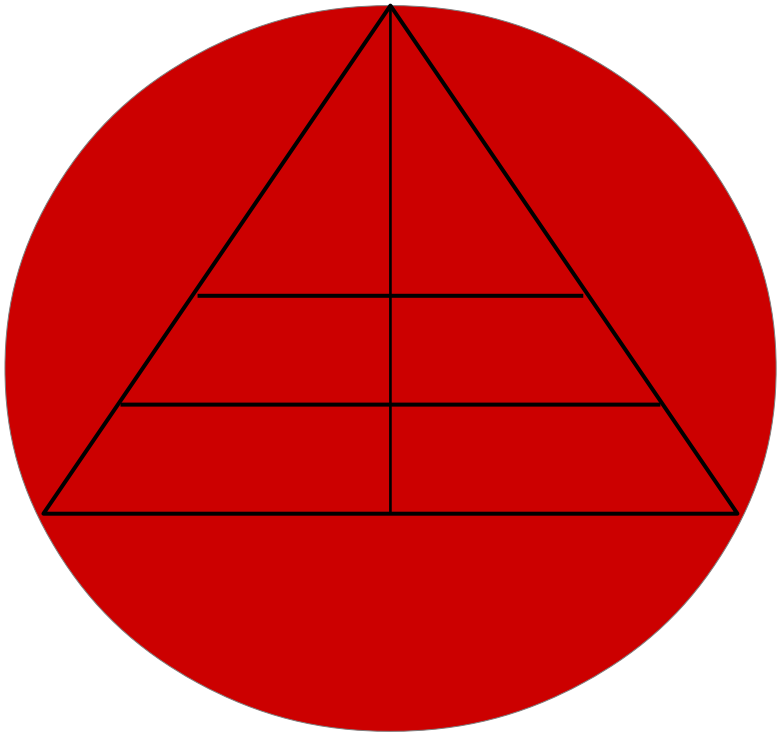
11 - hierarchical systems



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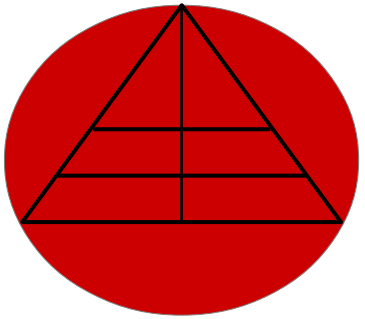
11 - hierarchical nature of layers systems comprise



- Of which larger systems is our system part? Are there even large systems "above"?
- Which are the parts of our systems - and do these parts also split up in subsystems?
- Which contributions does our system / holon provide for its larger systems and its sub-systems?
- Which contributions does our system receive from its larger systems and its sub-systems?
- In what respect can our system "grow", step from one stage to another? What are the preconditions? What would be the effects / the benefits / the costs / the risks?
- How can we make sure to keep in mind the systems "above" and "within" when speaking about our system?
- How can we clearly point out differences between different layers / levels / ... without depreciation?
- Can we distinguish between "growth hierarchies" and "dominance hierarchies"?
- Where can we identify hierarchies in systems already? Can we discern various kinds of hierarchies? What constitutes the relation between the parts and the whole?

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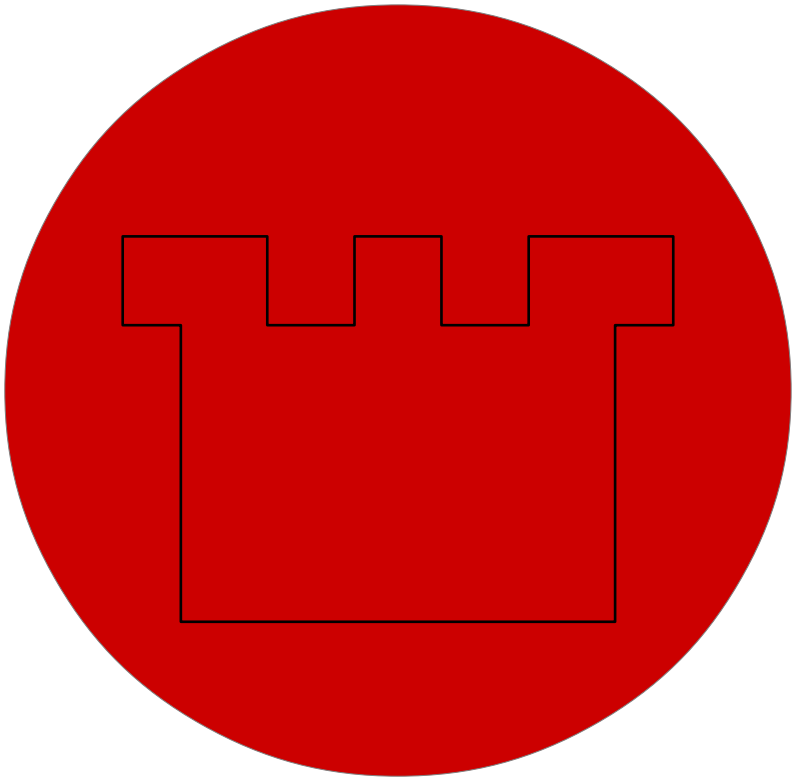
12 - Stability of systems



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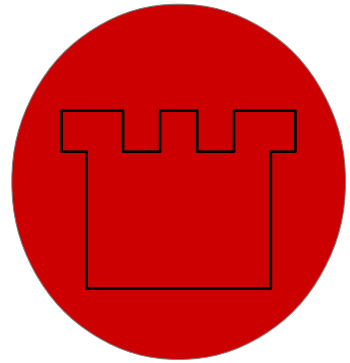
12 - Stability of systems functioning



- How can we discern if the system ist stable? What indicators would us tell if it were not?
- Which functions does the system fulfill? Are these functions accomplished steadily - or can we see irregularities? Which functions are more central than others?
- What about interfaces with other systems? Are there changes? Do these changes have stabilizing effects?
- Are there small signals that something is moving while everything is ok?
- Do some say "Never change a winning team" - really meaning: "Don´t touch: We don´t have a clue why it is still working!"
- Which systems are good examples of "stable functioning systems"? What constitutes stability? Which terms do we use to describe stability? Are these static or dynamic concepts? What enables stability for our thinking?

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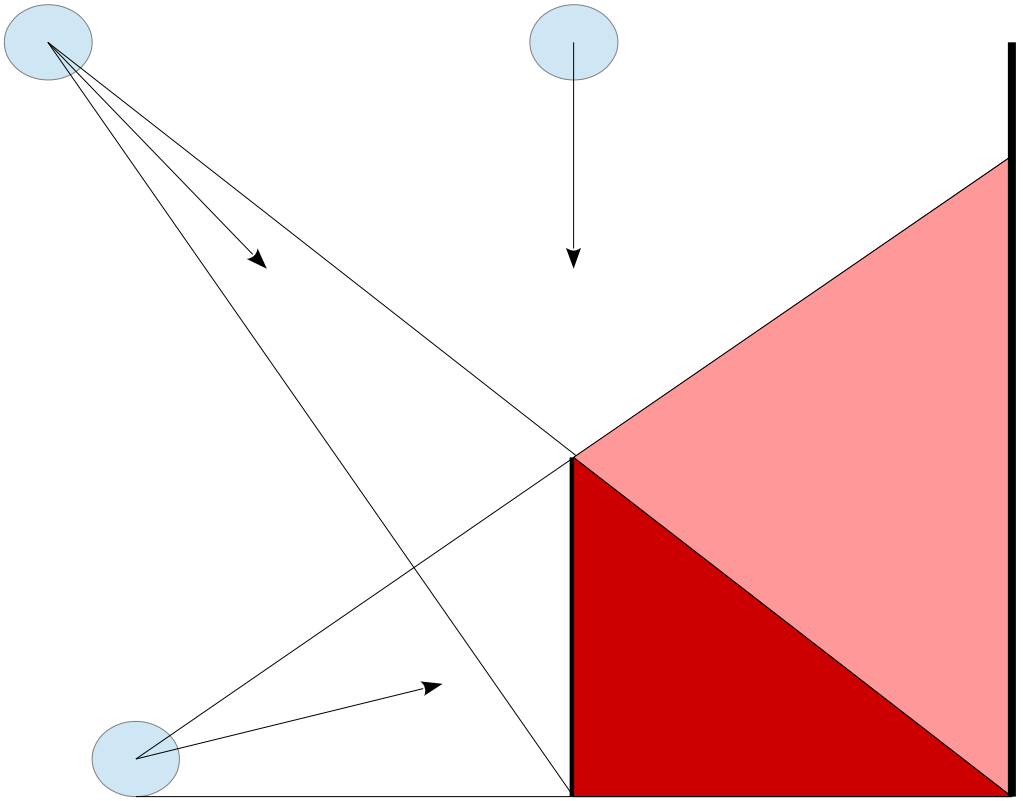
13 - Frames of reference



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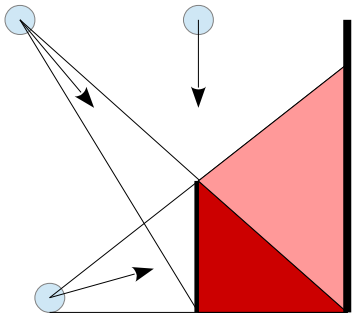
13 - Intellectual systems: frames of reference, traditions, ideologies



- What can be explained / evaluated / classified by established paradigms, frames, rules?
- Which assessments and meanings derive from the context?
- Which cultural or other imprintings "enforce" certain perspectives of stakeholders?
- Which lenses do I use to look at the situation? How would my perceptions, interpretations and judgments change, if I could somehow take off these lenses?
- What would happen if we had no judgment-criteria whatsoever?
- Which systems of interpretation and assessment do more justice to the system / situation than others? How would we know if a certain frame is not helpful any more?
- Where are we tempted to justify a certain action in retrospect - by using other arguments than we had in mind when we acted?
- In which cases do we find it easier to recognize the lenses through which we or others look at certain things? If we diagnose an ideological approach of another person: what does this tell us about ourselves?

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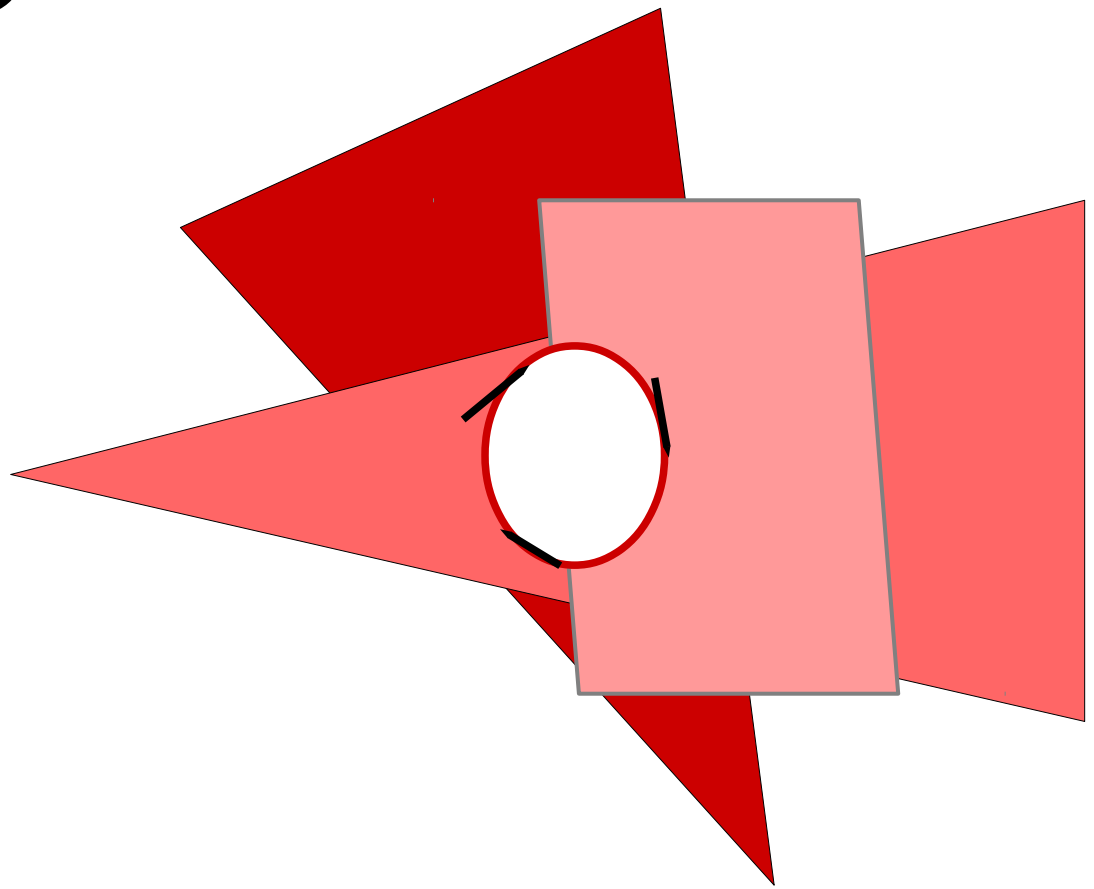
14 - Multiplicity of contexts



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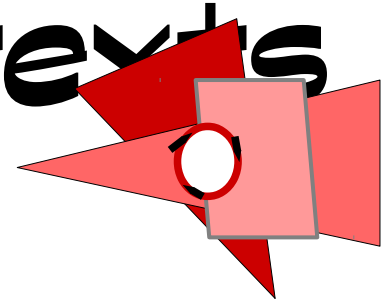
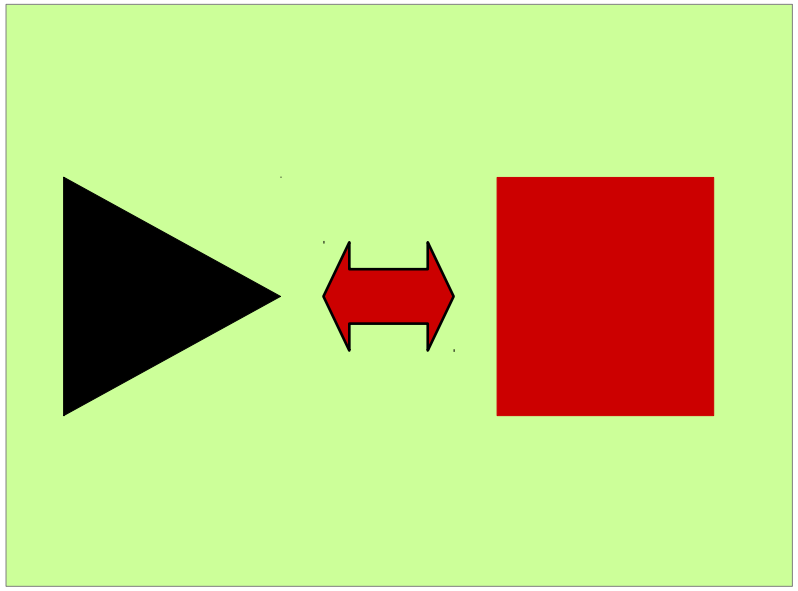
14 - Multiplicity of contexts (non-transformational)



- Which contexts are relevant for this situation?
- What is the influence of the contexts on the system? Does the system also have an effect onto the contexts?
- Do the contexts interact with each other? How could that influence us?
- How does our system look like from the outside-perspective of these contexts?
- In which situations was it possible for us to realize the multiplicity of contexts? What enabled this insight? Which metaphors do we use for multiple contexts: a stage with movable stage designs? ...

Relationship (Quadrant III)



Thought-Forms 15-21

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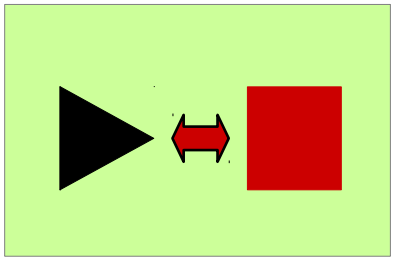
Relationship - Quadrant III



- What is the linking "common ground" that connects "things", thoughts, systems, persons, ... even if they are not associated at first sight?
- Often we look at things that are seen as stable by itself - although they are kept in balance only by the continual exchange with other systems.
- Thinking about relations, we could say that our conception of boundaries of system is somewhat arbitrary: systems viewed as holons are elements of larger wholes, "siblings" of other systems and "parents" of subsystems at the same time: relationships "up", beside, "down"

The 7 Relationship-Thought-Forms

15) Limits of separation
16) Value of relationship
17) Critique of reductionism
18) Relatedness of value systems
19) Structural aspects of relationship
20) Patterns of interaction in relationships
21) Constitutive relationships

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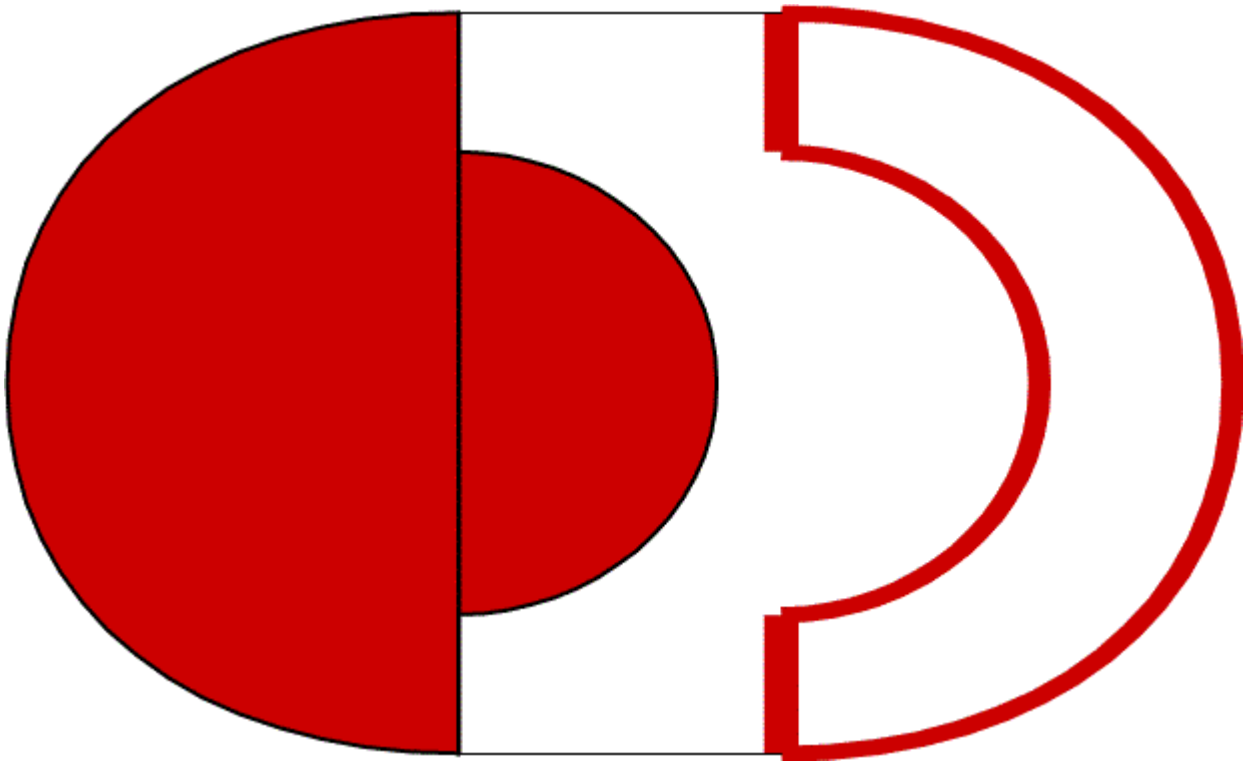
15 - Limits of separation



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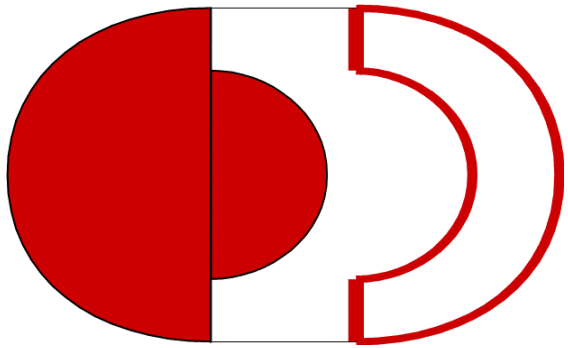
15 - Limits of separation

Focus on existence and value of relationship



- If we look at “things”: Can we see that they not only happen within a context, but also, that they are more or less related with other “things”?
- Let´s assume something was really totally separated: What consequences would that entail?
- With which elements can we identify the strongest links? What is the quality of these ties?
- How can we represent a system / a situation as separated and related at the same time? Which metaphors do we use to represent this quality? Do we have a special gesture for it?
- In which cases could we realize this separated-AND-related before? What kind of options emerged?

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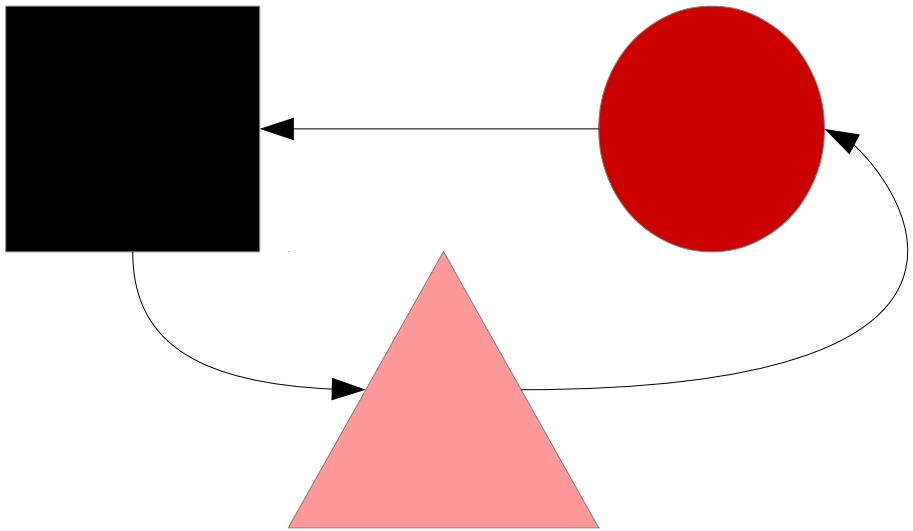
16 - Value of relationship



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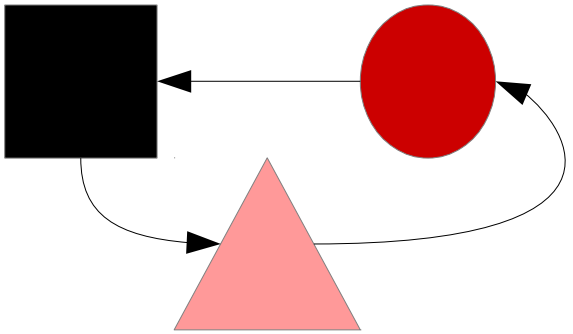
16 - Value of bringing into relationship



- Where can we see the common ground, the relation - and enforce it, make it more visible?
- Are there common ideals, common values?
- What positive output could a stronger relation have? Just mentally ... or really: Bringing chemical elements, people, ... together?
- What are the preconditions that can enable a "safe" space for contact - without doing any harm to the elements or the environment?
- Where did we realize a stronger relation before - with benefit? How did we do that? With which effects? What did we learn? Which insight is transferable?

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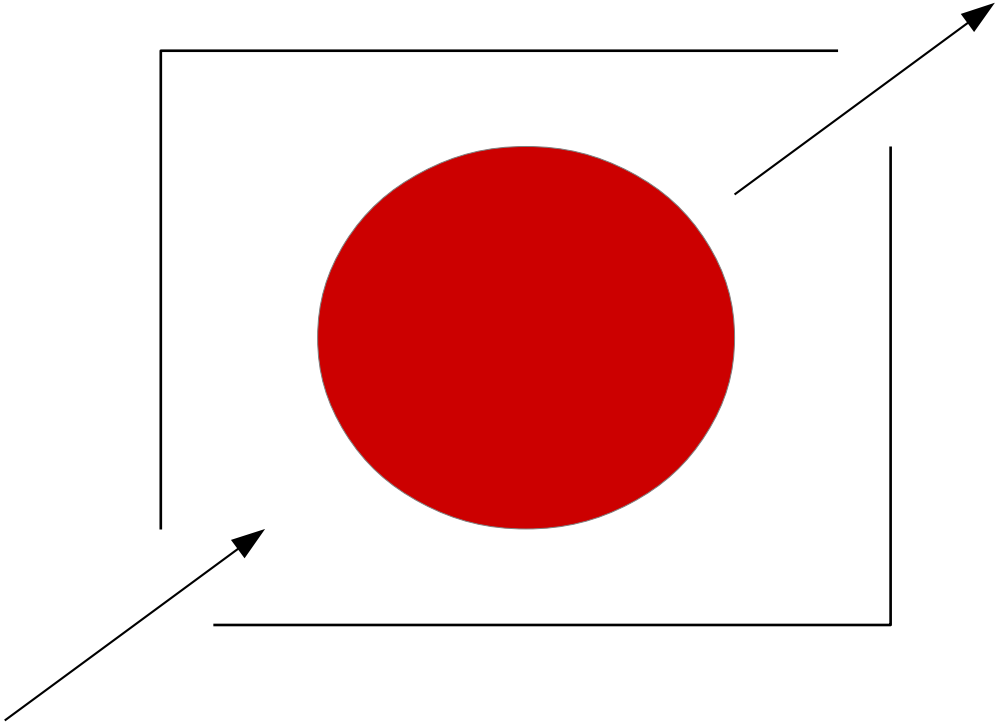
17 - Critique of reductionism



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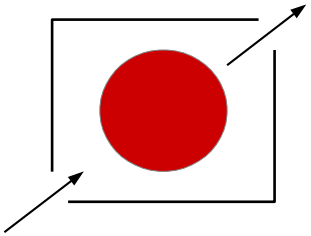
17 - Critique of reductionism and "de-totalized," thus isolated, entities separated from their shared common ground



- How do we realize that situations are being simplified - by neglecting the relationships between opinions / options / elements / ...
- If we realize that we ourselves are claiming that "things" are (only) isolated: What do we try to accomplish? What do we try to prevent?
- Do we sometimes tend to classify forms / attitudes / concepts as similar and of equal value - just to avoid critical discussions?
- In which areas do we manage to see forms etc. as interrelated - even if they seem isolated on first glance? How could we gain this perspective? How can we transfer this competence to other contexts?

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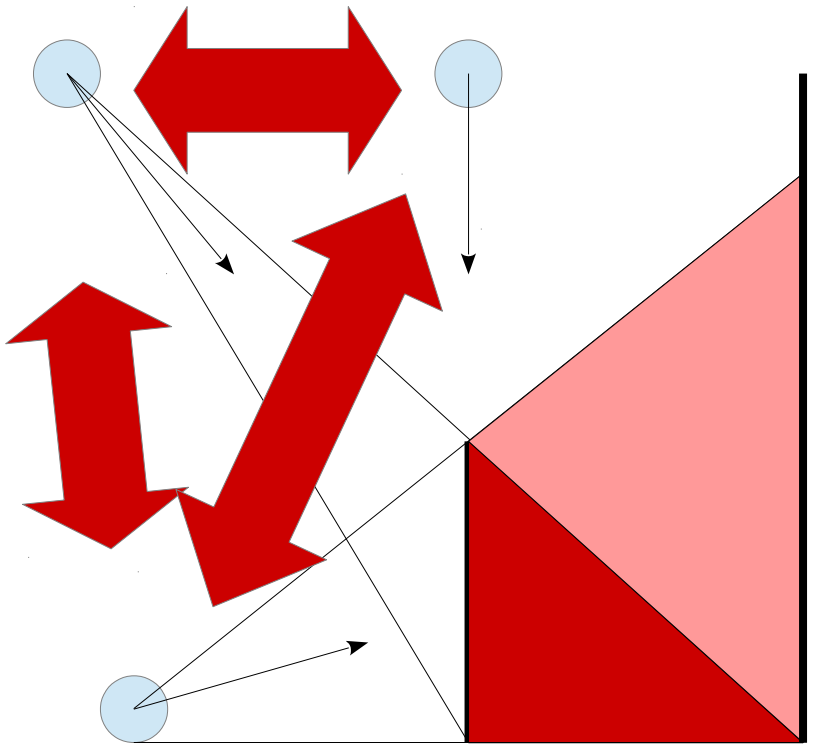
18 - Relatedness of value systems



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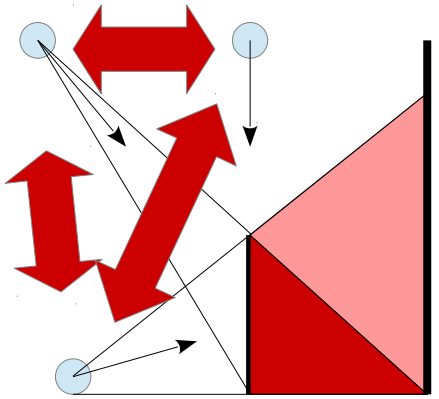
18 - Relatedness of different value and judgment systems



- Which different value systems interact in this situation?
- What are the similarities of these different judgment-concepts?
- Are these views linked like opposites? What is the relation behind? What are the tacit assumptions about the world and which are shared?
- Are there commonalities how judgments are articulated?
- Do we have a "map" for different value-systems?
- Where would we position our own approach within this map? How did our position on this map change in the past?
- Which tensions / conflicts look different if we see them against the background of the large value-shifts of society?
- Which antagonists share some views? What is the even more evil for them?
- In which fields did we encounter this thought-form before: Things being different and similar at the same time? Which options opened up?

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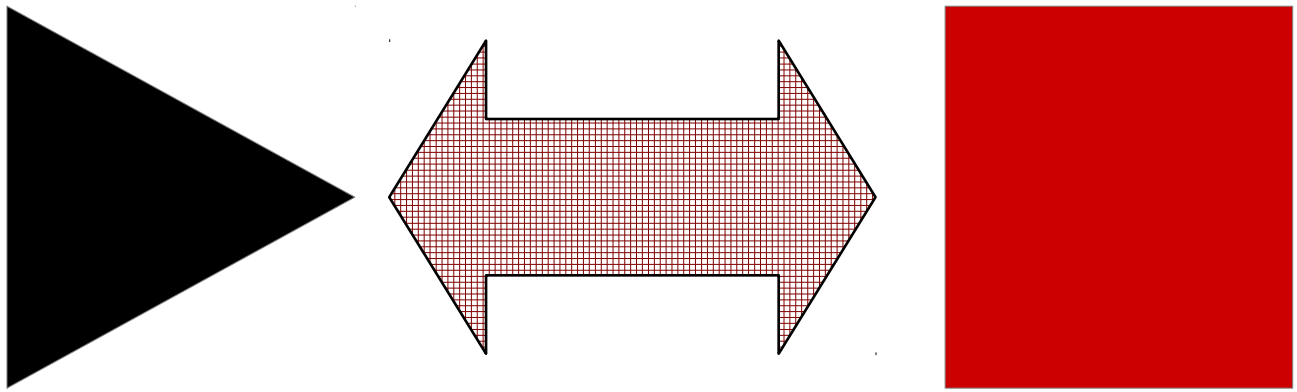
19 - Structural aspects of relationships



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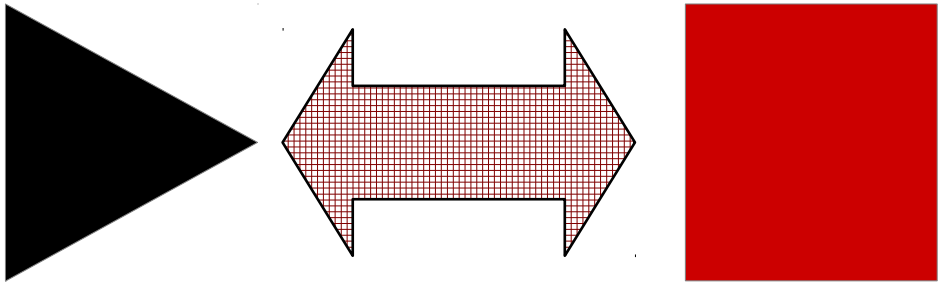
19 - Structural aspects of relationships



- Which relationship do we describe?
- Which structural qualities does this relation have?
- Which conditions frame the relationship?
- Which structures are created by the relationship?
- Which systems are kept in existence through this relationship?
- Is the relation one of figure and figure or figure and ground?
- What are the structures that enable feedback, thus stabilizing balance?
- Are there examples where this structural aspects caught our eyes especially? Which options arose? Which insights are transferable?

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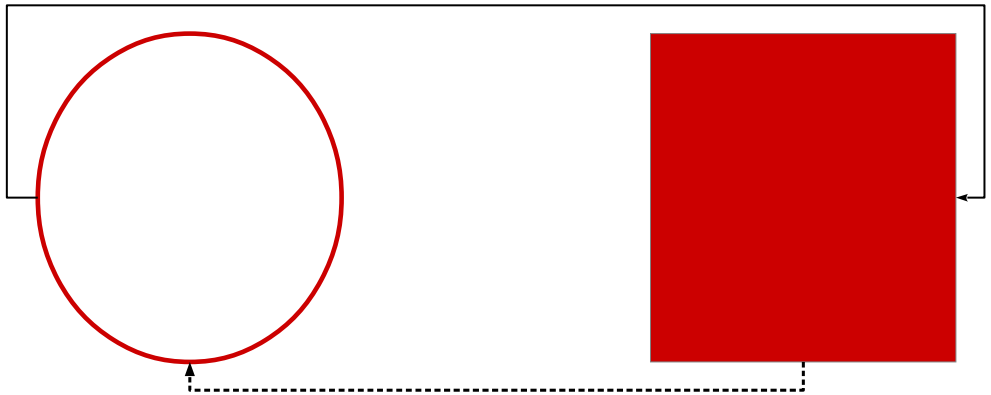
20 - Patterns of interaction in relationships



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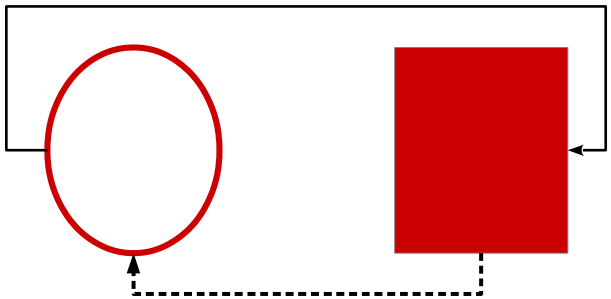
20 - Patterns of interaction in relationships



- How do protagonists relate to each other?
- Which patterns can we discern in their relationship?
- Are there patterns from other / older relationships that have been transferred to this relationship?
- How do influences work? Is it more like opposition, more together, one-sided, ... How do the working influences relate to the definition of the relationship that the protagonists formulate?
- Do the protagonists behave differently outside this relationship? What does this say about the formative effect of this relation?
- In which areas did we before realize the patterns of interactions in relationships? What enabled this insight? How would I describe this pattern today? Which models / terms / concepts do I use to describe patterns of interaction? How could I enlarge my pattern-vocabulary?

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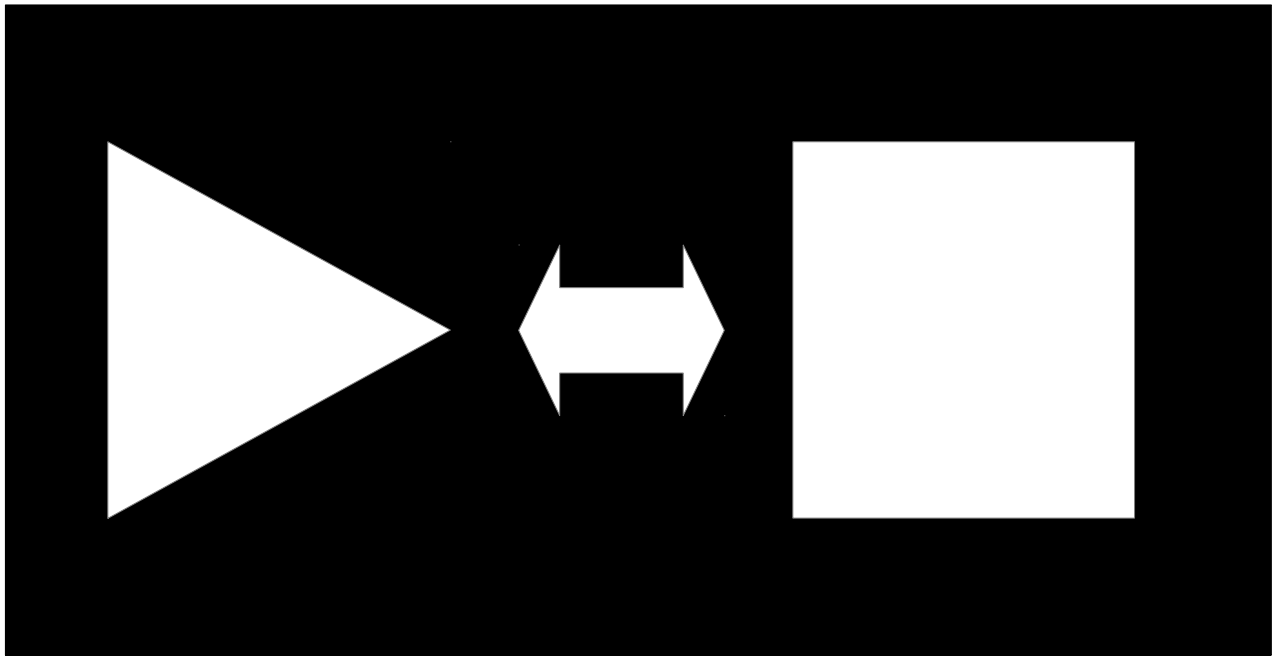
21 - Constitutive, relationships



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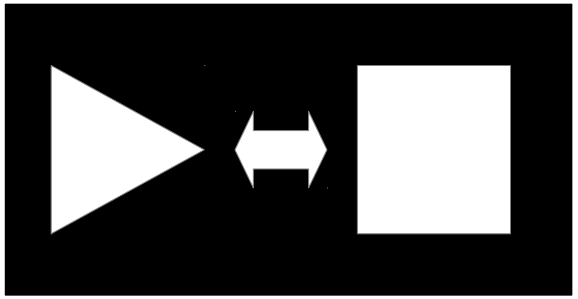
21 - Constitutive, intrinsic relationships (logically prior to what they relate)



- Which relationships emerge out of context, framing conditions?
- Where do system roles emerge - with the temptation to mix up role behavior with personality traits?
- Which parameters are products of context - that define relations: status / power / dynamics / ...
- How did these framing conditions emerge? By "chance" - or designed on purpose?
- Are the elements aware of the formative power that they are influenced by?
- Which qualities does the relation have? Which belong to the frame, which are originary?
- How does the frame react, if elements try to leave the frame, trying to shake off the limits?
- In which situations did I especially realize the power of constitutive relationships? Which potentials and which limits did this frame have? Which options came from this insight?

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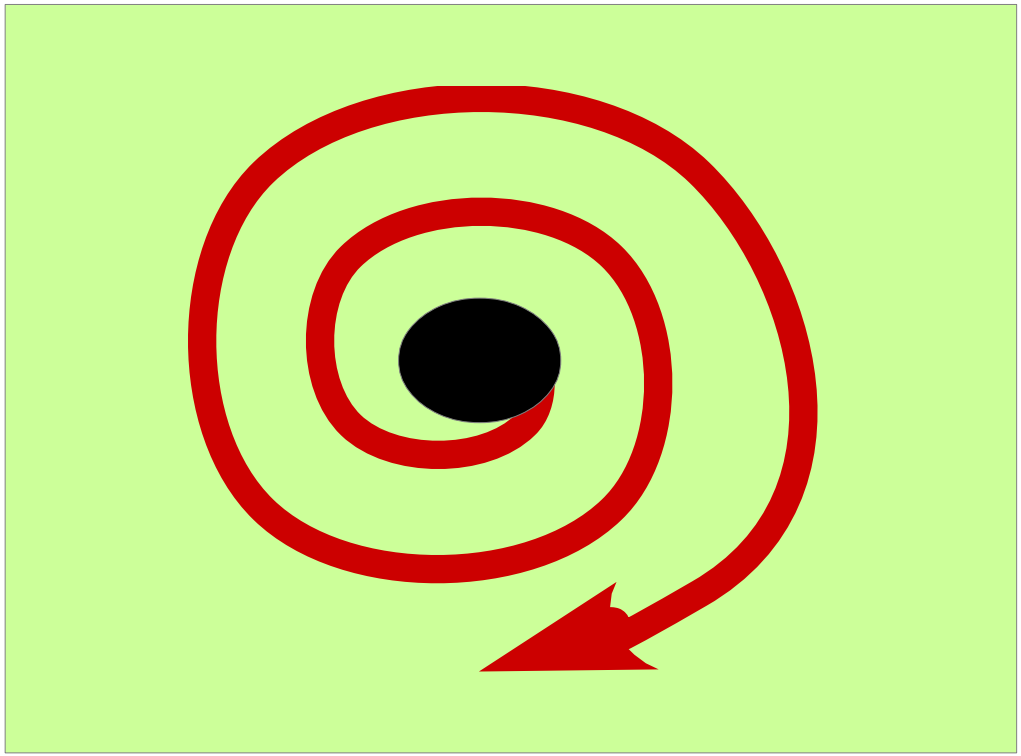
Transformation

(Quadrant IV)



Thought-Forms 22-28

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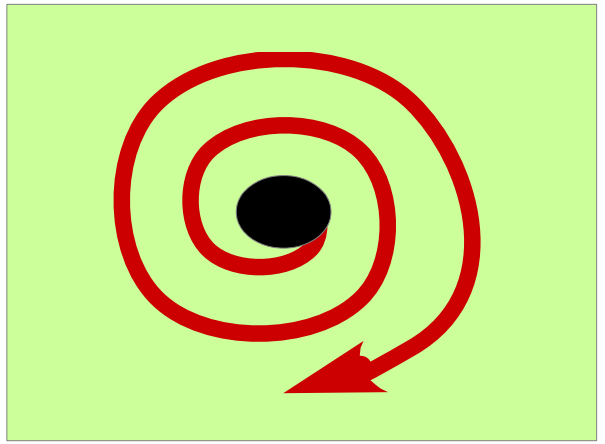
Transformation Quadrant IV



- Transformation presumes the thought-forms of the other quadrants: We now integrate the focus on processes, contexts and relationships.
- We especially look at the development of systems, the unfolding of their potential, their coupling with other systems, the way systems handle their instabilities and tensions.
- Doing this, we use different, even contradicting perspectives, letting them show new insights and realizations.

The 7 Transformation-Thought-Forms

22) Limits of Stability
23) Value of Conflict
24) Developmental potential
25) Evaluative comparison of systems in transformation
26) Coordinating Systems
27) Open, self-transforming systems
28) Integration of multiple perspectives

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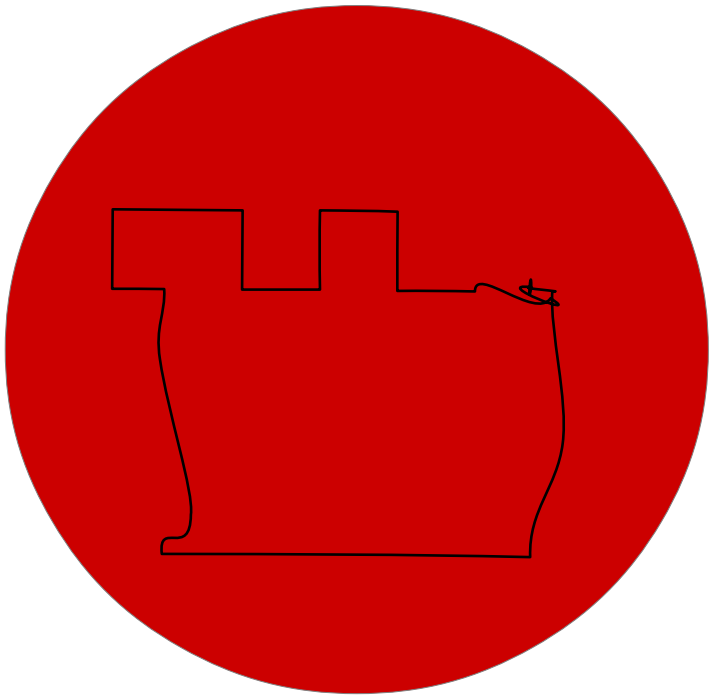
22 - Limits of stability



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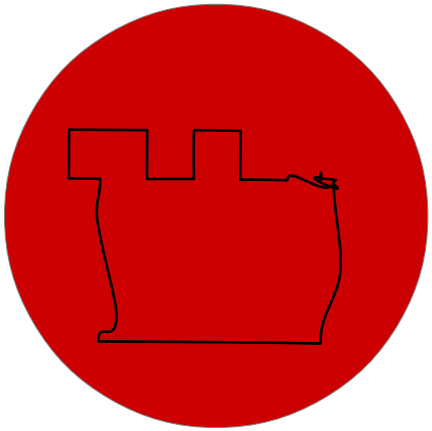
22 - Limits of stability, harmony, and durability (including quantitative into qualitative changes)

- What does the stability of the system depend on?
- Where are the limits, how could they be reached? Could we "test" these limits?
- Could we get to these limits on purpose?
- How did these limits emerge? Do we still need them? Could we alter them?
- What happens beyond these limits? Dissolution? Transformation? ...
- When did the limits of stability come into awareness before? In this example: What kept the system stable and what pushed the system towards its limits?
- How do we represent the concept of limits mentally? Which Metaphors do we use for stability and the tipping of this stability? (Ah, stability, limits and tipping already are metaphors ...)



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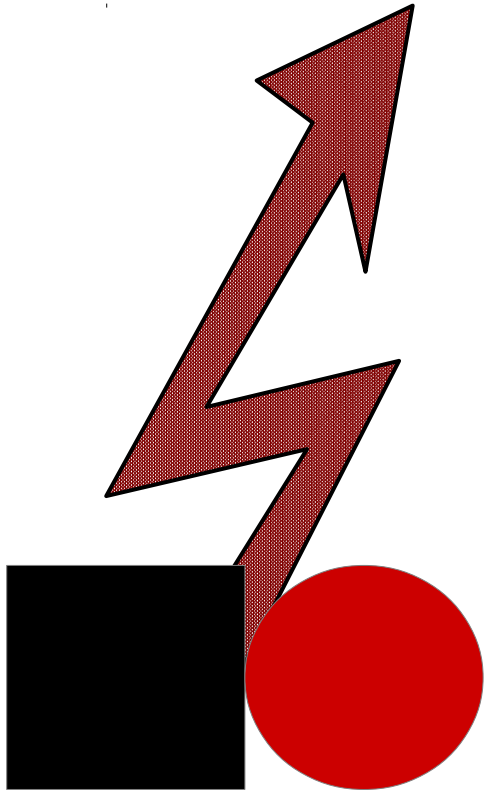
23 - Value of conflict



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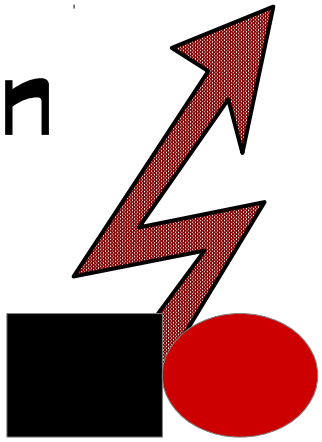
23 - Value of conflict

leading in a developmental direction



- Can we see the struggle between antagonizing polarities as conflict and the other way round: Conflicts as the struggle of polarities?
- If one of the polarities won - what would be lost?
- Can we see the importance / the contribution of conflicts for development and transformation? On the one hand conflicts as indications for transformation within systems, on the other hand conflicts as indications of transformations in the relationships of systems.
- Can we value conflict (and the resolution of conflict) as the "birth" of something new?
- How can we overcome the fear of conflict (if we should still be kept hostage by it) - following the saying of President Roosevelt: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself"
- How can we also avoid following our impulses that demand expulsion and extinction?
- Which conflicts come to mind when we realized maybe already during the "battle": This is not just cumbersome - it is helpful, productive, fruitful. What new quality emerged out of this conflict? Which aspects could be integrated better afterwards? Which insights can be transferred to other examples?

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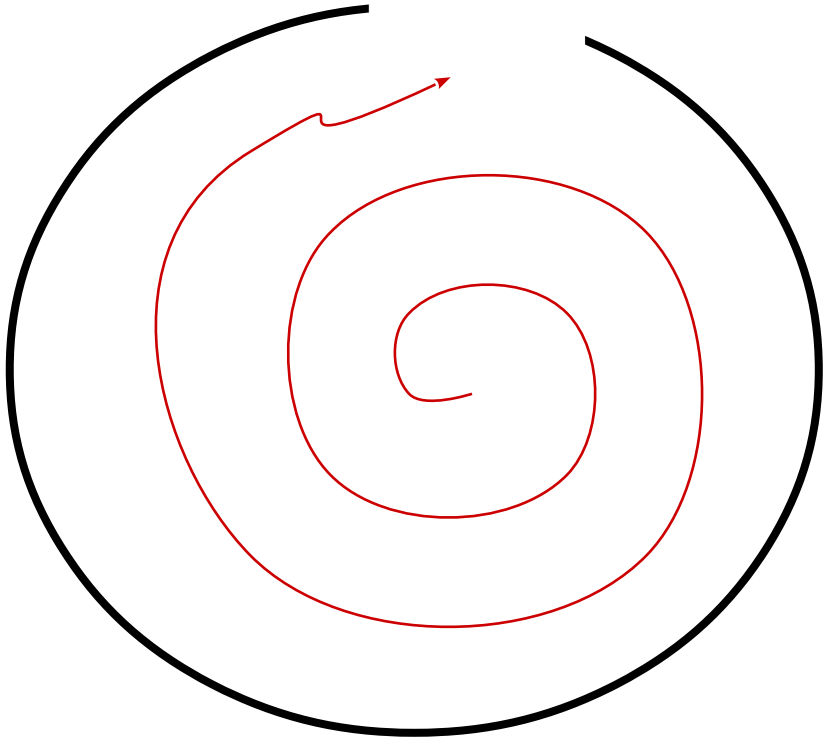
24 - Developmental potential



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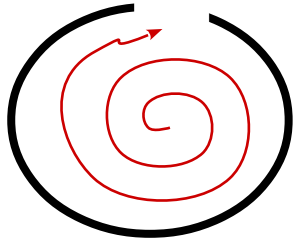
24 - Value of developmental potential leading to higher levels of individual and social functioning



- Which concepts of development do we have in mind? Do we distinguish between horizontal and vertical change?
- How would we recognize developmental potential in persons and systems?
- Do we have methods / concepts / terms to gauge and evaluate developmental potential?
- How can we tap into this potential, realize what is possible? Could we do that too quickly / too slowly / too ... ? Is this "realizing" something we can control / instigate ... or do we have to wait for it to "emerge" by itself?
- How can we establish within our systems new developmental potentials - energy reservoirs for future transformations? Can we do that actively? Can we "just" allow for it? Or do we think that this is outside of our circle of influence?

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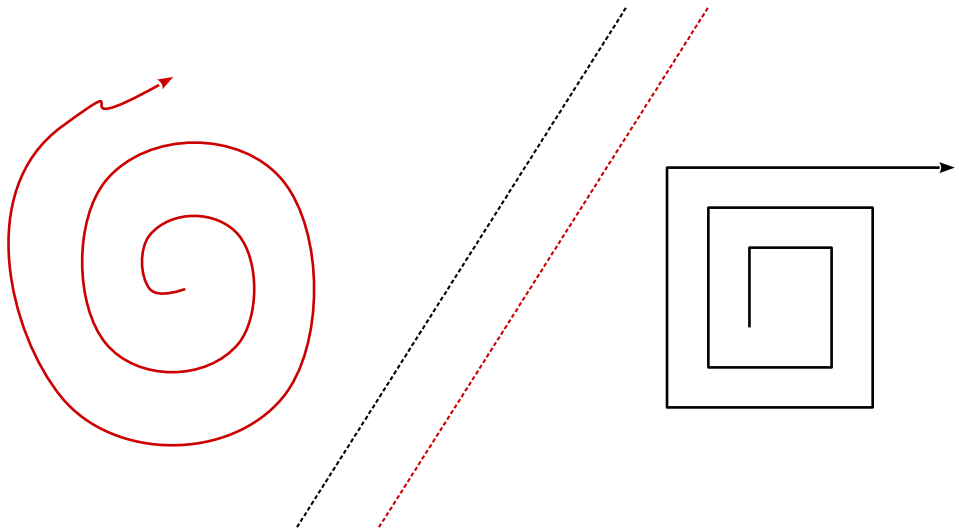
25 - Evaluative comparison of systems in trans-formation



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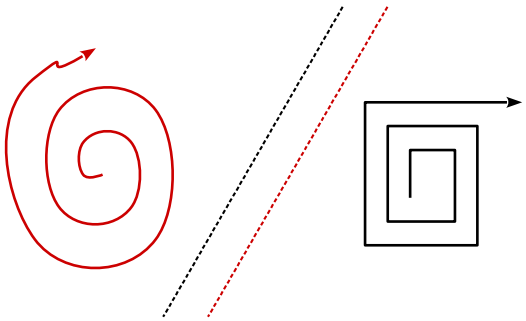
25 - Evaluative comparison of systems in transformation



- How can we compare systems, doing them, their qualities, functions, history etc. justice? Which criteria / parameters can we apply?
- Which output / benefit for whom do the systems deliver?
  Does the output meet the expectations?
- Which motivation do we have in mind when formulating expectations? Can we see the lenses of us and others that determine the expectations?
- Comparing two or more systems: what are similarities, what are differences?
- Is there an ideal form for the systems? Do we compare one "real" system with the ideal version of the other?
- How can we compare the ability of the systems to integrate new aspects? Can we assess how much the systems sustain the transformation of other systems?
- How can we describe differences in type (of equal value) and point to differences in stage (of different value) - without downgrading, but also without leveling - escape to flatland.

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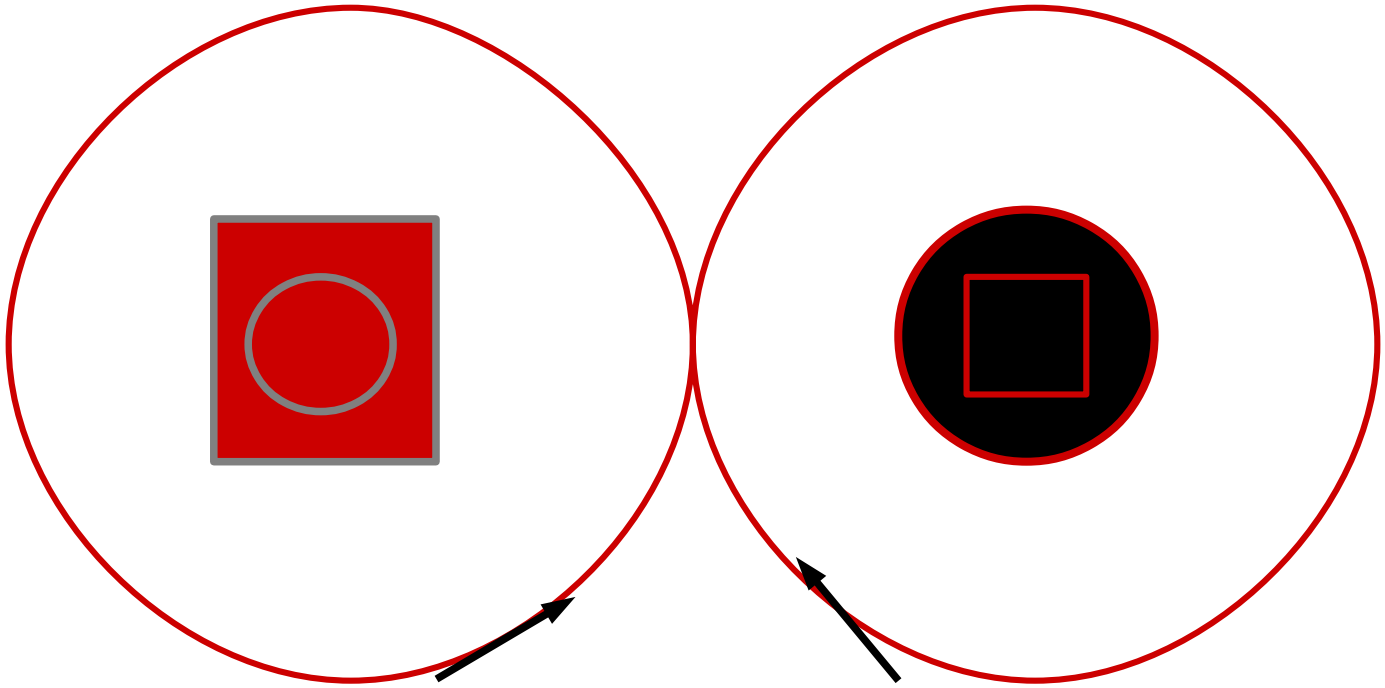
26 - Coordinating systems



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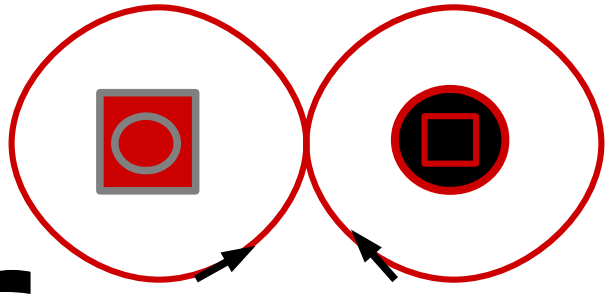
26 - Process of coordinating systems



- Can we see that systems are not coordinated naturally?
- Which metaphors do we use to represent coordination of systems?
- How do we describe the active intervention to coordinate systems? How can we think beyond mechanistic concepts?
- Do we realize the fundamental risks of positive feedback - tensions / energy / ... building up? In our example, how could positive feedback have dangerous effects?
- How can we define principles that make room for systems to coordinate themselves - once and continually?
- Which functions do we need to preserve in each system?
- Which functions could emerge only through coordination of the systems?
- Where did we come across this concept of coordination? How did coordination work? Which insights can we transfer?

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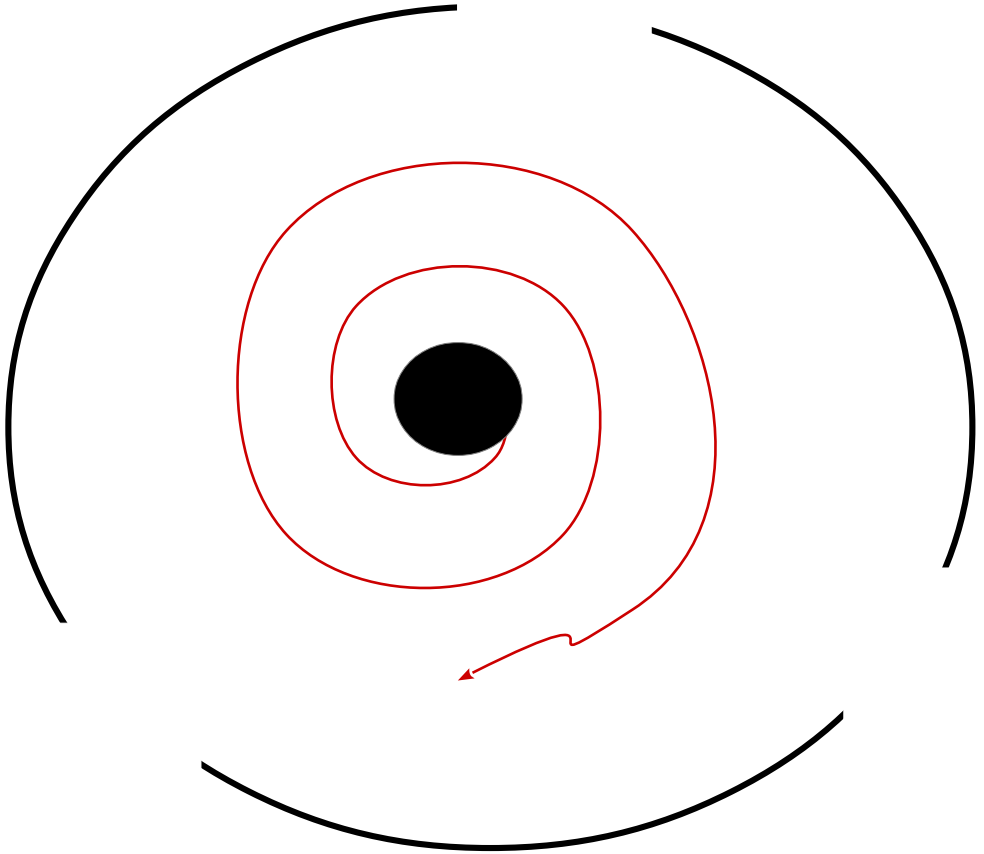
27 - Open, self-transforming systems



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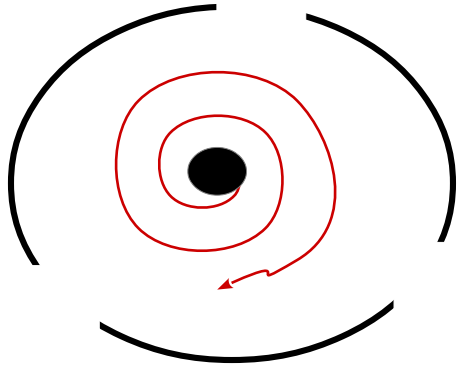

- Which is the identity that we want to protect and preserve while being subject to transformation?
- What would "openness" mean for our system? Which are the "eyes" with which this system gets input from the world? Where do we need to dose openness - setting clear boundaries - against what? How?
- What is the effect of letting more in? Which continual inputs are necessary already? Which opportunities could emerge from more openness?
- What kind of self-transformation has already taken place in the past? What can we learn from these experiences?
- How do we manage the polarity: aiming at self-transformation AND letting self-transformation happen - the empowerment-paradox
- Scenarios: What kind of changes in the environments would demand a change in the system?
- Where could we perceive self-transformation before? How did it work? What are the risks?
- If we think about self-transformation - what mental concepts do we use? Do we have a gesture for it?

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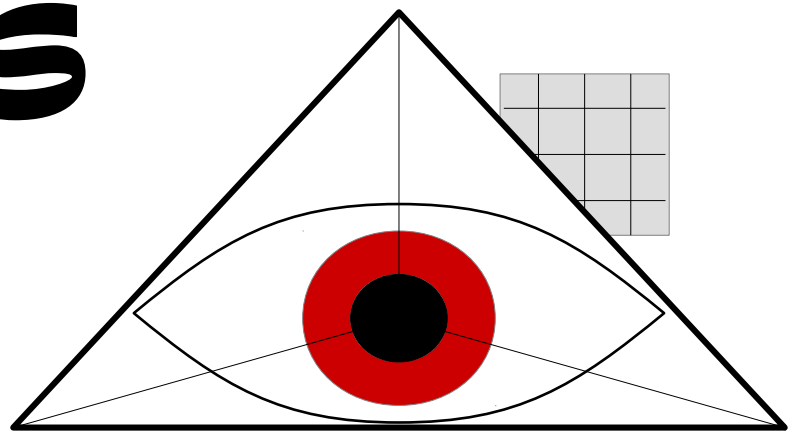
28 - Integration of multiple perspectives



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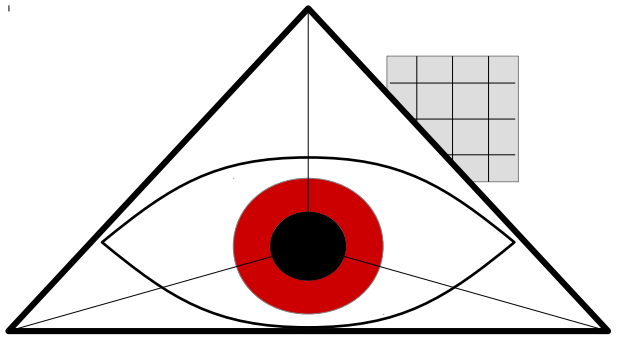
28 - Integration of multiple perspectives in order to define complex realities; critique of formalistic thinking



- Can we grasp the perspectives that dominate our thinking?
- Which perspectives are held by other stakeholders of the system?
- Can we see the limits of our own perspective? How could we complement our view?
- How can we - besides by using good lenses - stay open to new and unique that does not easily fit into a established category? How can we really "see" a flower, not just name it?
- Can we allow for various parallel perspectives? How can we avoid paralysis / confusion?
- How can we allow for times of open-ended questions, doubt, ambiguity and contradictions and afterwards entering times of decisions and action?
- How do we handle complexity? Where do we get time and/or buddies to reflect?
- In which areas is it especially hard to integrate other views? How come?

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