Bybi's

Conversation and Soup presents

CARE AND CARELESSNESS IN THE DANISH FOOD SYSTEM

a series of three conversations

Anne-Louise Is part of bybi and studies Human Geography and is currently obsessed with the surrealists creating art collectively in exile from WW1. Convinced she was a piece of seaweed in an earlier life. Most happy when in water.

ILMA IS A MARIE CURIE FELLOW AND PHD RESEARCHER WHO USES HER FACILITATION AND DESIGN SKILLS TO EXPLORE HOW WE CAN SUPPORT REGENERATIVE WAYS OF GROWING FOOD. SHE'S HAPPIEST TELLING STORIES AROUND THE FIRE

OLIVER IS AN ANTHROPOLOGIST AND FOUNDER OF BYBI. HE IS INTERESTED IN REGENERATION AND DEGROWTH AND HOW THE WAY WE TALK TOGETHER CHANGES THE FUTURE WE CREATE.

Bybi *began with a focus on community development and social enterprise, evolving into a project centered around urban beekeeping. It aims to foster partnerships between local businesses and community organizations, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility. The initiative seeks to challenge traditional narratives surrounding employment and social development, advocating for a more holistic approach that integrates ecological care and community engagement. By exploring innovative concepts like "honey money," it aims to redefine relationships with resources and promote a sustainable, interconnected community.*

ABOUT THESE CONVERSATIONS

WHY

As food producers ourselves, we meet a frustration every time 'the food system' emerges. How can we reframe our encounters with food, so care is more present and carelessness is more visible?

For me , I was curious if these conversations could change my perception of the big vast food system and my relation to food in general.

As a PhD researcher, I am exploring how to support regenerative ways of growing food. Regenerative agriculture does not have an agreed definition so for my research I reframe it as 'ways of growing food based on care'.

WHAT

We wanted to explore the food system from different perspectives and chose three different methods. We tried to make the conversations as concrete as possible. We invited friends and friends of friends to join. After each conversation, we shared a meal and discussed our experiences.

Together, we decided to hold three conversations using different conversational formats. The series was inspired by the work of the Dutch group 'Building Conversation' and builds on a regular series of 'Conversation and Soup' held at the Copenhagen honey social enterprise Bybi.

We had 20+ participants at each conversation, and we also have to acknowledge that most of them represented white and western perspectives.

This zine is our reflection on what we have learnt from these conversations about the food system and the conversation methods.

30th of September 2025 | Hosted by Oliver and guided by Ilma

SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS using bodies and emotions to represent the dynamics of the system

29th of October 2025 | Hosted by Oliver and guided by Anne-Louise

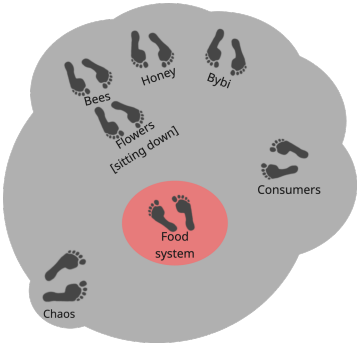
PARLIAMENT OF THINGS giving voices to humans and nonhuman actors in the system

27th of November 2025 | Hosted by Anne-Louise and guided by Oliver

TIME LOOP speaking with the voice of people from the past and the future

Our 1st conversation was inspired by

SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS



SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO STEP INTO THE SYSTEM AND REPRESENT ITS DIFFERENT ELEMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THEIR OWN BODIES. THE UNSEEN CONNECTIONS AND STUCK DYNAMICS ARE REVEALED BY PAYING ATTENTION TO THE BODILY SENSATIONS AND EMOTIONS OF THOSE REPRESENTING THE SYSTEM'S PARTS. THE APPROACH DRAWS UPON FAMILY THERAPY, PHENOMENOLOGY AND INDIGENOUS WISDOM TRANSITIONS AND WAS DEVELOPED IN THE 90S BY BERT HELLINGER.

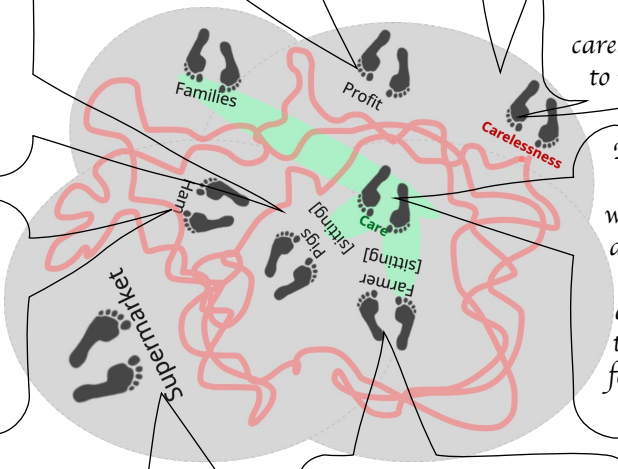
OUR FIRST CONSTELLATION LOOKED AT BYBI'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOOD SYSTEM WHILE THE SECOND ONE LOOKED AT THE GENERAL DYNAMICS IN THE FOOD SYSTEM AND HOW THAT CHANGES WITH CARE AND CARELESSNESS PRESENT.

Upon entering, carelessness started moving around saying 'I'm not stable. I'm not going to stand still'. It was everywhere with its flailing arms

Profit said 'I felt myself' with carelessness around. Care made it feel small

Pig felt that it could finally close the loop. It felt trust towards the farmer and more connection with them.

Carelessness didn't like care because it blocked carelessness ability to move around



Ham enjoyed standing next to pigs, but with carelesnness in the way, it couldn't look at pigs anymore

As care entered the system it was immediately drawn to all the living beings and spread out to touch them - farmer, pig, and family.

Supermarket was stressed out by carelessness and felt a loss of overview

Farmer felt closer to pig. With care touching them, carelessness did not feel stressful anymore.

Our 2nd conversation was inspired by

PARLIAMENT OF THINGS

money

families

minister

climate threat

investor

farmer

supermarket

soil

Children of the future

farm worker

bird

clouds

polytunnel

sun

bean (friend) of strawberry

water

microbiome

plastic container

pesticides

strawberry

trust

bees

Supermarket, investor, minister and money formed a very dominant and resistant-to-change corner

"What if we stopped investing in a supermarket?" To farmer and soil: "What's the case to invest in you?"

supermarket demanded so much space, and it was difficult to shut it up. it was not listening to family who did not even want it.

The living things - bird, strawberry, soil, bean - wanted change

Sun was not present at all

"I am too bloated, watery, big, unhappy and lacking soil"

"Maybe I don't want to exist and stay rubbish forever"

Strawberry was very silent

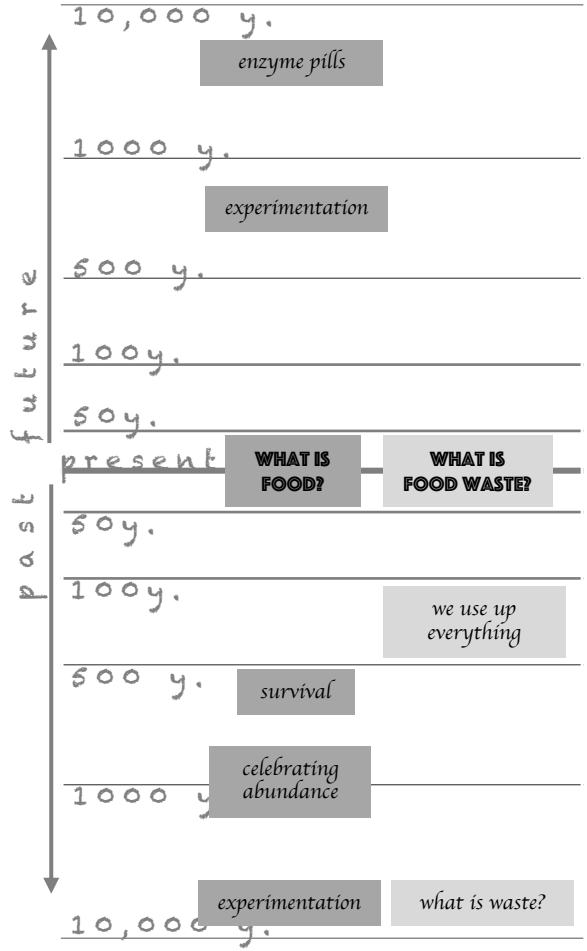
The theory of Parliament of Things derives from Bruno Latour and his book We Have Never Been Modern (1991) where he argues through the Actor Network Theory that we, humans, are no different from the bird and its nest and that we together are a part of the same network, and in this network of things – sun, the microbes, soil, plastic bottle – everything is acting and affects each other.

In this Parliament we gave voice to things speaking on behalf of strawberry who is fed up with degraded Danish soil, threat of climate crisis, and lack of taste resulting from growth in polytunnels. As a result, Danish people are losing the cherished summer tradition of picking the heart of the berries (to quote Robin Wall Kimmerer) free range . What should strawberry do in the future seeing this challenge? Should she abandon her friend soil and make a new alliance with Polytunnel in order to at least still be able to reach people through Supermarket?

How did we forget to include care??

Our 3rd conversation was inspired by

TIME LOOP



Time Loop is inspired by indigenous practices from the Great Lakes region. We take a concrete dilemma in the present - for example 'should I give up coffee, sugar and bananas to save the world?' and imagine a conversation with ancestors in the past and descendants in the future. Each participant in the room speaks from a point in time and can move around to other positions in time.

We started with questions:

Should we give up bananas?

Is food fuel or pleasure?

What is enough?

Is there hunger?

We were left with more questions:

At what point do you take responsibility for the future?

Are we really handing down a food future that is characterised by artificially produced industrial gloop?

Where is care in the food system?

The present was very concerned with sustainability. It was frustrated with past and future.

The past was concerned with having enough food. It seemed to be in balance with future the most.

The future seems to have solved all the problems with technology. It was unbothered with nutrition coming from enzymes.

What have we learnt

The conversations reminded us that everything shares responsibility for the present. They showed very clearly Donna Haraway's understanding of responsibility as "ability to respond". Responsibility and agency are constantly flowing through different relationships in the food system.

The conversations invited two possible ways to think of our relationship to the food system:

Do we walk away? Could we hold future conversations, and ignore the food system altogether?

Do we psychologically transform the food system?

After the conversations, we wondered what lay behind the dominance of the food system. What would make Supermarket let go?

WHAT WE LEARNT ABOUT TODAY'S FOOD SYSTEM

It's stuck, fragmented, hierarchical and emotionally heavy.

Current arrangements do not serve life.

The old forces (supermarket, minister, investor, money) keep the system locked-in by holding on to power.

There seem to be two futures branching out from the present: technology-heavy future leading to enzyme soup, and back-to-the-land / ecologically integrated future.

Frustration

In 'Time Loop' the past did not take responsibility for expensive, poisonous, poor-quality food flooding the present while the future was very happy with its protein soup once a month. I felt that I suddenly wanted to admonish both the future and past - is this really what you want? Is this what you have given us? Shape up! Take responsibility!

I found the conversations quite frustrating. 'Food systems' were always very present. I remember a moment in the first conversation - no matter where we stood or how we looked at it, food systems seemed to be watching. Like a painting where the eyes follow you around the room. Food systems actually drowned out care and carelessness.

about the food system?

WHAT WE LEARNT ABOUT TOMORROW'S FOOD SYSTEM

Acknowledgement of what exists in the system (even if we don't like it) and what is missing is a necessary step to move forward.

We need to cultivate new relational qualities such as care and attunement to life.

Re-orienting the food system towards ecological relationships and aligning it with regenerative, more-than-human futures gives hope and challenges anthropocentric and market-oriented narratives.

The conversations are teaching us the importance of "staying with the trouble" (to use another of Donna Harraway's seminal ideas)· Even when it felt frustrating, difficult, unsolvable, it was important to 'feel' the present state in a more visceral way· Ultimately, the responsibility, the agency lies with each one of us·

The most hopeful moments throughout all conversations occurred when there was an alliance, an alignment, an orientation towards life and all the living beings in the system· In Systemic Constellations, the system came into a bit more balance with the presence of care uniting pigs, farmers and families, while in the 'Parliament of Things' the alliance of living beings made the investor shift his perspective and wonder if he should orient his investments towards this alliance too...

Care

I experienced de-tanglement – from the outside, the food system seemed intangible and homogenous but taking it apart made it clear how this is not something I want to be a part of. I feel I am lacking care in this system. I am asking my self - how can I picture more care in the food system?
Where can I place it or practice it, taking it down a level, making it tangible for me?

What I wanted was for the conversations not to be about the food system at all, but about care, attention to the future, and healing.

If we are lacking care in the food system, then how can I invite more care into my relations to food?

What have we learnt about conversations?

DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONVERSATIONS REQUIRE PRACTICE

to notice what our bodily sensations and emotions tell us about what is happening

to use our imagination to understand what a completely different entity from us would be thinking and saying

to stretch our imagination beyond the immediate present and more than 50 years into the past or the future, especially the future

What are we practicing in conversations?

↓

Noticing and giving voice to something other than yourself!

Giving voices to things other than myself as a human takes practice. Every time it gets easier and freer to speak, rather than think what rules are.

How do we follow up on conversation?

Another conversation?

You need a good guide in the conversations; you need to begin with someone who knows the method and the meaning behind it. With time, the more practice you get participating in the conversation, the easier it is to take ownership of it.

Sparking hope? It goes together with agency, if there is no hope then there will be no agency

empowerment | transformation | hope

So, what is a good conversation?

Sparking agency?

action

Sparks more questions, makes you curious

responsibility

The future is uncertain and that's scary, but it gives me hope to address it