



Photo: The author



Bachelor Thesis in Geography and Geoinformatics

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Honey as an Invitation - A Case Study of the Magical Honey Temple Bybi

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Abstract

Scientific knowledge has yet to succeed in changing human relation to nature, despite the awareness that it is human actions that drive climate change. Scientists argue that thinking in new ways is not enough in order to render change. Instead a re-sensing and re-embodying is called for.

This case study examines Bybi's Honey Ceremony - a practice inspired by the ingenious thinking of the gift economy. Robin Wall Kimmerer reintroduces the gift economy but without concrete instructions on how to practice it. Bybi's honey ceremony is an interpretation of that, offering the honey as an invitation, not a product.

Presenting the honey in an aesthetic and sensuous staging however risks enforcing a dual perception of two worlds: the one we live and consume in, and another, caring, but seemingly unobtainable world, fostering a core dilemma of how to bridge the two worlds.

The power of speaking in togetherness through the Impossible Conversation will be utilized as a method to derive how the obligations are understood in a modern western context, leading to a conclusion that neither thoughts, actions nor conversations stand alone in bridging the two worlds.

Introduction

In 2013 the fifth assessment report by IPCC (2013) made it clear that human activities are causing global warming due to emissions of greenhouse gases, mainly through burning of fossil fuels.

In the special report on Global Warming of 1,5° C it is expressed that:

“Limiting global warming to 1,5° C is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics, but would require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.”

(IPCC.ch, 2018)

Scholars have since tried to discern this dilemma of why humans keep this practice of essentially taking more than offered, while being aware that it is exactly this practice that is causing the problem (Loreau, 2023; Kimmerer, 2024). This dilemma is captured in a certain perception of existence as being between two separate worlds: The world we live, work, shop and consume in and a mysterious other world which is caring and sustainable, but seemingly fantastical. The question of how to bridge these two worlds will be unfolded in this paper.

Contemporary scientists call for urgent, radical, and imaginative thinking to change our ways of being in the world in order to be able to inhabit the planet in the future (Loreau, 2023; Haraway, 2016; Thorgeirsdottir, 2024; Tronto, 2015; Kimmerer, 2024). Loreau (2023) argues that humans are so steeped in collective fictions created by modernity that keeps us detached from nature, causing us, humans, to destroy it. He calls for new, radical practices, as he asserts that intellectual clarity alone will not suffice, (Loreau, 2023). He argues instead that we should breathe, listen and smell our way back to nature.

Sigridur Thorgeirsdottir adds to this argument, that if we are to achieve change it must happen through how *“we experience and sense ourselves as environmental beings”* (2024. p. 180). In this sense we do not need new practices, but only to induce what is embedded in us already. This perspective has recently been amplified by Robin Wall Kimmerer writing on the traditional economy of gifts (Kimmerer, 2024; Mauss, 2024; Thygesen, 2019).

But while these writers offer an ambition for a practice of the gift economy, there is very little guidance to show how these practices might take shape in the everyday economy of products, consumers, and producers.

This Bachelor thesis is a case study of the company Bybi – a magical honey temple, adopting the thinking of the gift economy in a practice we in Bybi call a Honey Ceremony, where participants are invited to experience through their senses, what a different economy feels, looks and smells like. It begins with receiving a jar of honey and giving back to the bees by planting a flower.

In the realisation that we only need to activate what already exists in us through a re-sensing - it is then interesting to examine what Bybi are cultivating through staging honey as an invitation - not a product. We do not need to invent new ways of thinking of the economy, but only to go back to the roots to an economy that has been a part of indigenous communities across time and space, but has since been forgotten (Emergence Magazine, 2024). The gift economy might seem a radical economy to recognize in a time where the current dominant economy is constantly urging us to take even more (Emergence Magazine, 2024). However, reconnecting with our roots through imaging a different economic system may be worthwhile in times of uncertain changes (IPPC, 2013).

When raising attention to how a different way of thinking economy will lead to a more caring way of being in the world, it is necessary to assess how the money economy, that is the overruling practice of today's economy, differs, compared to the gift economy. The most relevant difference between the two economies lies in the obligations that are embedded in the gift economy. I will further unfold the differences between the two economies and the obligations of the gift economy in order to understand what they mean in terms of how the obligations are capable of changing people's consciousness and practices, in the theoretical description.

After introducing the theory of the gift economy I will explain how Donna Haraway's idea of Storytelling For Earthly Survival (Terranova, 2016) is relevant to utilize in a hermeneutic and phenomenological approach to the method of The Impossible Conversation in order to discern how the obligations are understood through modern western minds and how they come to show in participant's lived experiences. A refusal of an invitation once meant a declaration of war, but what does it mean today? Using The Impossible Conversation to derive qualitative data will allow me to examine how the theory of the gift economy through the practice of The Honey Ceremony is able to stay in participant's consciousness both long after taking part and what thoughts are cultivated doing the ceremony. Utilizing this method

will allow me to answer the question on how to address the dilemma introduced in the beginning and answer my research questions:

In order to bridge the gap between the two worlds - what thoughts, actions and conversations do we need to cultivate to be able to change participants' consciousness around how they relate to honey as an invitation - not a product?

How are the obligations of the gift economy perceived in a modern western world?

How is this change in consciousness imagined in other relations too?

My Position

Being a part of the community of Bybi for six years will naturally have effects on my analysis. I am writing this paper from my own perspective as a student and a researcher of the work of Bybi, but also as a practitioner of the work of Bybi which potentially could have both positive and negative meanings to this study. Positive as in that I am already deeply embedded in the company and their practices and therefore know them well. However, this very fact can also bring negative effects in creating a possible bias. I am aware of this position, and with the fact that I am writing alone, I will take what I have learned in this project seriously and prioritise time to listen to critique from both my peers at the university and from friends from outside in trying to avoid this possible bias.

Acknowledgements

I want to share my gratitude with the respondents who have been kind in giving me access to their personal stories and likewise to the people who have been a helpful hand in providing me with feedback. Even though there is only one author to this project, it was not created in my thoughts alone, but in a web of tentacular thinking (Haraway, 2016; Aers et al, 2022).

Theory

In light of the climate crisis we live in, new areas in the field of environmental ethics have emerged, addressing the dilemma that humans are aware of the consequences of our actions and yet mostly still carry on with business as usual (Thorgeirsdottir, 2024; Loreau, 2023).

Professor in philosophy and teacher in environmental ethics Sigridur Thorgeirsdottir (2024) points to the fact that science, and especially environmental ethics, have not yet been successful in changing people's ways of sustaining an unsustainable practice:

“In order for a change in culture and mentality to take place it is not enough that our understanding of our place in the environment becomes more ecocentric in the sense of understanding how human life is interconnected with all life. It is also not enough that the big economic, financial systems and production systems that constitute an unsustainable economy change. A change in the way we experience and sense ourselves as environmental beings also needs to happen.” (Thorgeirsdottir, 2024, p. 180).

Thorgeirsdottir (2024) argues for an experiential and embodied turn in order for change to happen and with that, a need to link thinking to our bodily experience through embodying the felt experience, making the abstract concepts of relating to nature and thinking economy tangible through our five senses.

Michel Loreau (2023), professor in theoretical ecology, argues that it is fictions, such as being superior to the natural world, that keeps humans destroying it, as in this fiction lies an embedded disrespect in the way that nature is made only out of objects to be exploited. It is necessary to broaden human perspectives and gain a sense that we, humans, are part of the world in a position that is not superior to animals or natural elements (Loreau, 2023).

Thorgeirsdottir's (2024) and Loreau's (2023) thinking follows Donna Haraway's (2016) notion of *“staying with the trouble”* in her book of the same title, where she asserts that: *“these are the times of urgencies that need stories”* (Haraway, 2016, p. 37) and even argues how storytelling can be used as a tool for earthly survival (Terranova, 2016). How Thorgeirsdottir's (2024) notions of bodily grasping these times of urgencies, together with Loreau's notion of humans' fictional relation to nature along with Haraway's storytelling relates to Bybi's Honey Ceremony will be unfolded throughout the paper. First I will highlight what this paper is really constructed around: the obligations of the gift economy.

An Economy of Gifts

In this study I will turn to the most recent approach of the gift economy, vividly described by Robin Wall Kimmerer in her books *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013) and *The Serviceberry* (2024). Kimmerer is a botanist and a Potawatami Nation member practicing and living the gift economy. The idea is, according to Kimmerer (2024), that recognizing the things we are offered from nature as gifts, instead of commodities will change our relation to them: *“when the natural world is understood as a gift instead of private property, there are ethical constraints on the accumulation of abundance that is not yours to own”* (Kimmerer, 2024, p. 34-35). In this sense Kimmerer (2024) shows the power of the language and that the specific words we use to describe things matters: *“To name the world as gifts, is to feel ones membership in the web of reciprocity, it makes you happy and it makes you accountable”* (Kimmerer, 2024, s. 22).

We would make sure to make good use of the things we are given as a gift, as a contrast to the things we buy in the supermarket. There are no obligations to the things we buy in the supermarket, because they have been paid for; we can do whatever we want with them, we do not owe anyone for them (Kimmerer, 2024). But if we are given a gift from a neighbor or perhaps a relative, a piece of clothing, some fruits from her garden or a bundle of yarn, we acquire a different relation to the thing. This reminds me of a story between my two friends: My friend was given a hand knitted hat by his girlfriend and after a failed machine-washing attempt, it became a very filtered hat, and instead of throwing it out, he saw it as a perfect fruit bowl. It probably would not have happened with a hat he had bought from a mass-producing clothing brand.

Kimmerer (2024) describes that in the tradition of the potawatomi nation the abundance are not conserved for later individual use, but rather *“stored in the belly of your brother”* (Kimmerer, 2024, p. 32) and she explains: *“the hunter who shared the feast with you today could well anticipate that you share from a full fishnet or offer your labor in repairing a boat in the future”* (Kimmerer, 2024, p. 34). Meaning that instead of keeping the abundance to oneself, a feast is held to share it with the community and when you one day are in deficiency, you can trust the community to feed or help you with your need at a different time, acknowledging times of abundance and times of scarcity (Emergence Magazine, 2024). This is a way of keeping the balance and restoring peace in the community (Mauss, 2024).

In order to keep the balance, Kimmerer (2024) employs the term “enoughness” in her story about serviceberries. The term can be understood as being content with having enough, not taking more than what is needed (Kimmerer, 2024). Things are not hoarded by a few in order to sell from it for a profit, but instead balanced out in the community naturally *“from a collective sense of equity in “enoughness” and accountability in distributing the gifts of the Earth”* (Kimmerer, 2024, p. 33).

Kimmerer (2024) explains the additional value that is accumulated in the gift economy, as a currency of gratitude and connection. The abundance of gifts are shared and the connection builds communities, as the community are constantly exchanging gifts and the gifts constantly change form in the way that connection is not static, it is flowing like energy through the community. Adding to this, is the recognition that all in the community have their unique gifts to share, in order for the community to flourish. The reciprocity of a gift is not expected to be equivalent, nor immediate - instead lies an acceptance of a delayed reciprocity (Kimmerer, 2024); that gifts can be reciprocated as - and when needed. Following this, Kimmerer also explains how the gift economy is contagious: Once we begin to practice the thinking of the gift economy everything turns into gifts from Mother Earth (Emergence Magazine, 2024).

This shapeshifting way of understanding the gift economy is adopted in Bybis practices as A Currency of Care (Figure 1) that has two rules: The honey must be shared with people we care about and we must plant flower seeds to thank the bees.

The concepts of the gift economy first emerged from the field of anthropology in Mauss’ Essay The Gift (Mauss, 2024) that was first published in 1925 where the obligations of the gift economy were founded:

The obligation to give, the obligation to receive and the obligation to reciprocate: to give back.

In 1950 Levi Strauss examined the North American potlatches where the gift of food were shared in celebratory feasts to secure peace, but also had the important aptitude of sustaining healthy communities (Lanoue, 2023). Since, the theory of the gift economy fused into sociology and economics and in more recent years Thygesen (2019) made an interesting comparison of the two economies: the money economy and the gift economy in his Case Study of local economy on the Danish island of Samsø. In his analysis he examines the additional values that the gift economy offers compared to the money economy.

This study's aim is not to compare the two economies, but it is inevitably to discern how they differ in understanding the gift economy's potential, in a time where the need for a different relation to earth and its gifts are urgent (Haraway, 2016).

In his comparison of the money economy and the gift economy Thygesen (2019) argues how the gift economy stands out through at least three significant differences that together cultivates an added value.

He explains how, as the first element that differentiates the two economies, the element of sustainability as an added value, through giving access. This is illustrated in a simple example of two neighbors: *“one party offers the other access to her [lawn]mower as a gift, and the other offers access to his [hedge]trimmer as a return gift. Both parties still own a garden tool, but they are converting ownership and consumer surplus into a gift economy by sharing them”* (Thygesen, 2019, p. 497). Instead of buying one lawn mower each, and one hedge trimmer each, they instead end up having each a mower and a trimmer because they gave access and shared their resources. Maybe they could have afforded to buy both a mower and a trimmer, and having each their own, but as Thygesens asserts: *“it is not an investment by me. It is an investment in us,[...] as opposed to ownership”* (2019, p. 498). Investing in *us* limits the resources taken from the earth, and therefore, as he argues, is sustainable.

The element of sharing their gifts instead of buying new, reveals also the second element that provides an added value; the potential to build communities through the element of trust: the two neighbors are now connected through a trusting bond that they build through sharing their resources. Reciprocity is, as he explains, not about giving back immediately, it would then be a transaction, not different from the money economy. But knowing that the neighbors can rely on each other to be able to reciprocate a gift in the future, whenever it is needed, is what lies in the trust and that has the potential to build communities (Thygesen, 2019), just as in Kimmerer's (2024) notion of delayed reciprocity.

The last and most important difference highlighted between the two economies is the three obligations as mentioned before from Mauss's *The Gift* (Mauss, 2024).

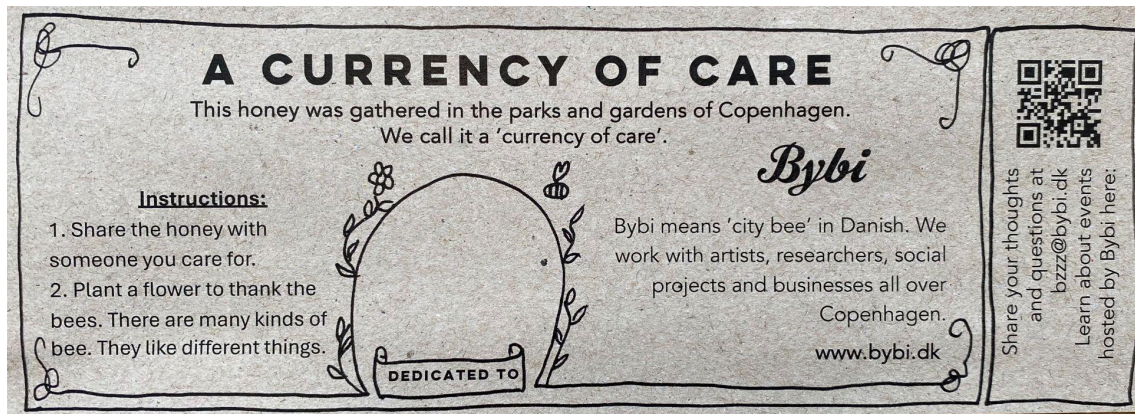


Fig. 1. A Currency of Care, with instructions of reciprocity and space for dedication.

The meaning of care, in the use of the company Bybi, is best illustrated in Joan Tronto's and Berenice Fisher's (Tronto, 2015) definition where care is understood first and foremost "*as a reaching out to something other than the self*" (Tronto, 2015, p. 102) and secondly, and most significant, is the understanding of care "*as a practice*" (Tronto, 2015, p. 108) that is elaborated: "*To call care a practice implies that it involves both thought and action, that thought and action are interrelated*" (2015, p. 108). This interrelation of thought and action compliments Loreau (2023) - and Thorgeirsdottir's (2024) argument for an embodied and sensuous turn, who exactly argues that thinking alone is not enough.

The allowance of the shapeshifting of gifts is illustrated in the relationships between the flowers, the bees and the people where also here, there is a constant exchange of gifts: "*movement is the gift of the pollinators*" Kimmerer (2024) explains. Nectar and pollen is the gift of the flowers, honey is the gift of the bees, and planting flower seeds in exchange for the honey is the gift of the people who plant the flower seeds (Emergence Magazine, 2024). These relationships together form a circulation that enables the honey to cultivate a Currency of Care that reaches out through the community, giving environmental and community care, as the honey is shared and the flower seeds are planted (Appendix 4).

In this sense people are of course not necessary: even though plants are physically not mobile, as they are literally rooted in the soil, it does not mean they cannot move - plants have developed clever techniques to distribute their seeds, either by wrapping them in irresistible colours and tasteful flesh, making them attractive to birds, or by making them light so the wind can carry them, as a dandelion for instance, letting the birds and the wind give the gift of mobility (Smith & Smith, 2015). But using honey and all its relations is a

clever approach to understanding, as it allows people to see, smell and taste a different economy: To embody an economy of gifts.

Bybi - The Intention

To further unfold the philosophy and the intention behind the practices of Bybi I will here present extracts of my conversation with Oliver Maxwell, anthropologist, director and founder of Bybi, letting him illustrate the relations between Bybi and its partners, to extract what it is, that Bybi are cultivating through the partnerships with keeping bees in the city, and to uncover what it is that Bybi, from the perspective of Maxwell (Appendix 1) hopes that participants take home with them, except for free honey.

OM: Oliver Maxwell

AL: The author

I began by asking Maxwell how he sees these relations between Bybi and the partners:

OM: One of the things that I find most fascinating and fun about doing this, is actually getting an inside into these organisations. I think businesses are a kind of social communities in some ways. They are like a tribe. They have their rules and their kind of ways of doing things. You meet people within them who are curious, they want changes to happen. They navigate between on the one hand, what the businesses is supposed to be doing, and on the other hand, what everyone really wants, which is to be kind and have a good impact in the world. And it's really interesting to look at ways in which this dilemma can be activated in a partnership. I think there's some really fascinating stories that come up. You know that quote from Donna Haraway, about weaving worlds, and telling stories, how we need different stories. I think a business or like any other social community is a story, and most people realize it's quite limiting and inflexible. People want to find ways of making it their own story and find different ways of doing it. Through the bees we found a way of doing that, which is a little bit provocative, a little bit interesting, and even empowering. It's a powerful and interesting relationship to have with the companies.

AL: What are you hoping that Bybi is cultivating through these relations?

OM: We are really trying to encourage people to take a joint responsibility for the communities that they are a part of. That contrasts, quite often, how businesses are supposed to run with quite hierarchical structures and top-down missions. I'm in a more abstract sense interested in this idea of responsibility that comes up over and over again, especially in this Donna Haraway understanding, as in ability to respond. So how do we encourage and cultivate that idea that responsibility is something you have for yourself and you can both choose to take it, but also give space for it to emerge in other relationships. On a more concrete level, we are cultivating the language and the practice we need to get there through 'curiosity', 'care' and 'pleasure'.

AL: Speaking of those words: care, curiosity and pleasure: The Honey Ceremonies, can you tell me why they are important?

OM: One of the central things we started doing in the last few years, is that we realized we needed to change the language that we use to talk about how we are together and how we gather and distribute resources. If you read the newspaper or listen to the radio or look anywhere around, you see that our modern world is entirely constructed of products and consumers. The economy is talked about in terms of consumers, even these big questions of sustainability are a question of consumers: How do you consume less or how do you reduce consumption. And as long as we are still talking in that language, we are just creating passive cogs in a machine that do what they want without any form of autonomy or self-determination. For us it started with the idea that we did not want consumers, we wanted co-creators, and we realized that when we didn't want consumers, that actually we didn't want products either. As soon as we removed the word product and consumer then suddenly a whole load of other opportunities began to emerge around not only how we should be together with each other, how we should talk to our partners, but also the infrastructure that mediates that. As long as you are selling a product, as you are using that word product, you are just reproducing that whole chain, but an invitation doesn't do that. An invitation has a completely different relationship. I can invite you to something, you can choose whether or not to accept, but you also know that there is an obligation that comes with that invitation as well. It can be quite hard to accept an invitation sometimes, because you know you are obliged to buy a present to return the invitation for you in some way to pay somebody's debt but it can also put you in a relationship that goes beyond the initial exchange. A product belongs in a shop and an invitation belongs in a ceremony. And that exchange and that debt

needs to be recognized in all sorts of different ways and it is in all sorts of different ways in our cultures from buying rounds of drinks in a pub, to baking cookies for Christmas.

AL: Exactly, and the whole idea about changing the language around what the honey is, that we do not see it as a product, but as an invitation. Can you tell me about how you see the gift economy in that?

OM: Making The Honey Ceremony actually came from a realization, from a question: If this is an invitation, where should it be staged? What should it look like? We approached it in this aesthetic way where we need to be able to see it, touch it. In order to be able to understand it, you need to be able to find a staging, so that people do not just take it off a shelf, that they feel the weight, they notice the colour. They must notice the obligation: to plant a flower seed and to share the honey. These things are staged and acknowledged in The Honey Ceremony. This idea that you can play with people's expectations, with a sign that basically says 'free honey – but only if you say thank you to the bees'. It provokes some deep programming. You see a sign and you think "uh, it's free!" You just want to take it, but nothing is free of course, there's always an obligation that comes with it, but to really create a setup that forces people to acknowledge the obligation, is an important part - You share it with someone you care for, you plant a flower to thank the bees. That's where it comes into the gift economy as well, because no gifts are free. Those gifts come with social obligations to each other, and the way those are manifested in different cultures around the world are really diverse in all sorts of ways. Our money economy is just one of them.

AL: Speaking about the gift economy and The Honey Ceremony: We have just been to this event at Velux. What are you hoping that people take home with them, except for the free honey?

OM: I'd like them to take the responsibility home with them. I'd like them to feel that they've committed to do something. I'd like them to think about that, if they do not actually share the honey, if they eat it themselves, that they have an awareness that it comes from a system that carries some obligations with it. I'd like them to take the curiosity and the care and the pleasure home with them, I'd like them to think about it when they see a bee, to think about it, when they give it to someone, I'd also like them to maybe imagine how that works when they see other products as well, when you are in the supermarket, and maybe just stop for a moment and think how could it be different. To take those values into other contexts.

AL: I'm curious to hear, you said some things when you were describing The Honey Ceremony, about that people notice the colour, the way they see it, and they smell it and in a way they use their senses, to understand a different kind of economy maybe. Why is that important, that they have to use their senses?

OM: One of the characteristics of our modern society, one of the things that are problematic about it, is the idea that we think of ourselves as not having a choice in the way of doing things. You buy a product in a shop and that's how it is and we can't change it and that's the only way of doing things. We tend to tune out from most of our senses. You know it's funny when you go into a supermarket, that it's so full of so many things from so many places in the world, full of colors and smells, and yet they're so sterile at the same time. It tends to be standardised, and *as you expect*, and I think that it's really healthy for us today to be encouraged to notice, because noticing gives you the potential to choose it or not, to respect the efforts that have gone into it. To have the responsibility and the ability to respond and a joint responsibility to actually make an active commitment rather than a passive one. I think most of the products that we buy, if people knew how they were produced or what they were made of and really did the same thing with a ballpoint pen or slice of bacon and really imagined the chemicals and the poisons and the, in some cases, misery that went into them. Probably they wouldn't want to buy them. Which I think is probably a good thing in many cases.

The Honey Ceremony - Cultivating A Currency of Care

In her books Kimmerer (2024; 2013) shows us the gift economy as a way of changing our consciousness through following the obligations, but with no direct instructions on how to put them in practice. Bybi's way of interpreting the gift economy is to change the language used to describe the honey - calling the honey an invitation rather than a product, and as Maxwell (Appendix 1) asserted: invitations do not belong in a supermarket, they belong in a ceremony.

The ceremony begins with participants receiving an invitation: a jar of honey - a gift from the bees, that they have to reciprocate. They can do so, as they also receive a packet of flower seeds. Then participants are now invited to close their eyes for a minute, while holding the honey and the seeds, and think about all the encounters that lead up to this moment: The beekeeper checking on the bees, people planting flowers, bees meeting flowers. Now they

have to think of a place where they want to plant this flower – it is an important gesture, if these seeds are not planted, they will never become flowers. Once the participants have a place in mind, they now make their promise – they have to say aloud, so that the flower seeds can hear them: “Dear flower seeds, I will plant you in my [insert place]”, and then they dip their finger in paint and leave a physical mark on the collective painting, so that a bell rings (Photo 1).



Photo 1. Participants in The Honey Ceremony, leaving a mark as a physical promise to the bees to plant their flower seeds in their chosen locality. Photo by Oliver Maxwell.

Now the promise to the bees have been made. This step is also a meditative opportunity to tune into oneself for a moment and can be attuned, depending on the flow and busyness of the ceremony. Sometimes participants are invited to imagine themselves planting the flower seeds, feeling their fingers in the soil, and smelling the flowers when they bloom, as a way of enforcing the sensuous element and turning down the speed of the day, giving participants a moment to calm down and opening up for a deeper connection to the practice (Thorgeirsdottir, 2024).

The next and last step is just as important: To keep the Currency of Care flowing, the honey must be shared with someone they care for. Here participants sit down at a round table set with fabric bags and markers for them to draw a drawing or write a note on, for those they want to share their honey with. The bag is for them to carry the honey and the seeds in (Photo 2).



Photo 2. One participant drawing a bee for the one they want to share their honey with in The Honey Ceremony at the family day at Velux 5th April 2025. The picture also shows “En omsorgs valuta” - A currency of care. Photo by Oliver Maxwell.

As participants share their honey and pass on the flower seeds, a Currency of Care is cultivated, (Figure 1). Now the participants are a part of a community of bees, flowers and people.

How the Money Flows

We in Bybi still need to be able to pay rent and put food on the table, so we still need money. Bybi works with approximately 25 organisations around Copenhagen, and these relations all create different connections for bees and plants to thrive in the city (Appendix 4). Money flows into the honey temple, as our partners pay us to put bees on their rooftops or gardens,

and to look after them. Then they pay again for us to join a family day or teambuilding day where we invite them for an aesthetic, sensory experience, for example a Honey Ceremony. Every relation to the partners are different and the result is shown in the individual honeys, as can be seen in the picture on the frontpage of this paper, visualising a map of Copenhagen in honey, where each honey is unique in taste and colour depending on the relation between the people in the organisation; what flowers they plant near the bees and then what flowers the bees are visiting around the specific hive. Creating these relations is much more fun than selling it in a supermarket, but it also shows how the honey is no longer a product, but an invitation (Appendix 1). Money is attached, but it is attached to the relationship rather than to the honey itself.

Consequences of Disobeying the Obligations

In Mauss' *The Gift* (2024) the act of not reciprocating a gift, for example, either by not accepting an invitation to a feast or refusing to give one, is equivalent to declaring war among the clans; *"it is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality"* (Mauss, 2024, p. 17), and thus disobeying the obligations of the gift economy.

In the case of Bybi, what happens if we take too much honey from the bees, or if we put out too many hives in the city? Through my time working in Bybi I have gained an understanding of this balance, through our beekeeper Aref Hebbo and his relations to the bees. He explains this balance in regards to keeping bees in the city: *"Putting out too many bees at one place will mean more bees fighting for the resources, which means less resources for the individual bee, and for all the other pollinators living in the city"*. If Bybi breaks the rules of the gift economy, it fails to work. It requires care and attention: *"The bees will tell if we take too much, and we need to listen"*, Aref explains. After a long and close relationship alongside the bees he is aware of this boundary. Sometimes it is necessary to turn down possible partners in the city, if a particular area already has too many hives, he emphasizes: *"We can't just put up endless hives, there wouldn't be enough food for all"*. This is a way of acknowledging the natural boundaries (Richardson et al., 2023) and embracing the notion of enoughness (Kimmerer, 2024).

Not obeying the rules of the gift economy shows the consequences: We declare war on the natural systems. As it is visualized in figure 2 below, six of earth's planetary boundaries have transgressed from being in the safe operating space to being either in the zone of increasing risk, or in the high risk zone.

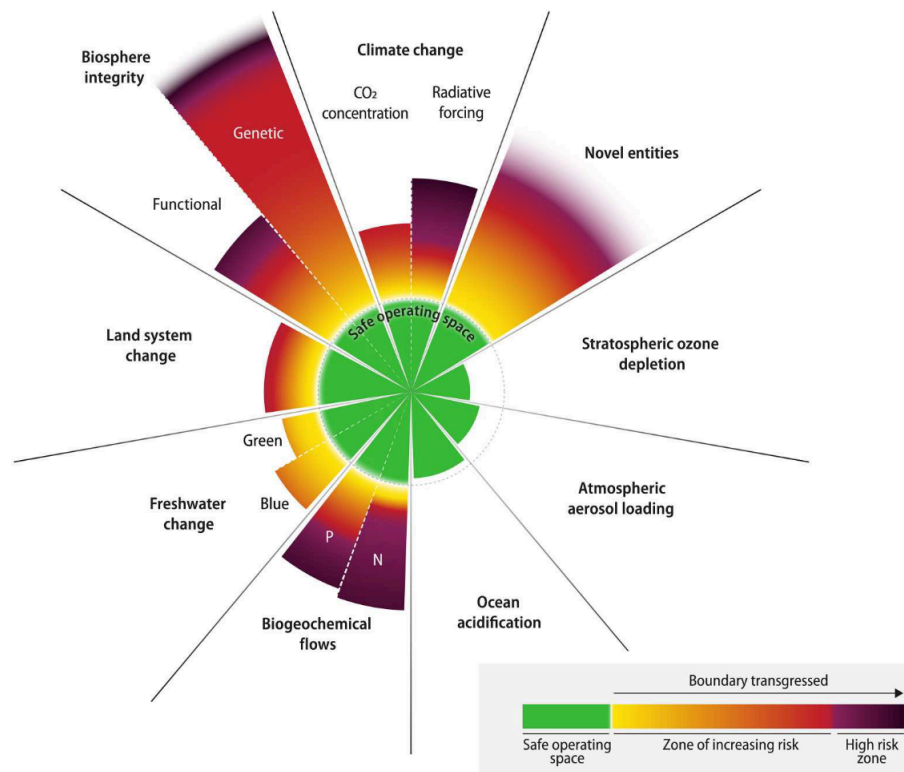


Fig. 2. Six out of nine planetary boundaries have been transgressed. The green colour is in the safe operating space, the yellow colour scaling to red is the zone of increasing risk and purple is the high risk zone compared to the Holocene period which the dotted circle represents. The figure are accompanied with large scientific uncertainties, but show unparalleled human disruption of the natural systems of the planet. Source: Richardson et al., 2023, p. 4.

Transgressing the safe operating space means humans have disrupted earth systems (Richardson et al., 2023, p. 4), which could bring earth into a “*state without analog in human history*” (Richardson et al., 2023, p. 1).

In Bybi’s case, it means that if we harvest too much honey, the bees will not have enough to sustain their needs, and eventually they will not be able to survive. Sometimes it is not perfect, and we lose a hive, but we can try our best to be attentive to the bees. The same goes with the balance in the earth's energy system – the system that keeps our climate livable and within the safe space - the process which is known as The Greenhouse Effect (Holden, 2017)

- if the balance is right, the atmosphere serves as a protector to our climate. Having The Greenhouse Effect is fortunate, it is what makes the planet livable (Holden, 2017). Under natural conditions there is balance between incoming and outgoing radiation; a negative feedback mechanism that restores balance in the climate (Houghton, 2015). But the balance has been tipped since the industrialization, and too many greenhouse gases, mainly CO₂ has been emitted to the atmosphere, resulting in pushing the system out of balance (Richardson et al., 2023; IPCC, 2013). This is referred to, as a positive feedback mechanism, where a system's response to a change, runs in the same direction as the change enhancing the change on the system: Higher amounts of emissions leads to higher temperatures, that leads to melting of ice caps, minimizing albedo, lowering the reflected radiation, that again raises temperatures, whereas, on the contrary, negative feedback mechanism obeys the rules and stabilizes the system, keeping the balance (Houghton, 2015).

The state of being out of the safe operating space is the state we are currently in (Richardson et al., 2023). Nature tells us that balance is lost, and we must try to listen, like Aref to the bees. This mechanism of not listening when nature is roaring is quite certainly not deliberate, but could possibly be explained by what Maxwell (Appendix 1) asserts as problematic about the modern world: *“that we think of ourselves as not having a choice in the way of doing things”* (Appendix 1) and Loreau’s, (2023) notion of modernity that has taken us away from nature and by that, leading us to destroy it - and that what has led to this unbalance in the natural systems is largely caused by a desensitization of ourselves.

In my examination I will strive to assess this dilemma, that we are now very aware that it is human actions that are causing disruption and still we do not change (IPCC, 2013; Richardson et al., 2023; Loreau, 2023), to *“see if peace is [still] possible”* (Terranova, 2016, 54.31) through changing the way we name things (Kimmerer, 2024; Appendix 1) and re-activating our senses (Loreau, 2023; Thorgeirsdottir, 2024; Appendix 1).

The Partners - Bybi’s Playmates

As mentioned earlier, Bybi works with around 25 organisations in the city, all exploring the relations between bees, flowers and people, all in their own way. In order to understand how

the obligations are understood from the perspective of the partners I conducted phenomenological qualitative interviews with two of them: L'Oréal and Velux.

L'Oréal describes their passions, according to their frontpage as: *“den uendelige mangfoldighed, skønhed repræsenterer, det stadigt skiftende forbrugerlandskab og -adfærd og at opfinde de bedste produkter til vores forbrugere er det vi brænder for”* (L'Oréal, n.d). And in their 2030 objective plan “L'Oréal for the Future” they directly describe that their goal is to *“respektere de såkaldte planetære grænser”* (L'Oréal, n.d). They even write in the future plan that the goal is to strive for a business model that enhances *“forpligtelserne”* (L'Oréal, n.d) for sustainability, which can be translated into *obligations*, almost as if Robin Wall Kimmerer (2024) herself were looking over their shoulder. It is very easy and clear to see what L'Oréal's goals and passions are and even though their focus is on selling products and probably also the products profit, it seems like the company cares a lot about how they impact the planet.

The first impression from assessing Velux is all the products and solutions they can offer. On the frontpage there is a direct link to *“Products”* (Velux, n.d.) and their sustainability goal is to be found in the very bottom of the page where there is a section on biodiversity and goals to decarbonise their production, but it is much more complicated to extract what the goals entails, as they are not presented very explicitly.

However my impression from working with Velux is that the company is very attentive to their impact on the planet.

Informants - Playing String Figure Games

The illustration of my informants (Figure 3) are inspired by Haraway's (2016) string figure game that she explains beautifully and wise herself:

“Playing games of string figures is about giving and receiving patterns, dropping threads and failing but sometimes finding something that works, something consequential and maybe even beautiful, that wasn't there before, of relaying connections that matter, of telling stories in hand upon hand [...]. String figures can be played by many, on all sorts of limbs, as long as the rhythm of accepting and giving is sustained” (Haraway, 2016, p. 10).

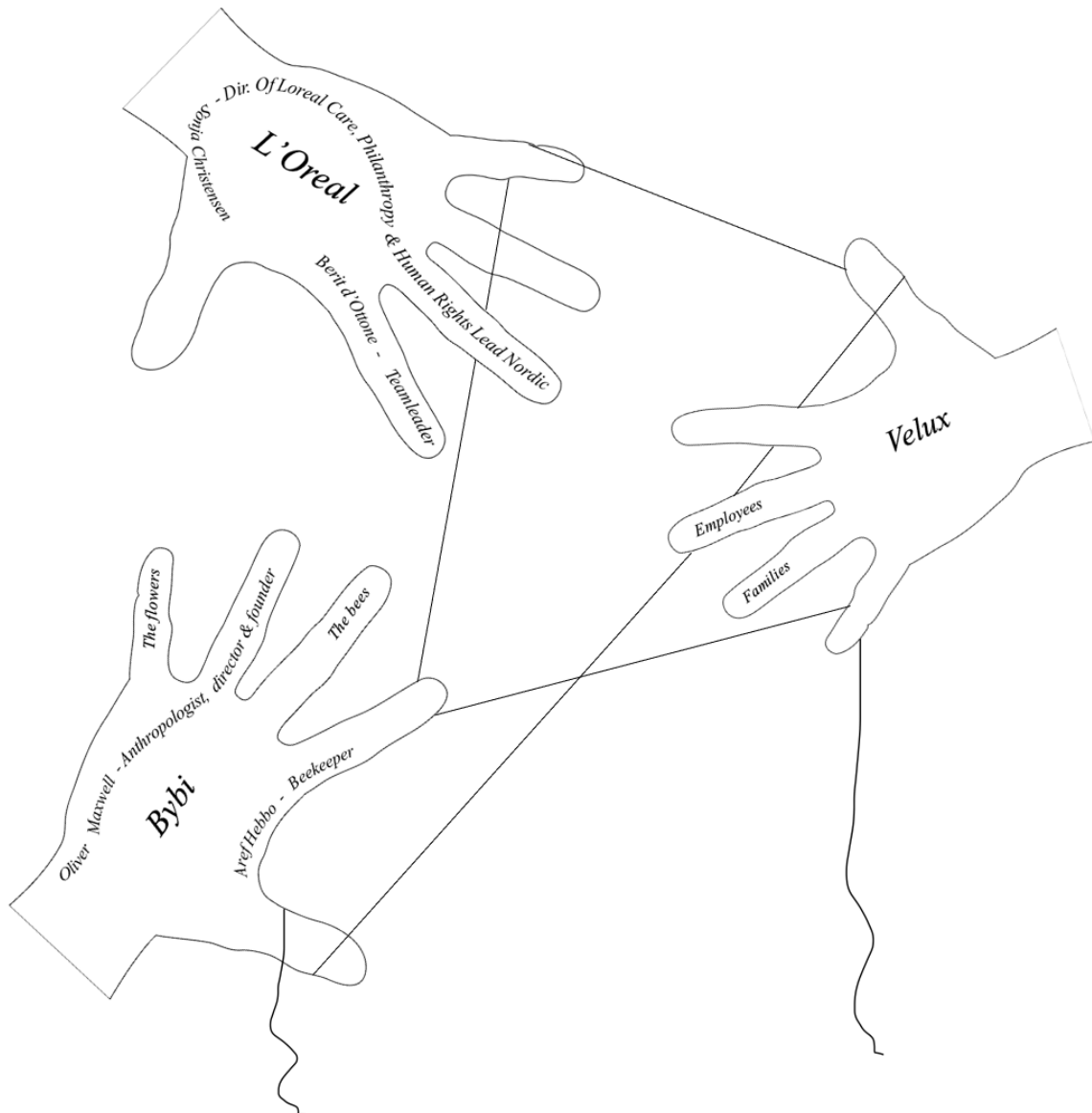


Fig. 3. Informants. From L'Oréal: Sonja Christensen - Director of L'Oréal Care, Philanthropy and Human Rights Lead Nordic, Berit d'Ottone - Team Leader. From Velux: Employees and families who participated in The Honey Ceremony 5th. April 2025. From Bybi: Oliver Maxwell - Anthropologist, Director and Founder, Aref Hebbo - Beekeeper, The bees, The Flowers.

The string finger game illustrates the act of playing with our partners in the thinking of the gift economy, in giving and accepting between us, and illuminate how Bybi and our partners “*tangle together in innovative ways that might, just barely possibly, render each other capable of a finite flourishing*” (Haraway, 2016, p. 16). Playing together is fun and explorative, but still contains the seriousness that we are playing around: our relation to each other and to nature.

The illustration exhibits the relations between Bybi and its partners, but also how the partners themselves are connected in playing string figure games with Bybi - having a like minded interest in the things Bybi stands for, to them. Being so, it not only (possibly) renders an interconnected capacity to flourish, but from the perspective of Bybi also hopefully renders the partners capable in “*making active commitments, rather than passive ones*”, to “*be encouraged to notice*”, “*to share a joint responsibility for the communities that they are a part of*”, to “*feel committed to do something*” and “*tak[ing] the care, curiosity and pleasure with them*”, (Appendix 1).

Methodology - The Impossible Conversation

As explained in the earlier sections, science shows that the way we currently practice “*constant[ly] taking without giving in return*” (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 375) is not sustainable (IPCC, 2013). And Loreau (2023) and Maxwell (Appendix 1) are not alone in their call for re-sensing: Thorgeirsdottir (2024) advocates likewise for an embodied, sensuous and experimental turn, in order to achieve actual change. Which is why it is interesting to explore a company who practices exactly that: inviting participants to a sensory Honey Ceremony that allows them to see, taste and smell a different economy. Having this call for embodiment and sensuous way of being in mind, along with the philosophy of Donna Haraway and her idea of “*Storytelling as a tool for earthly survival*” (Terranova, 2016), I will adopt a phenomenological approach in my case study of how participants of The Honey Ceremony understands the obligations today through their modern and western position and how they relate to honey as an invitation, letting participants speak for themselves, based on their bodily experiences of being a part of The Honey Ceremony (Manen, 1990). I will do so, while having a hermeneutic approach in mind, reminding me of my own position as a student of Geography, interpreting the indigenous tradition of the gift economy.

In order to derive the qualitative data needed for my examination, I wanted to utilize the method of The Impossible Conversation (Aers et al., 2022). The method is inspired by contemplations among Jesuit Monks, where difficult subjects like love, the future and even God better could be discussed through reading from, and listening to, personal experiences. The performance of The Impossible Conversation is organized by the Dutch performance

group Building Conversations, that explores different types of conversations originating from different cultures across time and space (Aers et al., 2022).

The Impossible Conversation takes form in three rounds where, in the first round participants are asked to write down a personal story and then read that aloud, in the second round they write down what they have learned in the first round, and then everyone reads aloud again. The last round is a discussion on what has been heard in the first two rounds. Reading aloud from participant's personal stories allows them to inspire the listeners to broaden what the subject means to them, as it is with focus group interviews, that is a crucial deviation to individual interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Participants might hear something they have not thought about at first, which widens their perspective, and maybe makes them remember something else. What is interesting about the method, embracing a group as a contrast to an individual, is that it opens up opportunities for participants to be inspired by other people's stories and memories, when listening to others, but also to learn in practice, how powerful the use of language is in changing realities, when we speak in togetherness (Aers et al., 2022).

The purpose of The Impossible Conversation was to explore participants' experiences and expressed perception of the obligations, doing and after having been part of The Honey Ceremony and other activities facilitated by Bybi.

To be able to gain many perspectives of how participants perceive the honey and its relations, I applied the method of The Impossible Conversation during a Honey Ceremony at a family day at the company Velux. Here I took advantage of the last step of The Honey Ceremony, where people have the possibility to slow down, and while they are immersed in the artistic process of drawing on fabric bags for them to carry their flower seeds and honey in, I employed the method from The Impossible Conversation and the thinking of Donna Haraway's storytelling for earthly survival (Terranova, 2016). Here participants were sitting down around tables together with their colleagues and their family, with whom they were attending the ceremony (Photo 3). While they were immersed, I asked them what they thought about the fact that they had to say thank you to the bees, in order to get the honey, and if they thought about it in other aspects of their everyday lives as well.



Photo 3. Last step of The Honey Ceremony where participants sit down to draw or write on the fabric bags for the ones they wish to share their honey with. Picture taken at The Homey Ceremony performed at Velux at the family day. Photo by Oliver Maxwell.

To gain perspectives from a different partner I performed a small group interview (Appendix 2) of the partner L'Oréal through the Director Sonja Christensen and Teamleader Berit o'Ottone. Here I had the method of The Impossible Conversation in mind, but I was not sure whether it would still have an effect on such a small group, as with only three people, including myself as a participant in the conversation.

L'Oréal has been a partner of Bybi since 2018 and has thus been entangled in Bybi's activities for many years, but what is interesting, is that the last event they participated in was last summer in 2024, allowing me to attain what thoughts and actions cultivated by Bybi's activities managed to stay or emerge over that time.

Performing the conversation I was thinking about Maxwell's (Appendix 1) notion of joint responsibility, so I wished to break down the researcher - subject relationship. Taking

responsibility for the questions that I ask, but preferring them to ask questions to each other, rather than me asking them, but being there to guide them in their own reflections. It was important for me to appear as a participant in the conversation, rather than an interviewer harvesting right or wrong answers - building a space for the conversation to flourish, rather than controlling it.

As Christensen and d'Ottone (Appendix 2) already knows me through the events they have been participating in at Bybi, I began the conversation underlining my position, that in this case, was not as a employee from Bybi to evaluate on how many flower seeds they have been out planting, but as a researcher, curious to hear from their personal perspective; their stories of how they perceive their relation to honey and what it means to them to be a part of this community of flowers, bees and people.

Utilizing the idea behind The Impossible Conversation in The Honey Ceremony was interesting, as it did not only gave me the chance to explore what was cultivated from being a part of Bybi's performance of The Honey Ceremony, but also gave the participants the possibility to share their stories of care, curiosity and pleasure with each other. In this sense using the method of sharing stories, it became clear that "*it matters what stories tell stories*" (Haraway, 2016, p. 35) - Not only where they responding and giving me answers to my questions, but at the same time they were building a community around actions of care for the them, the flowers and the bees, letting the act of sharing stories, be an act of care for the community im itself.

Limitations

To gain a perspective from people who have taken part in Bybi's activities, I would have preferred to derive data from only one partner and not two different. My plan was initially to have gathered employees from L'Oréal for an evening in Bybi where I would have hosted The Impossible Conversation to gain more perspectives. This would have given a more streamlined image of a partner's perception of the obligations, however this was unfortunately not possible.

Analysis - Lessons from the Bees

Having illuminated Bybis' perspective through my interview with Oliver Maxwell, I will in this section bring his descriptions along with the theory of the gift economy to see how the statements from participants and the hopes and dreams from Bybi align. To do so, I will analyse the statements derived from immediate perspectives through my fieldwork examination of Velux and my minor group interview of Director Sonja Christensen and Team Leader Berit d'Ottone from L'Oréal. I will elucidate how the obligations are understood through participants' statements and how their relation to honey changes through activating participants' senses in The Honey Ceremony, and possibly see how the relation to honey can be imagined in other relations too.

Velux - Through The Honey Ceremony

To begin my examination, I will firstly analyse statements gained from the perspective of participants to understand how the obligations are perceived through practicing The Honey Ceremony. This was done informally at a family event at Velux, giving me the chance to assess stories not only from people who work at Velux, but also from their families that they could bring to the event. This was an interesting aspect adding to the method; employing the method to The Honey Ceremony in deriving qualitative data on participants' consciousness around how they relate to honey as an invitation.

In focus group interviews, the aim is not to come to one single conclusion, or a single right answer, but instead gain multiple perspectives on a matter (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This is an important characteristic, as I wanted to attain as many of the participant's stories based on their bodily experiences, as possible.

As explained earlier, The Honey Ceremony is performed in three parts: 1) Participants are given a free jar of honey, 2) but only if they promise to say thank you to the bees and 3) the honey must be shared with someone they care for.

My idea was to utilize the last part, where participants are sitting down around big tables, that allowed space for listening to other participants' stories, to apply the method and here derive the data while immersed in drawing on their fabric bags (Photo 3). Now that they have said thank you to the bees, I could ask them what they thought about that, that they have to give

something back to the bees and if they thought about it in other aspects of their everyday life as well. In that way I could learn how the obligations are understood contemporarily.

One participant understood the obligations quite concrete, and in a more direct exchange manner, in terms of growing food:

“It's important, or else we are not getting any tomatoes” (Appendix 3).

One participant understood the obligations in terms of returning a favor, when I asked who a participant was going to share her honey with:

“I am going to give it to my sister, she drives me to the airport and looks after my dog, so I want to give her something for that” (Appendix 3). This shows how the gift economy is not necessarily initiated with a jar of honey from the ceremony, but how the sweet and sticky gift naturally fits in already mutual relations between the participant and her sister when reciprocating the gift of a favour. This illustrates a trusting bond between the two (Thygesen, 2019), that they can rely on whenever needed - not immediately. The participant stores her gift of honey in the belly of her sister, (Kimmerer, 2024) so she might be able to rely on her assistance again in the future.

On a more general level, gratitude was a word that occurred frequently:

“Gratitude – It's important, especially in these times – it is a necessity” (Appendix 3) one of the participants remarked. Showing gratitude can be one way of giving in return, in the sense of simply showing appreciation to the giver, as a way of acknowledging the obligation to receive (Kimmerer, 2024).

Later one participant set a clear example of her understanding of how she perceives all the resources she consumes as gifts from Mother Earth, that should be honored: *“I think that it is important to show gratitude - to think about it in terms of everything that Mother Earth is giving us”* (Appendix 3). The obligation of reciprocating, in her eyes, is then not only constrained to the honey she was holding in her hand, but to all of the gifts she was receiving from nature.

One example, where sitting together, listening to each other's stories, showed the potential of the method, was with a group of employees participating together. I was explaining to them about my project and about the gift economy, and I asked them what they thought about the fact that they had to say thank you to the bees in order to get the honey. They shared

generally, that it made sense, and that it was fair (Appendix 3). Then I asked them if they thought about it in other aspects as well, and two things came up: Again gratitude, and then one woman who said it made her think about the app 'TooGoodTooGo'; that she thought it was nice to use it, as she felt she helped companies who tried to do good by selling their produce for less, when they are about to expire, instead of throwing it out at the end of the day (Appendix 3). Her example made me think of a new app that I have recently learned about: 'Your Local' that works from the same concept, which I mentioned to them. As I was saying thank you to them for telling me their stories of gratitude, they were saying thank you for the recommendation of the new app, and we realized how this encounter was a practice of the gift economy.

In this group the currency was gratefulness. Gratefulness to receive the gift of learning something new, and a gratefulness in giving, to be able to pass something on, that we both could benefit from. Right there it made sense what Kimmerer (Emergence Magazine, 2024) is arguing, in that everyone has something to offer to the community. We all have gifts, but it would perhaps not have been known, and we might not have had the chance to give it, if it was not for the conversation. Being together in collective storytelling made us able to. We ended the conversation with a deep felt thank you, feeling wealthier. Not in coins, but in knowledge, and they in new practice.

It was quite magical to see how easy it was; as we were talking about the gift economy and about their stories of how they understood the obligations in other relations as well, it came clear how the gift economy has a way of being contagious, as we contaminated each other with our stories, reminding each other, and we realized how gifts can instantly change form when they flow in the currency of connection (Kimmerer, 2024): from a gift of gratitude - to a story - to a recommendation.

As for the parents and grandparents who were taking part in the ceremony, often they emphasized the significance of teaching their children, about the importance of saying thank you to the bees.

One example was a grandmother and her grandchild participating together. When asked what other aspects they thought about giving back, the grandmother told me that they use a cedar tree which they have on their balcony as a Christmas tree: "*we just take it in for Christmas, and then out again on the balcony when Christmas is over*" (Appendix 3). That way, she explained, they do not take more than necessary, in the way that "*they don't need to cut down*

a tree every year”(Appendix 3). She thought it was an important practice to give to the children. Here there is a sense of understanding Kimmerer's (2024) notion of enoughness - that they could choose to go out and cut down a new Christmas tree every year, as there are plenty of suppliers who sell the trees. However they acknowledge the enoughness in the active choice, of not doing so (Kimmerer, 2024; Appendix 1). Whether or not this practice stems from The Honey Ceremony, the conversation made her contemplate about that action.

Meanwhile, also the children who were participating in the ceremony had their own understanding of the obligation of reciprocity. I asked a boy aged 6, about what he thought about having to say thank you to the bees:

“If we don't say thank you to the bees, then we are not being very nice” (Appendix 3). And he explains: *“It is the same for Christmas, when I receive a gift, I also have to give a gift, otherwise I am not being nice”* (Appendix 3).

Of course it's children's logic, but it makes sense and really he expresses the essence of the gift economy, already understanding how the obligations work in relation to honey and has the imagination to see how it works on other relations to (Appendix 1).

It is interesting to notice that he understands my question in terms of Christmas *gifts*; I did not mention gifts, but this is what he thinks about, when I asked him. He connects the things we receive from the bees (the honey) with gifts, and to him it is completely intuitive to say thank you to the bees - otherwise we are not being nice.

Another participant touches on the heart of Maxwell's (Appendix 1) hopes for what it is that Bybi are cultivating, and demonstrates that he certainly is not *“a passive cog in a machine without autonomy and self-determination”* (Appendix 1), when I asked him what he thinks about having to say thank you to the bees:

“I think it's good, if the bees understand it, I don't know, but it allows me to see myself as something else than a consumer” (Appendix 3).

He somehow seem to understand both the playfulness and the seriousness of Bybi's practice: Of course the bees do not understand it, we are just pretending, applying play in the performance of The Honey Ceremony, to attain a different relation to honey and to activate a responsibility, (Appendix 1) to render people capable (Haraway, 2016); to realize that participants have a choice in seeing themselves as something other than a consumer.

Another example of how the method was interesting to use was, in a group of women. Again asking what they thought about the fact that they had to say thank you to the bees:

“It is a kind of life philosophy really” (Appendix 3) one of the women stated.

Another woman said that she thought it was important to show it to the children, to generally think about our resources. *“That there is also honey for our kids and grandchildren”* (Appendix 3).

Then another one from the table followed up and said: *“Yes, and also the adults!”* (Appendix 3), answering to the importance of passing on the obligation of giving back to nature to their children.

Then, yet another participant from the same table, listening to the others examples, said she thought about it in social aspects, in the way *“how we are together”* (Appendix 3). This is a good example that in reminding each other and inspiring each other, listening to each other's stories, we then open our horizon to what gifts can be - respecting each other in social aspects.

Performing the method doing the family day at Velux exposed different levels of understanding the obligations, some participants expressed that they thought it make sense and then not more much more, while others expressed a clear understanding of the obligations both in terms of receiving, giving and reciprocating and showed a sense of agency, expressed in their active relation to honey as an invitation, not a product, leaving them to perceive themselves as something else than a consumer.

It is difficult to say with some of the participants from Velux, if the thinking of the gift economy stems from being a part of Bybi's practices or if it is already embedded in what is my impression of the company, that they are already practicing a caring stance towards the planet, since most of the participants were participating in The Honey Ceremony for the first time. For example, the woman who stated that it was almost a life philosophy for her, probably could not have adopted that sense through the ceremony. However the very fact that the conversation took place enabled her to share her understanding of the obligations.

L'Oréal - Consciousness Change Over Time

To be able to attain perceptions of the obligations from the partner L'Oréal, and to examine what thoughts and actions were cultivated over time, I performed a minor group interview

with the Director Sonja Christensen and Team Leader Berit d'Ottone. Also here, I applied the method of The Impossible Conversation and the thinking of Donna Haraway and her idea of storytelling (Terranova, 2016), to open up the possibility for Christensen and d'Ottone (Appendix 2) to, when sharing their personal stories, inspire each other, and perhaps remind each other about things they have not thought about initially, in regards to how they relate to honey, through being a part of a community of flowers, bees and people.

My examination of how the obligations are perceived, based on their lived experiences, began by asking what the relation to Bybi means to them personally.

Christensen (Appendix 2) explains that the relation to Bybi is interesting, in the way that it not only supports biodiversity, but also has a social aspect. And highlights the close relationship that the employees have with the bees in Greve (this is where the bees live): *“that they can go out and see them and that the employees have arranged the garden with bushes and fruit trees so that here is nourishment for the bees”* (Appendix 2).

Being close to the bees, not only expressed two of the things Maxwell (Appendix 1) was hoping for: sharing a responsibility for the community that they are a part of, and giving them an opportunity to activate people's curiosity; to notice the bees and wonder in collectiveness, on how to care for them - Bybi did not plant the trees, the employees at L'Oréal did.

d'Ottone (Appendix 2) explains that she feels lucky to be a part of the project, because it gives her *“a chance to be close to [the bees], to see the product, the respect and to learn a lot of things”* (Appendix 2).

It is an interesting choice of words; she still somehow perceives Bybi as a company who produces a product, perhaps because that is what she is used to think, that businesses produce products, and people buy them, that could illustrate Maxwell's (Appendix 1) notion of passivity. Perhaps it requires more time and practice to reconsider the use of language.

d'Ottone (Appendix 2) continued, and gave a clear sense that she knew planting flower seeds as an act of care, and in a way, the act of planting them, also gave her a connection to the seasons when she explained that she has saved her flower seeds in her drawer: *“because now spring is coming and they soon have to go into the garden, so it moves in throughout the year; you really take something with you, both some knowledge and some extra care, and some extra thoughts about how it is in the real world”* (Appendix 2).

When I asked her to elaborate on 'taking something with you throughout the year' she explained, that she felt a responsibility in giving (the animals) a place to be, and that she is *"really concerned about humans' poor treatment of animals; but also the thing about that we take everything from everyone"* (Appendix 2) she says.

Perhaps, and quite likely, Bybi is not the only one influencing d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) concerns about the way humans treat animals, but it is significant that she is aware of her impact, and giving space to the animals, is what she can do to give something to the animals, who she thinks is not being treated well.

She then goes on to say: *"Then I think in the experience that is so visual, that makes you do these things that you have done many times before, like going out to plant in the garden, which enforces the thought you have at the given period, to remember when you take something, you also have to give"* (Appendix 2).

Here the embodied, repetitive act of going out to plant in the garden, stayed in her consciousness, enough to make the obligation of giving clear to her, that it is not just a one time act that she does because she has been a part of an event where she had to say thank you to the bees, but as a continuous act, embedded in her consciousness: that she understands the obligation and that the bees need flowers every spring.

Knowing that it has been at least a year since her and her coworkers in L'Oréal has been a part of a Honey Ceremony it is then interesting that d'Ottone (Appendix 2) mentioned that *"when you take something, you also have to give"*, (Appendix 2). This understanding somehow managed to stay in her consciousness long after, in her words: *"it just moves in"* (Appendix 2).

What is also interesting was the way she expressed how she acquired thoughts about how it is in *"the real world"* (Appendix 2), as understood that Bybi shows the reality as a contrast to what exactly?

This notion of d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) description of reality comes up again later when she explains about Citizen Day, that is L'oreal's own initiative, where the company donates a full work day to all of their partners to do things, that in Bybis case, for example has been extracting honey, making ceramic spoons for tasting, or practical things, like painting the kitchen in the honey temple, d'Ottone (Appendix 2) explains that it's nice, as they get to use their hands: *"then all of a sudden we are in this other reality that is everyone's reality and*

responsibility for this reality - that's really got something” (Appendix 2). Again she demonstrates a certain perception of Bybi being a part of a different reality, than the one she lives in, creating this notion of two worlds that cannot coexist.

It is not to say what exactly it is that d'Ottone (Appendix 2) means about her notion of the real world, but being a part of Bybi's practice somehow in her perception, makes her feel like she is in some kind of real world, as a contrast to the world she lives in, that is somehow not real to her. Maybe it is the world that Maxwell (Appendix 1) is hoping for, where there is a possibility to make an active commitment, rather than a passive one, where we talk to the bees (saying thank you to them), and where we can have a connection to nature, through a joint responsibility for the community we are part of. Perhaps, it is a world where the practice of having to plant the flower seeds makes d'Ottone (Appendix 2) aware of the seasons, now she has made the obligation to the bees (she agreed to receive their honey), she then has to learn about the seasons, in order to learn how to live up to the obligations: it does not work if she plants the seeds in the winter, as then, the flowers will not bloom when the bees need them in spring. Regardless of how deeply she understands the obligations, d'Ottone (Appendix 2) expresses an embodiment of a different economy through her actions.

d'Ottone (Appendix 2) also mentions Bybi, being a part of her everyday life, and gives an example of her daughter asking her what to do with the flower bulb she was given in The Honey Ceremony; as her daughter lives in an apartment, with no place to plant it, she says to d'Ottone, that she needs to take it to her garden and plant both of their flower bulbs (Appendix 2).

These actions of care and curiosity is then not limited to the people who work for L'Oréal, but because The Honey Ceremony also are a part of their family day at L'Oréal, an opportunity for thoughts and actions to deeply seep into participants personal lives as well, is cultivated as a shared experience, that allows them to support each other in their actions of care.

Listening to d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) stories and experiences with care and curiosity, Christensen (Appendix 2) now shares her experience with her garden:

“I have also privately been influenced to create a wild garden, it is not very good right now because now it is just withered grass, so I don't really know how, I must read about it, because I have to plant all these seeds” (Appendix 2).

Her statement is interesting because, at first, there is a sort of pride in that Christensen (Appendix 2) has actually made a wild garden, not for her own sake it seems, that then turns into a sense of passiveness, almost as if she does not really know why or what she is doing, only that she needs to plant the seeds, because that is what she has been told to do. And then again at the same time, a sense of curiosity, a wanting to know how the wild garden functions, as she did not seem to think it did at the moment. She somehow understood how the obligations work, the importance of giving space for the wild, but not really why.

I then asked both Christensen (Appendix 2) and d'Ottone (Appendix 2) if they noticed something; if something happens after they've planted the flower seeds, if the story ends there, or if there is something that continues?

At first Christensen (Appendix 2) looked a little confused about my question, but then d'Ottone (Appendix 2) picked up on it and said that she has begun to bring her bulbs inside, the ones she has in pots, as she has learned, they will not survive the winter: *"because they don't like the frost"* (Appendix 2), she says, and continues: *"remembering to make ready for fall, because then we bring something to the springtime"* (Appendix 2). 'Bringing something to the springtime'; d'Ottone (Appendix 2) personalizes the spring, like a dear friend she wants to give something or take care of, because she knows her (the springtime) needs or preferences well. This again demonstrates d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) knowledge of the seasons, activated through the repetitive and embodied act of planting flower seeds every springtime.

Then Christensen (Appendix 2) seemed to better understand what I meant and she exclaimed: *"oh yesyesyes!"* (Appendix 2) and I asked her then, if she felt she has learned something from the bees:

"Yes definitely, this thing about a bigger consciousness around, as you (d'Ottone) also say, that when you take something, you also have to give" (Appendix 2). Though still much in regards to biodiversity: *"I have made one, two insect hotels, I don't know if they work"* (Appendix 2) she asserted.

d'Ottone (Appendix 2) then interrupted eagerly, to say that she has made the 'right' ones (insects hotels), with emphasis on *right*. She explained that it is not the ones you buy from the store that work, but: *"my husband forgot to take the last firewood from the garden and then you throw some things on that, and that's where they want to be!"* (Appendix 2).

The example with the freezing bulbs shows d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) attentiveness and pride in that she felled she knew the bees' needs and the flower bulbs' needs, in the way that she again gave the bulbs personality, when describing "*they don't like the frost*" (Appendix 2). As with the insect hotels, she also explained with pride, in the way she compared her own *right* one with the ones from the store, that does not work: she knows the bees and their preferences. However d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) concerns and awareness, still did not really seem to move beyond the bees and their well being.

I asked again, as they both had expressed their awareness around the obligations of reciprocity; giving back when receiving, and the consciousness around it, if they thought about it in other aspects of their everyday life as well:

d'Ottone (Appendix 2) is the first to respond, and she said that she also thought about it in terms of that "*I think we know the world is a little bit on fire and the thing about making your own little accounting, I think I connect it with that*" (Appendix 2) and she continued: "*I have been much more concerned about that, so much that my friends call me Øko-Jytte because I sort out my trash, but the thing about influencing; it is me who moves first when having all these flower bulbs and then [her friends] can have some, they don't need to go to the nursery: the thing about sharing*" (Appendix 2).

Here d'Ottone (Appendix 2) demonstrated her knowledge of the seasons, that came into actions of care, as she positioned herself as a first mover among her friends and as someone who shares her abundance, not only in flower bulbs, but also in knowledge and practice, that in that manner, reaches out to something beyond herself (Tronto, 2015).

Christensen (Appendix 2) responds to d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) story of sharing by exclaiming: "*that is genius*" (Appendix 2).

I then asked Christensen (Appendix 2) if she also felt she was spreading a consciousness around reciprocity to her family and friends:

"*Uhm no, not really, I don't think so, they don't call me Øko Jytte*" (Appendix 2).

But then she continued:

"*Well now I just have some opportunities that many others don't, having a big lawn where I can just let half of it grow wild but it is something with...*", and then she laughs: "*for example, if we are going to visit someone, then I just sometimes go out into my garden and dig*

something up and make a little flower arrangement myself from that” and she continues: “I really like that. We also have a lot of ramson that grows in our front yard and I think it is really great to be able to give something you already have, as opposed to going out and getting a bouquet of cut flowers” (Appendix 2).

It is interesting that at first instinctively, Christensen (Appendix 2) answers no to my question, but after a while she remembered something, and at first she laughed, like she thought maybe it was a silly thing to do, but after she had some time to think about it, she shared her story of abundance, care and connection. Maybe she did not consider it significant to share at first, to be something of value to be shared in the conversation, but it turned out to be the most significant sharing of them all.

This is the first trace of how the understanding of reciprocity seeps into other aspects of their everyday life (Appendix 1). It was not even something she thought about, not a conscious act to influence her friends like d’Ottone (Appendix 2), but rather something she might as well - now that she has this garden.

d’Ottone (Appendix 2) supports Christensen's (Appendix 2) act: *“that is amazing right?”* (Appendix 2) and Christensen (Appendix 2) contemplates on her own statement:

“I don't know if it is because I was born stingy, it's not really it, it's because I think it's great that then they can have a whole lot of ramsons for example, right? I don't know if it has something to do with that (consciousness around reciprocity), maybe it is. That it's what makes me think I just might as well do that, as opposed to going out and buying some exotic plant that is not native” (Appendix 2).

Agreeing on what each other are saying, and being able to applaud each other in the acts of care, shows a cementing of mutual bonds (Kimmerer, 2024, p. 36) between Christensen and d’Ottone (Appendix 2), but also a mutual bond to the more than human relations that arise through their acts of care, in the conversation where the act of sharing their stories of knowledge and practices becomes a cultivation of care in itself.

That is the thing: When opening up about our stories and actions of care, opportunities to support each other unfold, creating communities around, what might at first seem like silly things we do to give the animals, flowers and seasons care and attention. Conversations like this creates opportunities to share gifts of knowledge on how to act carefully to nature (Aers et al, 2022) showing signs of a bridging between the two worlds. With her contemplation of

her action Christensen (Appendix 2) begins to understand why she is doing these acts of care, beyond just because she was told to do so in The Honey Ceremony.

It was significant how both Christensen (Appendix 2) and d'Ottone (Appendix 2) mentioned that 'when you take something, you also have to give back' without me reminding them about it. They were almost saying it like a mantra that has been chanted to them, thinking about that it's not since last summer they had participated in a Honey Ceremony, but this obligation still managed to remain in their consciousness.

Even with only three people in the group, the method of The Impossible Conversation (Aers et al., 2022) and Haraway's (2016) Storytelling for Earthly Survival (Terranova, 2016) still had an impact, and worked as a powerful tool, revealing the potential in sharing stories that lead Christensen and d'Ottone (Appendix 2) to mirror each other as they opened up to their personal experiences with being part of a community of flowers, bees and people.

Reflections on the Method

My concerns about performing The Impossible Conversation, that if it would still be enough to have the desired effect with only three participants including myself in the group, were not necessary. The method still managed to open up for deep reflections, as I learned when Christensen (Appendix 2) was reminded about her practices, listening to d'Ottone's (Appendix 2). This shows that being together in collective storytelling (Terranova, 2016) are not only interesting and powerful, but also still very evident, even in smaller gatherings. Even though we were only three in the group, the method still had the impact that I had hoped it would have in a larger group.

The informal staging of the conversation and the fact that Christensen and d'Ottone (Appendix 2) knew me from earlier events, perhaps led them feeling more comfortable and relaxed, and thus more open to share their personal and silly stories.

A conversation is not simply about taking space to ask questions, but also about giving space for answers and thoughts to develop, thinking about when Christensen's (Appendix 2) contemplations on sharing her own plants instead of buying new flowers emerged. This reminded me of the German saying: "*Mut zur lücke*", that translates into having the courage to leave gaps. Having the courage to lose control, to leave space for 'out of control'; is a

gamble, things can go wrong, or down an unexpected road, but there is also the possibility for something magic to happen, for something to emerge, to take place, that becomes possible when silence is considered a gift and a possibility, instead of an obstacle or something to solve (Aers et al, 2022).

If I would have been 'busy' asking a new question and not given Christensen (Appendix 2) time to reflect, when at first I did not receive a useful answer, then maybe her story would have been lost.

According to Aers et al. (2022) laughter is a betrayal of other emotions. What is Christensen's (Appendix 2) laughter a betrayal of then? Doubt of the legitimacy of her action perhaps? Her answer perhaps found space because of the literal fact that there was silence, as neither I or d'Ottone (Appendix 2) took the space to speak, or it may be caused by Christensen (Appendix 2) feeling comfortable in the space, and I had already opened the stage of silliness, when asking if they had learned something from the bees earlier.

There is a contrast in what the group interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), as a method of gaining qualitative data, has to offer: on the one hand it sets the stage for a more open conversation that allows for stories to open up, as participants are reminded listening to others stories, yielding a possibility for more in depth data. But on the other hand, and what stood out with applying the method doing The Honey Ceremony, is that this way of deriving data has a more chaotic nature (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Performing the method at The Honey Ceremony gave me access to a larger quantity of data, resulting in many perspectives, but less in-depth qualitative answers. This was partially also to do with the extra level of performing the method doing a family event, where the atmosphere was quite busy already, as there were many other activities that day drawing attention. However there were some participants who took their time to slow down for a while, perhaps as a break from all the other activities.

The informal interviews I conducted at The Honey Ceremony managed to flow more naturally as a conversation, rather than an interview, due to the informal setting when people were sharing their personal stories and listening to each other.

In hindsight I would have liked to have gone into greater depth with some of the responses, in order to better understand what participants meant by them, both in the sense with d'Ottone's other world, the woman who thinks about the gift economy in terms of social relations or the woman who asserted that it was a life philosophy for her. Alternatively I could have asked for

a contact that would have given me the opportunity to follow up, or have staged the conversation like I would have preferred, creating a clearer sense of the speaking and listening element in a less chaotic atmosphere, than what was the case performing the conversation doing The Honey Ceremony.

Discussion - An Honest Invitation

In the discussion I would like to focus on d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) description of the other world through Loreau's (2023) notion of the collective fictions that keep humans destroying nature and Maxwell's (Appendix 1) agency against passivity.

d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) perception of the other world raises a dilemma: how to close the gap between the real world and the other reality, when there in fact is only one, same world?

Are we still so steeped in Loreau's fictions, that Bybi and what it stands for, can only exist in another reality? Can the experience of The Honey Ceremony be too fictional? What other words do we need to change if we in Bybi are to close the gap between the two worlds even more? What other words except for product needs to be changed? What sort of conversations would it take?

Changing the way we relate to nature (Loreau, 2023), or in this projects focus: understanding how the obligation works, is then perhaps not only depending on how open we are to listening to ourselves (Loreau, 2025) or our ability to tune into our senses (Thorgeirsdottir, 2024), but perhaps also how honest the invitation is.

Through my examination, I discovered exactly how difficult it is to change the language around how we name things, and thus how we perceive them, as seen in the analysis when words like products, consumer, and resources still were words that were not even thought about being used. Not alone for participants that have been a part of Bybi's practices for years, but also in my own formulation of my research question, and even Maxwell's (Appendix 1) description of the hopes for what people bring with them from the ceremony, when he hopes that participants can imagine how it works on other *products* as well.

However there were glimpses of the two worlds connecting, that came to show in different examples of participants' actions of care. These glimpses and actions are significant, as it reveals how powerful Thorgeirsdottir's (2024) notion of sensing and embodiment is.

The honey is naturally aesthetic and inviting in itself - it looks beautiful, it smells beautiful and it's so abundant. Intuitively most people would not say no to such a glittering jar, especially not if it comes for free. Although agreeing to accept the gift of honey comes with a big responsibility (Figure 1). Making use of the honey's beauty and the playful tone of having to say thank you to a bee, is clever in drawing people's attention, but is the beauty and the playfulness then an honest invitation? Or is it disguising the opportunity to decline the invitation?

Putting up a sign that says: 'free honey - but only if you say thank you to the bees' (Photo 4) is playing with people's expectations (Appendix 1), it is to provoke them, to activate their consciousness, inviting participants to realise that they actually need to do something, in order to receive the honey, in a different way than simply taking it down a supermarket shelf and paying for it. Participants are invited to reflect on what that means; having to accept the invitation. In this sense, participants know what they are asked of, but is the invitation explicit enough to let participants know what the invitation entails?



Photo 4. Sign saying "Free honey - But only if you say thank you to the bees" from an earlier Honey Ceremony performed on a parking lot outside Kvickly, Englandsgade on Amager. Photo by Oliver Maxwell.

Sometimes it can be quite hard to accept an invitation, because you know what it entails, that you are obliged to return it in some way (Appendix 1).

When the obligations are made clear, a position to decline or accept it, is laid on an honest foundation (Aers et al., 2022). A decline of an invitation should not be equivalent to declaring war (Mauss, 1954), but be fully acceptable if one, for whatever reason, does not desire or wish to join, as long as they then do not expect to still receive the honey. It should be acceptable to decline the invitation, but if the invitation is accepted, it should be clear as to what it is inviting to. That is an honest invitation.

Leaving space for declining the invitation is one thing, but can the invitation leave space for participants to consider if they can live up to the obligations, that come with receiving the honey? Is there space for those who still wish to be part of the community, but are not in the position to reciprocate at the moment? Can they then still be a part of the community?

Answering that leads back to Kimmerer's explanation of delayed reciprocity (Kimmerer, 2024) and Thygesens (2019) trusting bonds. That the obligations hold a knowledge of times of abundance and of times of scarcity. They hold the understanding that sometimes we are not in a position to reciprocate, and acknowledges that reciprocating a gift does not need to happen simultaneously, as receiving it. Otherwise it would be no different from an exchange, as with in the money economy. There are naturally times of scarcity, times when we are not in a position to give and the community has a responsibility to acknowledge that too. To trust future reciprocities.

d'Ottone's daughter understood that when she accepted the gift of the honey, and instead of throwing her flower bulb out, when she did not have a garden of her own to plant it, she passed it on to her mother to make sure it was still planted at some point (d'Ottone, Appendix 2, time).

More explicit examples of "*it mov[ing] in*" (Appendix 2), (understanding how the obligations work) were when participants were consciously make insect hotels or keep from cutting half their lawn as their ways of reciprocating the honey, but also examples of seemingly less conscious actions as for example Christensen (Appendix 2) sharing from her abundance, instead of going out buying new, that did not seem like an active choice, as opposed to d'Ottone's (Appendix 2) actions of care.

Is there then a better approach to saying thank you to a bee? Is it better that the actions of care are done unconsciously, as part of a natural way of being in the world, as a human, or are the actions better done intentionally? Christensen (Appendix 2) did not really seem to understand some of her actions, before she reflected on what they actually meant in sharing her story of them.

Does it then matter how conscious, the actions that we take are, as long as the actions are not destructive for the planet and for one another?

On the one hand, Loreau (2023) does not differ: conscious or not, the body will let itself go into a communion with the natural world, when we open up to sensing it. With the connection, through opening up to our own feelings when we are relating to nature, the caring actions will follow, conscious or not.

On the other hand, Maxwell argues for a responsibility towards the things we are offered along with an active commitment to them (Appendix 1).

Although Christensen (Appendix 2) may not specifically seem to know what she was doing with her wild garden and her insect hotel, but she was still trying her best to notice and taking a responsibility for the community in her garden, which she just happens to have.

There is no *right* way of reciprocating: In the circle of our kinfolk, all flourishing is mutual and we all have a place in the circle of giving and receiving (Emergence Magazine, 2024). The gifts should all be their own and appreciated for not being standardised or as we might expect (Appendix 1). We all have our ways of acting carefully, showing in the unique ways participants were saying thank you to the bees. Whether it was leaving space for the garden to grow wild, choosing not to buy a christmas tree every year, buying food that could have been thrown out or sharing from their abundance.

How explicit should the invitation then be in explaining what it entails? Preferably participants are not simply performing their acts of care passively, because they were told to do so in The Honey Ceremony, but rather making an active commitment on their own (Appendix 1), creating their own personal stories and acts of care, and at the same time being aware of their limitations, reflecting on what they have to give for communal flourishing. Then reciprocating becomes something that was sprouted in the embodied experience of the ceremony, but were able to develop into personal, deep felt actions creating agency (Kimmerer, 2024) and not passive acts, that were forced upon them.

Exactly in the diversity of the actions of care lies the magic - we all have our gifts to share in the circle of mutual flourishing (Emergence Magazine, 2024), and we all have our personal ways of being in the community and sharing our abundance. It would not be quite as magical if participants were told that there is only one *right* way of saying ‘thank you’ to the bees.

Reflections on the Research Question

Throughout my examination and as the understanding of the theory was unfolded in the process of the analysis, I discovered a dilemma in how embedded our language is in our consciousness in my initial formulation of the research question:

I will be asking the question *if* The Honey Ceremony is capable of changing how we think of economy from a destructive economy based on profit and growth, to a healthy, caring economy based on the thinking of the gift economy. And if so, how is it practiced? Are people changing their view on *resources* from nature and their *consumerism*?

I discovered my own replication of the perception of the two worlds, ultimately replicating what is causing the problem of creating the gap between the worlds, through the language I was using. The question should then not be *if* the The Honey Ceremony has the potential to make people capable of thinking and acting differently about how they relate to nature’s *resources* and essentially how they *consume* them, being merely a test of Bybi’s practices and would not have led to a discovery of how to bridge the two worlds.

The Honey Ceremony is an invitation for participants to interpret the relations between the bees, the people and the honey in their own way, that in this sense allows them to be part of answering the question as an ongoing and open-ended exploration, but If I do not accept the premise of the ceremony and the language that it is changing through it myself, then I cannot expect participants to do the same.

Keeping in mind the hermeneutic approach and being open for outside critique I was reminded about the immense meaning and power the language we use to name things has, in creating realities (Aers et al. 2022), leading me to change my research question to the current.

Conclusion - Bridging the Two Worlds

Tronto (2015) argued for care as both action and thought, which I saw the legitimacy of in my examination of Bybi's practices. But what I also discovered to be equally as important was the conversations. Speaking in togetherness (Aers et al., 2022), even in small gatherings, shows a kinship with nature, to each other and an understanding that we are not alone in our actions of care for the environment (Appendix 2; Appendix 3). But it also gives space for contemplation, to revisit our thoughts and actions, and reflect upon them, that allows us to be actively making choices, not passively acting, because we were told to do so. As we take storytelling for earthly survival (Terranova, 2016) serious, when we share our stories in communion, then agency, curiosity, care, pleasure, responsibility and all the other voices in the community (Figure 4) are allowed to flourish mutually in the circle of our kinfolk (Kimmerer, 2024).

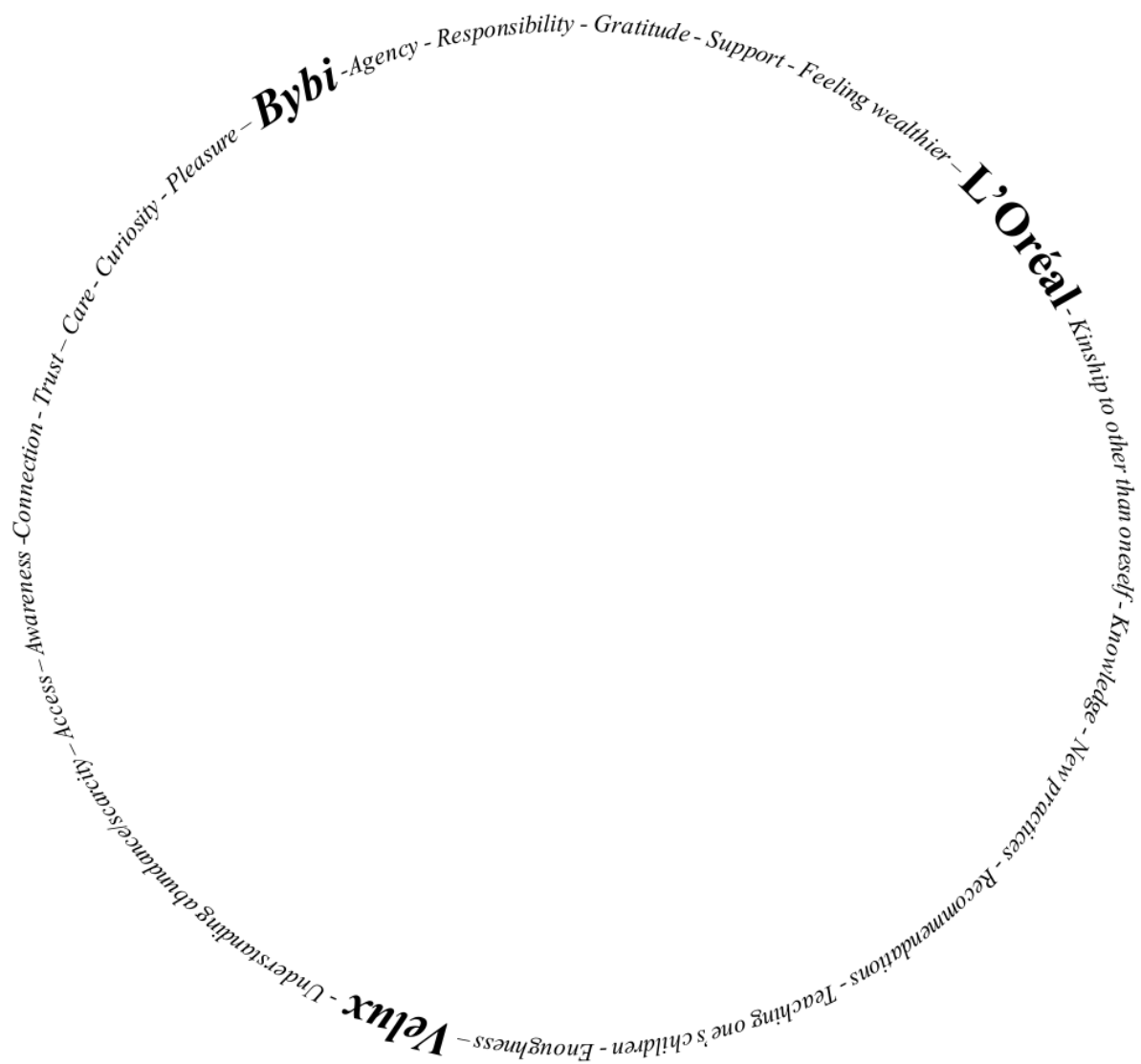


Fig. 4. Illustration of the circle of kinfolk where all flourishing is mutual, by inspiration of Robin Wall Kimmerer (2024). The words making up the circle illustrate the voices that flow in *The Currency of Care* in the relation between Bybi, Velux and L'Oréal.

It sparks a purpose, that we as humans matter, and it gives us agency (Kimmerer, 2024), and then neither thought, action nor conversation stands alone. In that sense, it becomes evident that it matters what actions we take, and it matters how we name things, it matters what thoughts think thoughts and it matters what stories tell stories (Kimmerer, 2024; Haraway, 2016, p. 35).

The conversations I had with participants did show signs of the two worlds connecting. Seeing that, and realizing the power of the conversation, it becomes clear how important it is to keep these aesthetic, embodied practices of The Honey Ceremony, but equally important inviting for collective storytelling.

Through my insight, I discovered the different ways of how participants perceived the honey and its relations, and it shows that there are many ways that all of these people are a part of the web of reciprocity (Kimmerer, 2024), as they express themselves as accountable to giving back to bees, friends, family, christmas trees and Mother Earth.

Changing the language is not easy, and perhaps it will take years of practice and conversations to change how honey is perceived as something else than a resource to be filled again (by planting flowers), but I saw through participants statements that some things did manage to seep into their consciousness, albeit in different levels.

This was shown in practices where participants were noticing, and being attentive through a relation to the seasons and in that, learning about times of abundance and scarcity - for example, when to plant flower seeds to thank the bees and when to harvest ramson, to share with ones they care for. Even though this individual understanding of the obligations came to show in different levels of consciousness, it still showed that participants were able to imagine how the obligations work on other products as well (Appendix 1) shortening the bridge between the two worlds.

Listening to participants' stories and learning what saying thank you to a bee means to them personally, also widened the possibilities to understand the obligations of the gift economy from my point of view and how they can be interpreted in a modern western world. In the conversations participants are given a chance to articulate how they relate to the honey and how they relate to the obligations, to put their actions into words, and thoughts into reality, again closing the gap between the two worlds.

One thing that Kimmerer (2024) is not mentioning in her books is the relation to money. As noted earlier we in Bybi still need to pay bills and rent, so we need money to be a part of the circle as well. For Bybi to be playing in this alternative manner is precarious, because we need playmates to play with. Consequently if no one wants to play, then, first and foremost The Currency of Care will not be flowing, but also no money will be. There is a big risk in offering the honey in an invitation that can be declined - we cannot force people to join. But it is a risk we must take, as we do see signs of cracks in the membrane between the two worlds, and so:

“We must insist on lives lived and stories told for flourishing and abundance in the teeth of rampaging destruction and improvisation and cultivate the capacity to reimagine wealth,

learn practical healing, and stitch together improbable collaborations” (Haraway, 2016, p. 136).

We are aware of the state of our dear mother (earth) so we must insist keeping on playing, acting, thinking and telling stories with our eyes and ears open.

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Appendix overview

Appendix 1: Conversation with Oliver Maxwell

Appendix 2: Transcript L'Oréal

Appendix 3: Notes from The Honey Ceremony at Velux

Appendix 4: Bybi 2024 honeymoney - a currency of care

Appendix 1: Conversation with Oliver Maxwell

OM: Oliver Maxwell

AL: The author

AL: You know what I am doing in this project and that I am really trying to figure out what it is that Bybi is cultivating through these partnerships with keeping bees in the city. So can you just tell me a little bit what it means to you, and for Bybi as well to have these relations with the partners in the city keeping bees. What does it mean?

OM: It is an interesting question, actually, what are we cultivating? Slightly different way of putting it. (long pause) What are we cultivating?

AL: Maybe you can also just start by telling: how do you see these relations? Between Bybi and the partners?

OM: One of the things that I find most fascinating and fun about doing this, is actually getting an inside into these organisations. I think businesses are a funny kind of social communities in some ways they are like a tribe, you know they have their rules and their kind of ways of doing things. Then you meet these kinds of people within them who are curious, they want stuff to happen, they have, quite often... They kind of navigate between on the one hand what some of those businesses are supposed to be doing, while on the other hand what everyone really wants, which is to get on and be nice, and be kind and have a good impact in the world. And it's really interesting to look at ways which, like that dilemma, because it's quite often a dilemma, can be illuminated and activated. I think there's some just really fascinating stories that come up, you know that quote from Donna Haraway, that weaving worlds, and telling stories, and how we need different stories. I think a business or like any other social community is a story, and it's actually often quite boring, most people realize it's actually quite boring. People want to find ways of making it their own and find different ways of doing it.

I think through the bees we found a way of doing that, which is a little bit challenging, a little bit interesting, and quite empowering I think, for some people. And that's really a powerful and interesting relationship to have with the companies.

AL: So, it's not just about keeping bees in the city?

OM: No, not at all. You know the words that I use more and more are joint responsibility, how you approach them, about not having a product. That the bees and the people and the businesses are really these constellations of different actors that can be stitched together in

these different stories. And I think we are kind of giving them permission to maybe tell some different stories or reveal some different conflicts.

AL: Yeah, so maybe now I can ask again what it is that you are hoping that Bybi are cultivating through these relations? That you think are significant?

OM: I think that there's these words that we come back to all the time. That I come back to in a second. There's a couple of other themes that I think come up as well; this idea of joined responsibility I think is really clear, and we are really trying to encourage people to share a joined responsibility for these communities that they are a part of, and that it is in contrast to, quite often, how businesses are supposed to run with quite hierarchical structures. I'm in a more abstract sense really interested in this idea of responsibility that comes up over and over again, especially in this Donna Haraway, as in ability to respond. So how do we encourage and cultivate that idea that responsibility is something you have for yourself, and you can choose to make. On a more concrete level, in terms of how we talk about, you know our activities are generally to get there through curiosity, and care and pleasure.

AL: Speaking of those words care, curiosity and pleasure: we do these honey ceremonies, can you just tell me a little about them, what they do? Why are they important?

OM: One of the central things we started doing in the last few years, is that we realized we needed to change the language that we use to talk about how we are together and how we gather and distribute resources. If you read the newspaper or listen to the radio or look anywhere around, you see that our world, modern world, is entirely constructed of products and consumers. You know the economy is talked about in terms of consumers, even these big questions of sustainability, questions of consumers: like how do you consume less or how do you reduce consumption. What products are we making, who are our target groups. And as long as we are still talking in that language, we are just creating these kinds of passive cogs in a machine that are doing what they want without any form of autonomy or self-determination. And that started for us with this idea that we didn't want consumers, we wanted co-creators, and we realized that when we didn't want co-creators, that actually we didn't want products either. And as soon as we removed the word product and consumer then suddenly a whole load of other opportunities began to emerge around not only how we should be together with each other, how we should talk to our partners, but also the infrastructure that mediates that. Not just the way in which website templates, business plans and brochures are designed, but also the way in which for example resources get passed from place to place along this chain. So you know a product is made in a factory, it goes to a shop, and in the shop, it is sold to a consumer. And as long as you are selling a product, as you are using that word product, you are just reproducing that whole chain, but an invitation doesn't do that, an invitation has a completely different relationship, it belongs in a relationship, I can invite you to something, you can choose whether or not to accept, but you also know, and everyone instinctively knows is part of what being a human is that there is an obligation that

comes with that invitation as well. It can be quite hard to accept an invitation sometimes, because you know you are obliged to buy a present to return the invitation or do something else, for you in some way to pay somebody's debt in some ways, but it can also put you in a relationship that goes beyond the initial exchange. A product belongs in a shop and an invitation belongs in a ceremony. And that exchange and that debt needs to be recognized in all sorts of different ways and it is in all sorts of different ways in our cultures from buying rounds of drinks in a pub to baking cookies for Christmas.

AL: Exactly, and the whole idea about changing the language around what the honey is, that it's no longer, we don't see it as a product, but as an invitation. How, can you tell me a little about, I know as well we talk a lot about the gift economy, how do you see the gift economy in all that? And in the honey ceremony as well?

OM: So making the honey ceremony actually came from that realization, from that question, if this is an invitation where should it be staged? 10.26 What should it look like? And that we approached in this aesthetic way where we need to be able to see it, touch it, in order to be able to understand it, you need to be able to sort of find a way that people don't just take it off a shelf, that they feel the weight, they notice the colour. They do something with it. And then this obligation to plant a flower seed and to share it. And that those are actually staged and acknowledged in the honey ceremony, you know this idea that you can play with people's expectations, with a sign that basically says free honey – but only if you say thank you to the bees. That we are so deeply programmed like these men who have lots of dogs and you ring a bell and you say uh it's free! You just want to take it, but nothing is free of course there's always an obligation that comes with it, but to really kind of create a set up that forces people to acknowledge that. Is an important part of that set up. You share it with someone you care for, you plant a flower to thank the bees. And that's where it comes into the gift economy as well, because the gift economy obviously isn't free, no gifts are free. You know its kind of ultimate characteristic of social relationships and all human societies, that we are all exchanging gifts all the time, but those gifts come with social obligations to each other and the way those are kind of manifested in different cultures around the world are really diverse in all sorts of ways. Our money economy is just one of them.

AL: So that's the way the gift economy is a part of the practice in Bybi?

OM: well the gift economy is a word that has become attached to this in the last year or so, that we have been talking about, I mean it was always there. There's certain resources that have, or just are a part of the gift economy even in our culture, wine or beer or whatever, and honey is one of those, it's almost, its feels so natural for honey to be part of that because its such a generous gift that we get from nature that were in a way obliged to share it. So that metaphor works really powerfully with honey. It takes a bit more work to put it into a slice of bacon or a bag of rice.

AL: Ah okay, because it's not processed in the same way? It's difficult maybe to see where a piece of bacon comes from?

OM: Yes because its heavily processed into a product, you know it's there as a stable, but there's some things that are, you know the gift economy talks about meat, you can't store it, so you store it in the belly of your brother, where we are a long way away from that, now, but there's some things that we all touch, maybe honey or tea or some ways coffee.

AL: So talking about the gift economy and the honey ceremony, we have just been to this event at Velux where we did the honey ceremony and where I think hundreds of people participated. What are you hoping that people take home with them, except for the free honey?

OM: I'd like them to take the responsibility home with them. I'd like them to feel that they've committed to do something. I'd like them to think about that, you know, if they don't actually share the honey, if they eat it themselves, that they have an awareness that this comes from a system that carries some obligations with it. I'd like them to take the curiosity and the care and the pleasure home with them, id like them to think about it when they see a bee, to think about it, when they give it to someone, id also like them to maybe imagine how that works when they see other products as well, when you are in the supermarket, and you are maybe kind of doing these things, to maybe just stop for a moment and think well how could this be? Or how could this be different. 16.08 to take those values into other contexts. Maybe something they think about if they bake a loaf of bread or some jam. About how they are part of sharing these things onwards. And what obligations they'd like to have. What ways they can maybe be more performative and careful when they share things with each other.

AL: I'm curious to hear, you said some things when you were describing the honey ceremony, about that people notice the colour, they way they see it, and they smell it and in a way they use their senses, to understand a different kind of economy maybe, why is that important that they have to use their senses? Or have you thought about it at all?

OM: yeah, I have thought about it actually, and I think its really important. Like aesthetics and senses. One is the characteristics of our modern society, one of the things that are problematic about it, one is, like we talked about, is this idea that we think of ourselves as not having a choice in the way of doing things, you know you buy a product in a shop and that's how it is and we can't change it and that's the only way of doing things. One way of talking together or working, and another kind of consequence that is part of that, is that we tend to tune out from most of our senses. You know its funny when you go into a supermarket, that its so full of so many things from so many places in the world, full of colours and smells and stuff like that, and yet there so sterile at the same time can't really smell anything and increasingly fruit doesn't really smell of anything because it's all kind of produced in some plastic factories and stuff. Tends to be sought of standardised, and *as you expect*, and I think that it's really healthy for us today to be encouraged to notice, also because noticing gives you

the potential to choose it or chose not to do it, to respect the things that have gone into it, maybe to hear about the things that have been there, and also, what we talked about, responsibility and the ability to respond and a joined responsibility to actually make an active commitment rather than a passive one. I think most of the products they we buy, if people knew how they were produced or what they were made of and relay did the same thing with a ballpoint pen or slice of bacon for that matter. And really imagined the chemicals and the poisons and the, in some cases, misery that went into them. Probably they wouldn't want to buy them. Which I think is probably a good thing I many cases.

AL: Yes if people were to start talking about or thinking about it, it's the same thing with oil, I think lot about oil, that is something Robin also talks about in her book, and I had a conversation about with my former flatmate, that oil is a gift that we are not given, its something that we extract, we crack open the surface of the earth and then we suck out this oil that are not given to us. And he says well it's everything we build our society on, this is what has brought us to where we are today, and I am like yeah, exactly, and we now have forest fires all around us.

OM: Yeah, it's completely out of balance. Exactly. Potential, connection is the first prerequisite to responsibility and autonomy, oh yes the other thing I was going to say is it's not a question about responsible consumerism, I think it's deeper than that, it's not about just kind of like knowing what in your product, or labelling them or whatever, it's like the whole language these things are produced, and the whole obligation that follows not only when you pick something up but also when your done with it.

Appendix 2: Transcript L'Oréal

C: Sonja Christensen

D: Berit d'Ottone

AL: The Author

AL: I ved jo at jeg arbejder i Bybi, jeg har arbejdet der i 6 år, men jeg er her som forsker i dag for at undersøge den her relation der er mellem L'Oreal og Bybi og hvad den betyder for jer. Så jeg er her ikke for at få en evaluering af hvor mange blomsterfrø i har været ude og plante. Jeg er her mere for at høre om jeres personlige oplevelser og jeres forståelse af hvordan I ser det her samarbejde med Bybi.

Så men jeg tænker du kan starte Sonja med at fortælle om hvordan du ser det her samarbejde?

C: Jeg tror vi har haft det her samarbejde siden 2018, så det er jo way back, kan man sige, det kom sig helt tilfældigt da vores daværende direktør, han er brite, han havde mødt Oliver. På et eller andet hvad ved jeg, brite arrangement tror jeg. Jeg ved det ikke, jeg var ikke selv med. Og så syntes han det lød som et super spændende projekt. Og der var vi meget fokuseret, det har vi jo været i mange år, fokuseret på at blive bedre til at blive miljøbevidste og også få biodiversitet ind over vores målsætninger i forhold til.. Vi havde dengang en politisk strategi som vi kaldte sharing beauty with all, vores bæredygtigheds strategi med et 2020 mål og den blev så opdateret i 2020 med 2030 mål som vi nu kalder for L'Oreal for the future. Og der er biodiversitet også en meget meget stærk værdi. Og derfor syntes vi dels at, plus 2020 forstærker vi meget det sociale aspekt i det vi kalder cooroperate responsibility. Og derfor syntes vi at det passer fantastisk at det her samarbejde eller partnerskab eller hvad man skal kalde det, fordi I har det sociale aspekt også, altså ikke kun biodiversitet, men også det sociale aspekt. det syntes vi jo er noget vi rigtig rigtig gerne vil støtte. Så det er ikke kun bierne, men det er lige så meget de mennesker der står bag og så kan vi sige, så har vi også jo set det som en mulighed for ikke kun at have en form for sponsorship, men også at vores medarbejdere kan lære om Bybi projektet ved at være med på citizen day. Og det syntes vi er enormt givende fordi der får man mulighed for at høre hvad det er i går og laver og altså alle er jo tilhængere, altså det er jo.. alle er jo vilde! Og vil rigtig gerne være med på jeres projekt. Og så også at vi kunne få det tætte samarbejde vi kunne få ved at have bistader i greve. Og der er folk jo også vilde med at være med og det syntes jeg er super værdifuldt.

AL: Kan du ikke lige fortælle nu når du slev siger ”være med” hvordan kommer det til udtryk for medarbejderne ude i Greve?

C: Jamen altså at man kan gå ud og kigge på bierne og de har indrettet den have øh med buske og frugttræer så der også er noget næring for bierne. Og så jeg har indtryk af, det siger vores chef dernede i hvert flad, Theis, at medarbejderne er stolte af at vi har det her samarbejde og det her projekt. Så det er jo dejligt.

AL: Hvad med dig Berit, kunne jeg også godt tænke mig at høre lidt fra dig, som Teamleder, hvordan du ser den her relation?

D: Jamen nu har jeg jo været teamleder, det er andet år, øhm og før jeg ligesom sagde at det ville jeg gerne, så var jeg jo også med ude på citizen day, og der er et eller andet særligt fortryllende ved, jeg tror egentlig mennesket godt ved over en bred kam, fordi der er skrevet bøger og det bliver meget i tale sat, at bierne er enormt vigtige. Og selv det at få lov at være så tæt på dem og se både produktet, respekten, lære en masse ting, vi har lært meget alle sammen, ved at være heldige at være med på det her projekt, så det giver sådan en, som Sonja også siger, en kæmpe stolthed fordi det er meget håndgribeligt hvad der kan komme ud at et samarbejde på den her måde. Tænker jeg. Tror vi alle sammen har husket at plante de frø vi får, der er så mange ting man egentlig tager med sig. Som man også lige møder i sin skuffe, nu har jeg gemt de seneste frø, fordi nu er det ved at være forår, de skal snart ud i haven, så

jeg tror egentlig det er noget der ikke kun flytter ind for en dag, det flytter ind sådan over året, man tager virkelig noget med sig, både noget viden og noget ekstra omsorg og ekstra mange tanker omkring hvordan det er i den virkelige verden.

AL: Kan du komme med nogle eksempler hvordan det kommer til kommer til udtryk, du siger at man tager det med gennem hele året?

D: Jeg tror bare det her med at nu er det plantesæson, det her med fordi det er så meget med at man skal sørge for at de har et sted at være, det taler vi jo om med alle dyr i verden, når der er nogen der er doktor dyregod så er det mig, jeg er helt vildt bekymret over menneskets dårlige behandling af dyr, men også det her med at vi jo ligesom tager alt fra alle, så syntes jeg at der er noget enormt visuelt, som printer sig både på nethinden, men også i oplevelsen, som gør at du gør en ting du har gjort mange gange, som at gå ud og plante i haven eller gå ud i blomsterskolen eller et eller andet, så får du noget med dig, som forstærker den tanke du har i den givende periode, netop det her med at huske at når man tager, skal man også give. De små løg vi også har fået, de er da også kommet ned, det husker man. Jeg ser faktisk på en anden måde på sådan et blomsterløg, fordi min mormor havde jo lært mig: det kan komme igen næste år hvis du husker det, ja det er godt med dig, så får man ligesom visualiseret og genfortalt på en måde som jeg syntes, det flytter bare ind! Og vi taler faktisk ret tit om det, har du fået plantet dine, det der ligesom med man får noget med som man kan bruge i sin hverdag også.

AL: Det er også, nu når du siger i taler om det, det er også noget i taler om med jeres medarbejdere, kan i mærke det på det sprog i bruger når i altså i taler sammen, husker hinanden på de her gerninger?

D: Jeg tror det er når vi også er så heldig også at få det der honning med og nogen har det med til deres te, så er i på en måde meget med i vores underbevidste hverdag vi jeg sige. Og så husker jo jo også at der var det her samarbejde som Sonja du lige må korrigere mig, i at vi har den her family day, hvor I også byder ind, det er det jeg syntes der gør et samarbejde ekstra rigt, at det ikke kun er på den ene der måde på noget skriv som folk ikke altid er så gode til at læse, men så pludselig så dukker I også op der, så er det jo pludselig vores familier. Altså min datter fik også et blomsterløg i hånden og hun siger mor jeg bor jo i lejlighed, hvad skal jeg gøre? Så derfor gav hun mig det fordi hun ville jo ikke bare, du ved nogen kunne jo have tænkt nå ja det er jo bare, det taber jeg på vejen hjem, men den der måde det bliver tænkt efter på, nå men jeg bor på Nørrebro på tredje sal, mor du må tage det med hjem i haven og plante begge vores. Så det her med at det også, ja det kan brede sig også, fordi så er vi jo både mange, men med vores familier er vi jo endnu flere. Syntes det er ret fint.

C: Og rent privat har jeg jo også ladet mig influere til at få lavet en vild have i haven, den er altså ikke særlig god fordi lige nu er det bare vissen græs, så jeg ved ikke rigtig lige hvordan, jeg må læse mig til hvad jeg skal gøre ved det, fordi jeg skal jo have sået alle de der frø. Men

jeg er helt enig Berit, det der med at man tænker, jeg tænker meget mere øh altså bi-mad, altså blomster-blomster end jeg har gjort før.

D: Og hvor simpelt det egentlig kan gøres: fordi nogen så tænker man åh nej, nu skal jeg i plante skole og nu skal jeg se, lede efter det der bi mærke, men her der er det jo i virkeligheden simplificeret at der er mad i meget for de her bier. Og jeg har faktisk fundet et sted at hælde de der frø, og jeg har jeg placeret under mit æbletræ hvor der i forvejen er en masse jord, der ryger det ned, så det, jeg er også gået meget mere vildt til værks end jeg plejer, det er ikke fordi jeg nogensinde har haft den der velfriserede have, vi bor sådan lidt i en halv skov, men jeg har fundet mange flere områder hvor jeg laver det der blomsterflor, som er så fint.

AL: Lægger i mærke til noget, hvad sker der så efter I har plantet de her, stopper det så der eller er der noget der fortsætter på en måde efter I har plantet blomsterne?

D: Jamen jeg er begyndt sådan lidt, nu ligner jeg min mormor, men så tager jeg lige et løg op, eller du ved, så tager jeg lige et løg ind, der før kunne være døde i en krukke. Fordi de ikke kan lide frost.

C: Nå jajaja

D: Jeg er meget mere bevidst om – ikke at genbruge, men at sørge for at passe på det, det jo fint nok, dem ude i haven de kommer jo op, men dem i krukkerne, det gør de ikke så meget, så det der med at huske at gøre klar til efteråret, fordi så har vi ligesom medbragt noget til foråret. Så det er faktisk takket været det her samarbejde jeg tænker endnu mere på det.

AL: Det er godt at vi har de her praksisser og det lyder også som I inspirerer hinanden på arbejde.

D: Mhmm

AL: Føler du Sonja at du har lært noget af bierne?

C: Ja altså helt klart, det her med en større bevidsthed, en bevidsthed, som du siger, når man tager noget, skal man give noget igen, sådan i det hele taget om at være bevidst om at, altså biodiversitet i det hele taget, jeg har lavet sådan et lille, to insekthoteller og sådan.

AL: Har du det? Nå

C: Jeg ved ikke om de fungerer

D: Jeg har så lavet de rigtige, fordi jeg kom jo til at gå til noget stand op hvor nej jeg var med til cirkusrevyen, men der bliver gjort nar af dem der, altså du går i Bauhauss og køber de der insekthoteller hvor han siger ”tror i Selv du ville bo i det?”. Men egentlig var mit gode insekthotel: min man han har glemt at slæbe det sidste brænde op fra hjørnet, og du så smider nogen ting på, det er der de gerne vil være! Så det har, jeg tænker, jeg kæder alt det der

sammen med, også det her med jeg tror at hvis man ikke er helt ny mere, det er ikke, så kan man også have nogle bias med at ej hvis din mormor kom på besøg og så og så din have nu, så ville hun korse sig: ej! Det der med at tingene forandrer sig, at noget er smukt, så det der med at lave sin egen lille blomstereng derhjemme, det syntes jeg er meget inspirerende.

AL: Så du kan godt sige til din mormor, mormor det er faktisk sådan her haven skal se ud?

D: Ja, nu bliver jeg nødt til at sige det til hende oppe i himlen, så derfor tror jeg hun tilgiver mig, jeg tror hun har set forandringen, og set nogle programmer hvor nogle kommuner går amok når man ikke vil klippe grøftekanterne, og man tænker slap af, men det er jo sådan en transformation på en eller anden måde.

AL: Og det her med, det kan jeg spørge jer begge to om, det her med, at når man tager noget, så skal man også give noget igen, og den bevidsthed omkring det, er der også andre aspekter i jeres hverdag som I ligesom tænker over det?

D: Ja. Jeg har også taget en anden ting til mig, hvis der kommer noget ind i huset, så skal der også noget ud igen, så den der med ikke, jeg tror den hænger sammen med flere ting i forhold til at vi jo godt ved at verden er lidt i brand og det her med at lave sit eget lille regnskab, det syntes jeg faktisk at det connecter sig godt med, jeg er blevet meget mere bevidst om det, så meget mine veninder kalder mig Øko Jytte, fordi jeg sorterer mit affald, men igen det der med også at påvirke, nogen gange så de der løg jeg husker at tage ind, så er det også mig der står forrest med pludselig at have mange løg og det der med ikke at gå på planteskolen, så får de også nogen, det der med også at dele lidt ud.

C: Det er jo genialt.

D: Det der med at smitte hinanden lidt på den gode måde, på den hyggelige måde, der er noget her der breder sig lidt ud over bare at være gode ved bierne, holde regnskab, sige tak for at blive kaldt Øko Jytte, sortere affald.

AL: Nej det handler ikke om at være den der pegefinger.

D: Det duer ikke.

AL: Det duer ikke, og der er ikke nogen der bliver glade for det og syntes det er fedt med den måde, men altså, vi syntes altid det er så fedt at når I kommer ud til Bybi, det er så fedt ligesom at se at I bare er med på hvad vi ligesom stiller frem til jer, om det så er at lave magiske små skeer, eller om det er at slynge honning, eller hvad et nu er, kan vi virkelig se at der er engagement. Jeg havde nogen hvor vi slyngede honning og der havde vi en lang snak omkring hvor kommer det her honning fra, hvad skal der egentlig til for at vi står her i dag og faktisk kan slynge det her honning, der er nogen der har været ude og plante nogle blomsterfrø på et eller andet tidspunkt, og så har Aref, vores biavler været og passe bierne og på et tidspunkt så kan vi ligesom komme og høste det her honning, og så var jeg sådan okay hvad syntes I den her honning smager af så sagde de: den smager af kærlighed og så var der

andre der sagde den smager af frihed og så det var jo ikke noget som vi ligesom har sagt, at det er det de skal sige, det kommer jo bare ud af dem selv at de.. og når man har haft sådan en dag, så føler man ligesom også der sker noget i folks bevidsthed.

D: Men også fordi vi ligesom får lov at arbejde med vores hænder, som normalt er vores håndarbejde, sådan her (trykker på tastatur) og så foregår det meget her og selvfølgelig er der også meget med hinanden, men det her med vi pludselig er i den der anden virkelighed som er vores allesammens virkelighed og ansvarlighed for den virkelighed, det kan bare noget, og det sjove er jo, jeg er jo mega allergisk, mod hvepse for eksempel, så nogen siger hvordan tør du overhovedet gå med på det der, jeg får nogle indsprøjtninger så jeg falder ikke farligt om, men alligevel er det det sted jeg helst vil være.

C: Ja hahah.

AL: Ej hvor fint, godt at høre, du tør alligevel.

D: Ikke at de andre ting ikke også giver mening også, men der er noget lidt fortryllende.

AL: Kan du også mærke Sonja, at du også breder det ud til din familie og dine veninder måske, og så videre?

C: Øh nej det syntes jeg egentlig ikke øh, jeg syntes ikke, de kalder mig ikke Øko Jytte, var det det de?

D: Det er mine veninder der kalder mig Øko Jytte og så tænker jeg tak.

C: Altså nej nu har jeg bare nogle muligheder som der er mange der ikke har, altså med at have en kæmpe græsplæne hvor jeg bare kan lade halvdelen vokse vildt ikke, så det er, det er så forskelligt, kan man sige ikke, øhm, men det er også sådan noget med at, haha, altså for eksempel hvis vi skal besøge nogen, så kan jeg jo godt bare finde på at bare gå ud i haven og grave noget op og så lave en sammenplantning af det.

D: Det er også fantastisk ikke.

C: Og det kan jeg jo godt lide, vi har jo en hulens masse ramsløg der gror ude i vores forhave og det syntes jeg er så fedt at man så kan give noget man har i forvejen ikke? Altså i forhold til at gå ud og købe en buket bunde blomster. Jeg ved ikke om det er fordi jeg er født nærig, det er det egentlig ikke, det er fordi at jeg syntes det er fedt, at så kan de også få en hel masse ramsløg for eksempel ikke? Det ved jeg ikke om det har noget med det at gøre, det kan da godt være. At det er det der gør at jeg syntes det kunne man da lige så godt, som at gå ud og købe en eller anden eksotisk plante som slet ikke hører hjemme her. For eksempel.

AL: Ja, men det er rigtig, men det er måske også noget omkring en bevidsthed omkring forbrug

C: Ja ja!

AL: Hvad er det for nogle ressourcer vi har og hvad er det vi tager fra jorden hele tiden ikke? Altså hvor meget relation har i til Greve? Hører i nogle historier fra Greve altså med deres have og hvordan de ligesom, nu sagde i at de var stolte af at have haven derude osv.?

D: Jeg kommer der jo faktisk i nyere tid mere end jeg plejer, fordi jeg har haft en kontakt nede i greve som tog sig af noget lager, som vi allokerer rundt, sådan noget education i norden og jeg har faktisk, de gange jeg har været på besøg, så bliver den faktisk nævnt. Og det syntes jeg er lidt sødt. Så det er egentlig det jeg ved om det. og så ved jeg også

C: Theis havde desværre ikke tid, fordi de har et nyt styresystem på lageret, fordi han er jo den der ved bedst, kan man sige ikke, og han er jo helt vild, han har jo altid været super pro projektet, det er spørgsmålet om det kunne være noget telefon ting.

D: Han er klart den der ved mest, jeg ved bare at de taler om det, men det syntes jeg er lidt sødt,

AL: det kunne være meget fedt, hvis man kunne få dem til at fortælle nogle af deres historier

C: Ja det syntes jeg helt bestemt

AL: Hvordan de oplever det her samarbejde

C: Ja. Og de kender jo også Aref når han kommer

AL: ja det er jo også det, altså de har jo også en relation når han kommer, og det er jo også det, vi vil jo gerne have at Aref ikke bare er en eller anden anonym person der bare kommer og dukker op, men at det er biavleren fra Bybi som man godt kan tale med, som man måske også kan stille spørgsmål til.

AL: Det sidste jeg godt kunne tænke mig at runde det er om i har nogle spørgsmål til den her relation? Er der noget i undrer jer over? Er der måske nogle komplikationer eller dilemmaer i kan se?

C: Nej det syntes jeg ikke, jeg syntes jo det er super spændende i også er meget filosofiske omkring bierne og den der soundwalk i havde lavet, det syntes var helt genialt også. Fordi det giver en kæmpe forståelse af bi liv. Hahaha

AL: Hahah okay, så der er ikke noget hvor i tænker, altså nogle gange bliver det jo lidt hippie agtigt, kunne vi forstille os, altså fordi vi er jo så meget inde i det vi gør på ene eller anden måde, så det er jo også lidt spændende at høre udefra, bliver det lidt mærkeligt nogle gange?

D: Jeg vil nok sige det er passion, fordi det bliver nemt hippie agtigt, hvis det ligger i København, og det er noget der er lidt nørdet, forstå mig ret, så bliver det jo hippie agtigt,

AL: Ja ja

D: jeg tænker bare i kunne jo sagtens åbne et sted mere for at udbrede det, det er jo op til jer men tænker sagtens det kunne fungere ovre på fastlandet også. Fordi lidt mere måske viden, det er jo når jeg fortæller om det så folk ved det ikke. Så den der at multiplicere viden om det.

AL: Tænker du på at folk ikke kender Bybi eller tænker du, siger de hvad? Til hvad vi laver?

D: Altså Bybi. Det er måske kendskabet, hvis du kommer lidt uden for storbyen, så syntes jeg at folk ved måske for lidt om jer, altså den brede befolkning ved for lidt om jer.

AL: Okay

D: Det ville da være fedt for dem at vide det

C: Absolut, men det er jo også i det hele taget, altså der er jo, det er jo tit at jeg kommer til at nævne Bybi, hvor folk så ikke ved hvad det er. Og vi arbejder j også for at udbrede kendskabet kan man jo sige, ikke kun fordi vi har det her partnerskab, men også fordi, jeg syntes det er super interessant som koncept, så det skal alle jo kende til.

D: ja det syntes jeg også og det er egentlig derfor vi siger det. At flere bør vide det. Flere end vi kan nå at fortælle ikke?

Appendix 3: Notes from the Honey Ceremony at Velux

What do you think about that we have to say thank you to the bees?

Do you think about it in other aspects in your everyday life?

Gratitude was a word that came up frequently.

And for the parents and grandparents they emphasized the importance of teaching their kids about that it is important to say thank you to the bees.

I think about it also in social aspects, how we are together.

Gratitude – it is important especially in these times – it is a necessity.

One example was a grandmother and her grandchild participating together. When asked what other aspects they think about giving back she told me about their Christmas tree, that they use a cedar tree that they have on their balcony as a Christmas tree, they just take it in for

Christmas, and then out again on the balcony when Christmas is over. In that way they don't have to take more than necessary, not more than what is given. They don't have to cut one down every year. She thought it was an important practice to give to the kids.

Another participant explains that she thinks about it at her work where she works in the kitchen in a school. She says she can see a change from when they began working with zero food waste, that the kids who were not used to it, didn't like the idea of eating leftovers, but that the kids who are there now don't think about it at all, it is just how it is, it is not something to think about, it is just normal now.

A participant tells me that he thinks we should go back to simpler times, he says: you don't see bees no more, because we use so much fertilizer, we have ruined our nature. I think of it at my workspace where whenever I use a teaspoon for my coffee and put it in the washing machine. There is a sense of grief of loss of the things we have lost because we have taken too much, and we don't give back.

On group of workers: what do you think about the fact that you have to say thank you to the bees? It makes sense. "Fair". where it had an effect sitting together and listening to each others thinking of the gift economy, two things came up: again gratitude and a woman who said she thought of the app TooGoodTooGo, she likes to use it because it helps the companies

That made me think of a new app that I have recently learned about: Yourlocal which I mentioned to them. As I was saying thank you to them for telling me their stories of gratitude, they were saying thank you for the recommendation of the new app, and we realized that this exchange in itself was a practice of the gift economy.

Who are you going to share your honey with?

My friend Anders, it is his birthday.

What do think about this, that we have to say thank you to the bees?

I think it's good, if the bees understands it, I don't know, but it allows me to see myself as something else than a consumer.

A group of ladies: (boss ladies)

What do you think about that we have to say thank you to the bees? That we have to give something back?

It is a kind of life philosophy really one said.

Another one said its important to show to the kids and it is important. Generally to think about our resources. That there is also honey for our kids and grandchildren.

Then another one interrupted and said: yes, and also the adults!

Another participant:

I think about that it is important to show gratitude, to think about it in terms of everything that mother earth is giving us.

It is important, or else we are not getting any tomatoes.

Who are you sharing your honey with? I am going to give it to my sister, she drives me to the airport and sits my dog, so I want to give her something for that.

Frode, six years old:

What do you think about this, that we have to say thank you to the bees?

If we don't say thank you to the bees, then we are not being very nice.

It is the same for Christmas, when I receive a gift, I also have to give a gift, otherwise I am not being nice.

If we don't obey to the rules of the gift economy and don't give back to mother earth, we are not being nice to her. It shouldn't just be kids logic, but everyone's logic.

Generally people were saying that they think it is important and that it makes sense, and then not much more, but there were some who clearly were thinking about it in their everyday life.

Appendix 4: Bybi 2024 honeymoney - a currency of care

BYBI 2024

honeymoney

a currency of care



"To have any chance at building a sustainable and inclusive future, we need to re-think and re-organise money"

Ester Barinaga Martin, 'Remaking Money for a Sustainable Future' 2024



Employees and families from L'Oréal gather wildflower seeds from the garden, august 2024

Did you know that Bybi is more than bees?

For the last few years, we have been positioned at the intersection of art, research, ecological activism and regenerative agriculture – exploring the question of how bees, people and flowers live together in the city. This report shares some of the questions we have been looking at in 2024.

This year ‘money’ has been a major theme in our activities. How can we better connect economic activity with ecological and community care? As we try to cultivate a new, more aesthetic language outside of ‘production’, what role does money play? What role does honey play in a business where we refuse to use the word ‘product’?

In 2024 we held a series of public conversations with our community about money and a programme of experimental honey/money events with a few selected partners. In many traditions honey was money. We asked, what if honey was seen as a currency today? How would our relationships with animals, plants and each other be different?

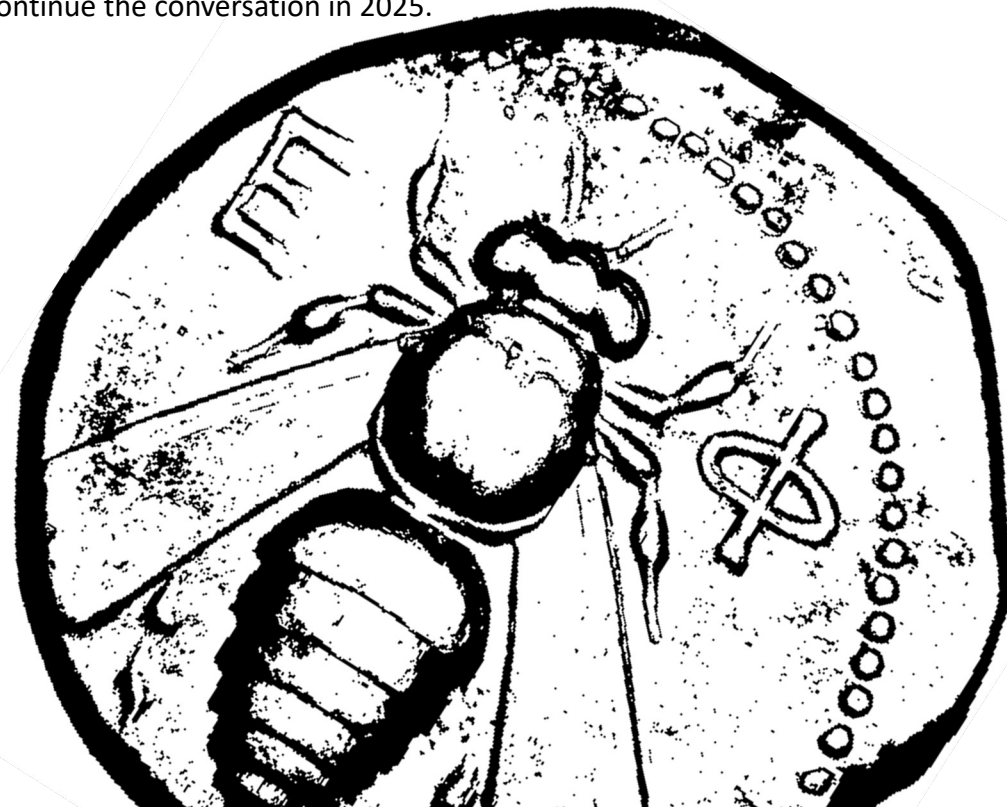
The result is the idea to reimagine honey as a ‘currency of care’. It is something to be circulated, creating new connections as it flows among us and new landscapes as those it touches plant flowers to ‘thank’ the bees and pollinators. Bybi facilitates this movement with events, artistic installations and community interventions. Rolling out this approach in collaboration with artists, researchers and our partners will be the focus of 2025.

We anticipate honeymoney will attract a lot of attention in the coming months. Ecological crises are becoming more urgent, prices are rising and globally, dark political clouds are gathering. We all

need new ways to emphasise the practices of joint responsibility and care. Honeymoney, together with our community of businesses, artists and municipalities could provide both the space and infrastructure for doing this at home and inspiration to projects struggling with the same dilemmas further afield.

It works because it is a collective project. Bybi has welcomed three new partners – Boehringer Ingelheim, Stack Infrastructure and Frederiksberg Centre. We have organised 85 events, talks, tours and performances. 6,4 tons of honey – or ‘honeymoney’ - have been gathered, shared, shared again, almost all of it in and around Copenhagen.

None of this would be possible without you. So thank you, again, for your commitment, curiosity and support. We invite you to continue the conversation in 2025.



SYMPOIESIS (MAKING WITH)

Sympoiesis is a concept that comes from Donna Haraway, one of our favourite thinkers. It means, simply 'making with' and captures the way we work with animals, plants and people in Copenhagen. We are constantly 'making-with', weaving a tapestry of connections that cannot be captured numbers alone.

In our report, we don't address targets hit or missed. Instead, we reflect on the questions of how we are together and what new questions have arisen during the year.

In 2025 we feel it is more important than ever to create spaces where trust and resilience can be held and cultivated collectively. What do we need to do to take our friends and partners with us in this direction? What do you need from us?

Please help us to answer the questions in our report. If you have suggestions or ideas write to us at bzzz@bybi.dk or share your thoughts [@bybi.dk](https://www.instagram.com/bybi.dk) on Social Media.

Honey spoons for sharing. We use them in all our events and tastings.

Honey workshop with the team from Ørsted.





ARE THE BEES AND BEEKEEPERS HAPPIER?

A year is a long time for a bee. Spring and early summer were very warm and last year's interventions meant that they were strong and healthy going into the summer. Winter so far has also been unusually warm, which can mean more parasites and the sudden collapse of healthy colonies. We are crossing our fingers that they will be OK come spring.

As I write this, the regime in Syria has just fallen and while the possibility of freedom is welcome, the situation for the Kurds looks uncertain. The forces standing in the way of freedom and security for our beekeeper Aref and his family are still overwhelming. It is a reminder that care and safety are concerns that link both the bees and the people around us.

Aref is constantly adjusting his way of working with the bees. We have tried letting them keep more of their honey, different kinds of treatment for diseases and changes to the timing of when we harvest. We continue to reduce the number of bees per site so we don't overwhelm areas with honeybees.

We would like to do more to 'de-industrialise' the bees but in many ways, we are still locked into decisions that were made years ago about what kinds of beehives and equipment to use. The impact of unpredictable forces (climate change, foreign wars, sudden illness) is greater than the small, everyday adjustments that we can make. We hope honeymoney will provide a new way of thinking and perhaps new resources to confront this dilemma.

Aref with the bees at Frederiksberg Centre



The beekeepers inspect the hives at
Fabrikken for Kunst, Sundholm

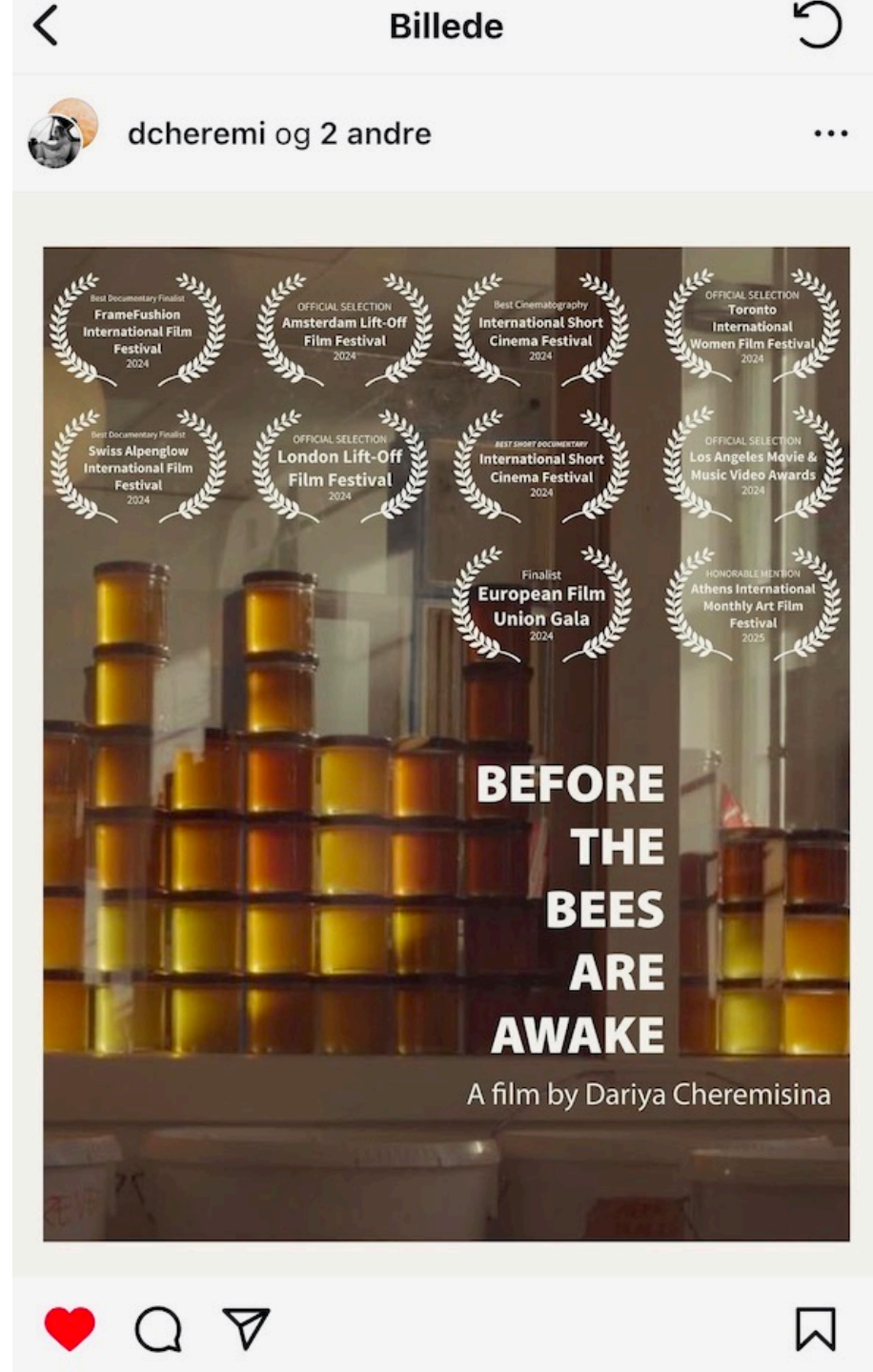
WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE BEES? HOW HAVE WE SHARED IT?

Our ambition this year was more artistic collaborations to find ways of telling the story of bees and people. We used the year on research, planning and smaller actions with local artists. We made a film with Daiya Cheremisina, a young Russian film maker. We made sensory models with Laura Winge, and helped Peter Franceschi rediscover an ancient Egyptian portrait style, painting with beeswax. Artists and performers approached us looking to explore materials and landscapes through the bees.

Peter's portraits are pieces of time and place. The faces capture people who died over 2000 years ago, re-created on the hard covers of discarded danish books – medical textbooks, agricultural journals, cookbooks from the 1930s. The 'paint' is beeswax from Copenhagen, pigmented with natural minerals. They smell amazing too.

In 2024 we also made in 84 events, festivals, talks, tours and projects with schools and universities. We distributed 35000 packets of flower seeds and 8000 organic flower bulbs. We were mentioned in 5 international press stories.

Next years' challenge is to bring these sensory, aesthetic productions into the exchange of the honey. Can we make our partnerships into artworks? Can we find the means to support the artist in our community financially? How do we make every interaction with the bees and honey into an act that contributes to the health of the community?





Recreations of ancient Egyptian portraits using pigmented beeswax.

HAS THE HONEY BECOME MORE OF AN INVITATION?

Is this the moment when honey will evolve from being an 'invitation' to 'a currency of care'?

We introduced double-headed porcelain spoons (made by volunteers from L'Oréal) and had our guests feed each other honey. We obtained antique pots, jars and spoons that are aesthetically more pleasing than modern plastic buckets. We experimented with new versions of the honey ceremony.

In one series of experiments we invited people to choose themselves how much money to exchange. The idea was joint responsibility: If we trust you with the honey, will you trust us with the money? Not everyone was as generous as we expected, but many understood what it takes to gather the honey and shared accordingly. What would it take to encourage more people to act like this?

We made 10 honey ceremonies this year, involving over 3000 people, 1 ton of honey and associated flower bulbs and seeds. We also shared the honey with cocktail bars, restaurants, bakeries and small, sustainable producers making local wines, meads, chillies and remedies.

We have also experienced falling interest in more conventional markets and a dilemma about increasing prices in line with inflation. We are not sure people are prepared to pay more, but we insist on staying out of a 'race to the bottom'. Something needs to change, and we think the solution is to lean even more into art. How can we re-recreate more of our business infrastructure: our receipts, invoices and partnership agreements as sharable artworks that emphasise joint responsibility and community care?





A honey ceremony at Buster Film Festival



While the bees make honey, flowers make seeds. Both need to circulate.

HAVE OUR PARTNERSHIPS BECOME MORE REGENERATIVE?

In 2024 we enjoyed the company of three new partners: Stack Infrastructure, Boehringer Ingelheim and Frederiksberg Centre.

We made 'Parliament of Things' discussions with DIS and Rambøll and 'resting with bees' workshops with Rockfon and L'Oreal. We made honey ceremonies with Frederiksberg Centre and Pension Denmark, among others.

In our annual teambuilding events with L'Oréal and Ørsted, we tried to change to focus from being about 'helping' a community project, to being a way to take shared responsibility for animals, plants and people in the community.

In 2025 we want to rearticulate our role with our partners, so that our events, installations and interventions are understood as a way of guiding the circulation of 'honeymoney'. This will need time and space to cultivate. Can we take our partners with us on this journey?

We still feel that there is a bigger potential to bring employees and friends from our partners into our events. How can we improve our communication with these groups?



Bees and a new pollinator garden on the roof of Stack Infrastructure

HAVE WE IMPROVED THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION?

In our organisation, one-off projects can have a big effect. Two projects closing in 2023 resulted in our turnover going down by about 12% in 2024. We think the extra time spent on experimenting and development has been useful (funded by ourselves), and we will still make a profit through new partnerships and better ways of using the honey, so we are not concerned in the short term.

However, future potential in specialist farmers markets and delicatessens continues to fall and we need to replace these channels with a new approach. Just like other farmers, we will need to break out of the perception that 'producers' and 'consumers' have opposing interests if we are to thrive in the future.

Making a profit is not the aim of the organisation, but sustainability is important, so we need to create a little more space for ourselves next year. We need to spend more time on our communications and materials, and on inviting more people and institutions in to the discussion on honeymoney.

The question is this: If honey was a 'currency of care', how would we make it differently? How would we share it? How would we exchange it with kroner, so we could pay our rent, salaries and support our families? What would it mean for the animals and plants around us?

Our ambitions for honeymoney would be helped by some kind of project support from partners and funders as a kind of collective research project. We hope it will be possible to mobilise this support using the aesthetic, open-ended language we have learned from the regeneration movement.



A honeymoney event
with Ørestad
Grundejerforening



HAVE WE IMPROVED THE DIVERSITY AND ENGAGEMENT OF OUR SOCIAL COMMUNITY?

Building a human community around Bybi has always been an ambition of the organisation. With time and practice, what we do because it seems right is beginning to evolve into a culture.

We are 3-4 paid staff and 25-30 volunteers, assistants, students and helpers from over 12 countries. We have volunteer days every Tuesday and a small army of helpers every day in the weeks when we are harvesting. Some volunteers have been with us for years and we are always happy to welcome back old faces.

We continued to hold open, free, 'conversation and soup' events every month in 2024 and a programme of candle-making, spoon-making, book swaps and dances.

At our Christmas event this year, we held a folk-dance party for our volunteers, friends and families.

Characteristic of our events is the idea of commitment and joint responsibility. Everyone helps, everyone joins in. Everyone makes sure that everyone is welcome, regardless of age, culture, gender or background.

In 2025 we would like to do more. We would like new partnerships with other social communities in Copenhagen so we can share our ideas and practices in new directions and better ways to administer our events.





Volunteer Tuesday at Bybi.



DOES THE WAY WE TALK INFLUENCE THE FUTURE WE CREATE?

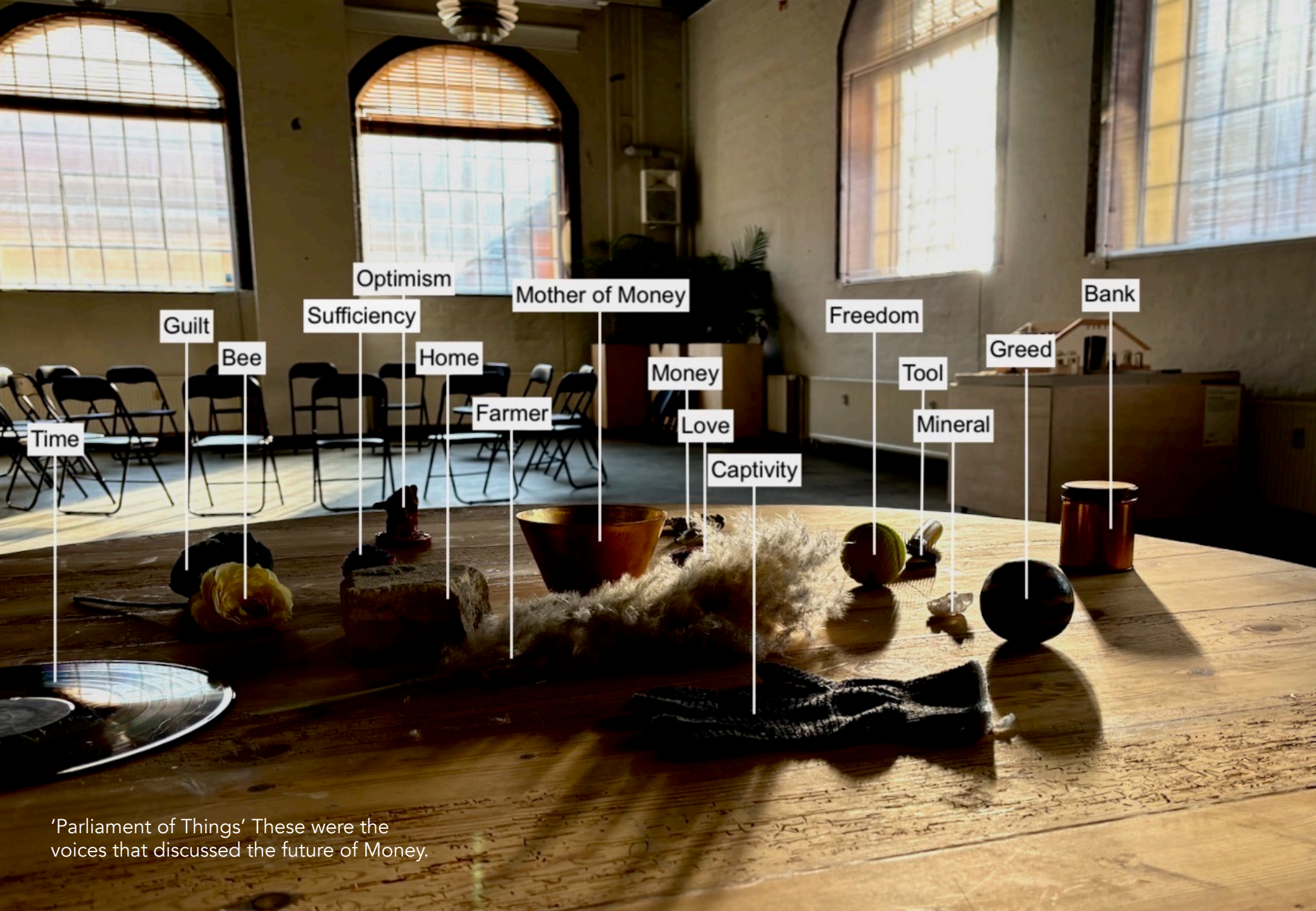
In 2024 Bybi continued to develop a platform for dialogical practices. Inspired by Building Conversation, a Dutch art group, we work with conversational traditions from other cultures and philosophies and stage them together.

The conversations work as an alternative to planning, as teambuilding exercises and to give new perspectives on sustainability practices. We have conducted conversations with universities, citizens and with large businesses like Rambøll.

We see a huge potential for these conversations growing in 2025. As an organisation, we have an ambition to nourish this practices and share them with other organisations. Perhaps you would like to join?

'Time Loop' – a conversation style
inspired by indigenous communities in
the Great Lakes.





Optimism

Mother of Money

Freedom

Bank

Guilt

Sufficiency

Home

Money

Greed

Bee

Farmer

Love

Tool

Time

Mineral

Captivity

'Parliament of Things' These were the voices that discussed the future of Money.

HONEY GATHERED IN 2024

Partner organisation	Bee colonies	Total honey gathered 2024 (kg)
3F	4	250
Bella Center Copenhagen	5	261
Boehringer Ingelheim	2	109
Copenhagen Botanical Garden	7	629
Danish Institute for Study Abroad (DIS)	3	146
Fagbevægelsens Hovedorganisation (FH)	2	69
Frederiksberg Centre	2	209
Frederiksberg Kommune	3	236
FX team	2	108
Grundejerforeningen Ørsted Universitetskvarter	0	0
Kongelund Forest	4	143
Københavns Rådhus	2	105
L'Oreal	6	317
Lederne	5	256
Niels Bohr Insitut	8	647
Parken	2	181
PensionDanmark	2	72
Radiometer	4	210
Rockfon	4	117
Stack Infrastructuure	2	87
Sundholm	4	92
Tivoli	3	85
Valby Parkstein	5	327
Valby Robin	6	377
Velux	4	166
Ørsted	4	35
Blend and other partners		1120
TOTAL	94	6354

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!





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