



REIFRAMING! Seeing something else

This Week's **Research Reflection**

Weaving Worlds: Symbols in Motion

From Trees to Dragons: Exploring the Threads That Glue Meaning and Transformation

Ask yourself: What are your favourite symbols in this moment of time? The logbook, as before, delves into individuals, theorists, entrepreneurs, and artists. This edition comes with a touch of *Journal of Management Studies* and *Dagens Industri*.

My favourite symbol right now is a diamond, I just ended a program in Istanbul that I felt was a diamond for me. In this logbook, we dive into the role of **Symbols in Human and Organizational Development**. In the picture to the right we see the symbol of



someone taking care of a green plant close to an open window (ok its me) and below the picture of blueberries in The Meaning School logotype. A note: The blueberries represent living resilience that come together to



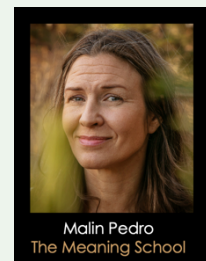
Take care of the blueberries

create a cohesive, collective meaning-making. In reflecting on the role that symbols play in shaping our understanding of the world I today drawn my insights from what is shared in two articles, [one](#) is from a mainly philosophical perspective named "Organizations, Institutions, and Symbols: Introduction to a Point-Counterpoint Conversation", by Muzioa et al.(2024). The [other one](#) is "The Biological Basis of the Symbolic: Exploring the Implications of the Co-Evolution of Language, Cognition and Sociality for Management Studies", by N. Phillipsa and C. Moser. *Two questions to start with: What is a picture (symbol) of your organizational success? And what could be a metaphor (symbol) of who you are?*

Exploring the Implications of the Co-Evolution of Language, Cognition and Sociality for Management Studies", by N. Phillipsa and C. Moser. *Two questions to start with: What is a picture (symbol) of your organizational success? And what could be a metaphor (symbol) of who you are?*

Malin Pedro, Curator and Program Director

This reflection is part of my discovery journey. If you are interested in reading more, contact me.



Malin Pedro
The Meaning School



The Power of Symbols in Creating Meaning and Organizational Realities

The first article provides an exploration of how symbols are not merely abstract representations, but active and formative forces that contribute to the construction of both social and organizational realities. Symbols go beyond logical ideas and are deeply connected to culture, myths, and the meanings we create together. I think about my own symbols, living units: trees, gardens and forests, blueberries, a ship, and an origami dragon. Each one has a personal meaning for me, and they also have a shared significance.

The Tree is deeply rooted in collective mythology, and represents growth, interconnectedness, and the foundation upon which we build our futures. It speaks to the idea of institutional roots. The blueberries symbolize resilience. The ship reminds me of the constant movement and direction in organizations and the origami dragon represents the structural element that holds together both form and function in a transformation process. Much like the philosophical perspective in the article linked,



the dragon weaves sensory experiences and shared concepts. What do I mean by that? Well, imagine a team working together to create an art installation or build a symbolic object, such as a dragon made of various materials. Throughout the process, participants experience sensory engagement (working with their hands, visualizing the design, collaborating through discussions), while sharing thought

concepts that emerge through their teamwork. In this context, the dragon becomes more than just an object. It is a physical symbol that embodies the company's cultural values, perhaps even its vision. It embodies stories to be told, and it contains hopefully positive memories. Symbols (like the glue or diamonds in this text), in their many forms, help bind the individual and the collective, the material and the immaterial. They function not only as glue



not only as glue





that holds social and cultural systems together but also as threads that weave deeper connections and a create a shared sense of belonging.



A personal episode in program, Istanbul 2024. The meaning: a diamond

The [article](#) "The Biological Basis of the Symbolic: Exploring the Implications of the Co-Evolution of Language, Cognition and Sociality for Management Studies", by N. Phillipsa and C. Moser shows that there is a broad definition of a symbol and the most useful could be: 'A symbol is something that someone intends to represent something other than itself (DeLoache, 2004). When reading this article we see the meaning of symbols from another perspective, focusing on human biology and evolution rather than philosophy or sociology. This article argues that the ability to create and



Handeln genom tiderna, Stig Lindberg



share symbols was a major turning point in human evolution, enabling us to communicate, store knowledge, think abstractly, and work together in large groups. This ability also created a unique "cognitive niche" that sets humans apart. We can read more about this in the book *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari.

Stig Lindberg



Stig Lindberg
Artist

In a program I led for a financial agency this year at the Vår Gård conference in Sweden, we used Stig Larsson's painting "Trade Through the Ages" as a tool for introductions. Participants were asked to stand by a symbol from the artwork that their parent might use to represent them and to share their story from that perspective.

The wall sculpture "Trade Through the Ages" (Handeln genom tiderna) portrays the development of commerce in Sweden, created by ceramic. [Stig Lindberg](#) (1916–1982) was one of Sweden's greatest and most popular post war designers, working as the artistic director at the Gustavsberg porcelain factory. He was a ceramic designer, glass designer, textile designer, industrial designer, painter, and illustrator.

Stig was born in Umeå, Sweden, the city where I attended Officer School, and he passed away in San Felice Circeo, Italy, the country where I have my extended family and stepchildren. Lindberg pushed boundaries toward abstraction and was one of Sweden's most important postwar designers.



RIBB, Stig Lindberg

During his career at Gustavsberg pottery factory, he created tableware lines that remain iconic today. My grandfather drank his morning coffee from the RIBB cup—or rather, he drank his coffee from the saucer of the cup, as some people did in the old days.



A touch of Dagens Industri

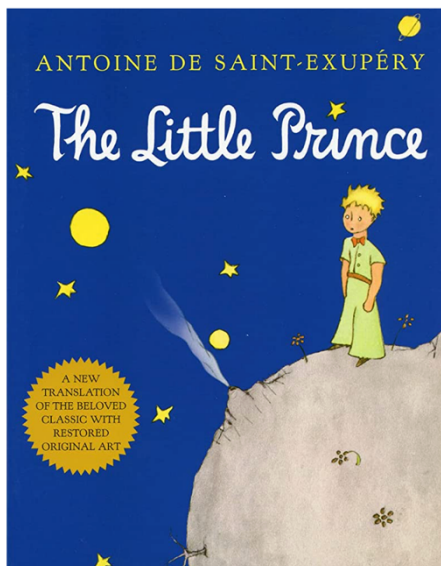


Hagströmer om Apotea: "Blir inte vatten och bröd idag"

but they might crunch.

The news about the online pharmacy Apotea's plans to be listed on the Stockholm Stock Exchange boosted the stock of Creades (a major shareholder in Apotea) by several percent. Together with his family, [Sven Hagströmer](#) owns just over 60 percent of the capital in Creades. There will be diamonds for lunch,

In an interview with *Dagens Industri*, he remarked that "it won't be bread and water for lunch" after the announcement. Congratulations, Sven! You seem to be an exceptional leader. I remember being invited to a panel with you once, you made a fantastic impression. I know that Sven Hagströmer is a pilot, just like me. He has flown a Cessna 206, while I earned and took my license on a Cessna 207. This brings to mind of [Antoine de Saint-Exupéry](#), the French



writer, poet, journalist, and aviator. He received several literary awards for his novella *The Little Prince* (*Le Petit Prince*) and his lyrical aviation writings. *The Little Prince* is a part of some of my programs.



“Good-bye,” said the fox. Here is my secret. It is very simple: one sees only with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eye.

The banks are set to make sustainability efforts flourish

Finally, a new way to view what constitutes a resource. We also have new definitions of what environmental pollution entails. Noise and social media, such as LinkedIn, can consume our environment, but we'll leave that for another logbook. From my role as Program Director at Stockholm School of Economics, Executive Education (freelancer nowadays), this warms my heart. I know how colleagues and researchers struggle with this shift in educational contexts. Congratulations to faculty in finance as Johan N, Hanna S, Niclas H, Emilia C, and others. What an incredible job you've done!

"The modern financial sector now has to account for more than just ones and zeros in its investments. This is how Swedish major banks are working with biodiversity. For a long time, classical economic models treated nature as a free, infinitely exploitable resource. Today, we know that biodiversity—all the different forms of life on Earth, such as animals, plants, and microorganisms, and how they coexist in ecosystems—is under severe threat." Dagens Industri, November 7th.





Mission with this logbook - a seed and a space

"In reading a novel, any novel, we have to know perfectly well that the whole thing is nonsense, and then, while reading, believe every word of it.

Finally, when we're done with it, we may find... that we're a bit different from what we were before we read it, that we have changed a little, as if by having met a new face, crossed a street we never crossed before. **But it is very hard to say just what we learned, how we were changed...** The truth is a matter of the imagination." (Ursula K. Le Guin)



The Meaning School
is a garden



Take care of the blueberries