



Fig. 1— When asked what constraints do, we may readily answer that we indeed feel constrained by the constraints! So, when I am asked to do dated entries in a logbook, or to make a plan for the term, I don't do these things because I feel constrained. But if choosing to do them anyhow, I am surprised that they have given me some new space. *How so?*

How is it possible that we have a sense of *knowing what I am doing* when—at the same time—*I am undergoing change*? The question is relevant in relation to education, teaching or working in a creative profession. The question appears simple. Yet, it is what makes the difference between following whims and doing research: going back, searching again, looking twice (re-spect). If we are content in letting things happen, we ask only one question: *What is the usefulness of this activity, in terms of the values I hold?* Here we are missing out on at least *one* other question.

Here is one: *Am I aware of the relation between this activity and its specific outcomes?* If we ask only the first question we are *not* doing research. Or, we are *not* assigning our responsibility for life-long learning by training ourselves to some regular working-habits. We miss out on learning that we can “get clean glasses with dirty towels”: that imperfect methods do not necessarily yield imperfect outcomes. But when we changing *as* we are progressing—which is our concern here—we need to make *overviews*, many times, on our *work*: now, scrolling forward and backwards.

Asking now— *what have I here?* **Asking forwards**— *where is it going/moving?* **Asking backwards**— *How far has it reached in terms of what has already been achieved?* What is *now*, what is *coming*, what is *achieved*. Starting by looking back, we are readily confused, since we are looking at something that defined us (when working on it), with the eyes of someone who in the *meantime* has changed. This is where we end up when we think we are working *without* constraints. The first step is to take *awareness* of the constraints, in the terms of professional *work* and personal *change*.

A “tie-break” between students and teachers, regularly features this *quid pro quo*: the student is in the middle of something (which is *ongoing now* and absorbs the whole person), while the teacher is concerned with *where it is going* (and attempts to discipline the students by reminding them of this). The result is an “unhappy marriage”, as the two of them simply do not get to talk about *the same thing*. As in many unhappy relations the student-teacher relation becomes construed as an alienating *opposition* (which only becomes deeper as they *each* express their needs).



Fig. 2—the characters Leo and Bruno in the Italian movie *Eight mountains* who join to refurbish an old mountain cabin, for reasons that are unclear to them, and most likely out of sheer need to spend their young energy doing so.

If they both acknowledged that, wherever the work might be going, it builds on a reception of the submitted work *as is*: hence both the student and the teacher—at least at the MA-level—need to make *a statement of what they are receiving*. Either by laying out the work in great detail, or by using feedback (e.g. as explicated by DASart): **a)** *what works for me is...*; **b)** *as someone receiving your work from a my point of view, I see it in a certain professional perspective, and from this*

perspective I would need to know more about... and then, moving on to where the work might be going, it is from this baseline (when we are clear on our sometimes productive differences).

Here, when the student—or, colleague—is ready to make a statement *on the kind of feedback s/he needs to move on with the work*, at this point, then that is second kind of constraint (hatching from the previous one). Now, the colleague/teacher can now develop a more *detailed response* on the the work as received, in this second step, *leading up to* an open question: that is, a question which is *not* a yes/no-question (or, inviting a *longer* response than yes/no). From this point, a *third* level of reception is hatched (whether by the student/teacher/colleague) with yet a new constraint.

A *third constraint* that springs from a question, which by now we have established the grounds to ask and discuss: *how far has the work come in terms of what has already been achieved*. In other words: *what does the student/colleague have to build on?* That is, given the *reception* as the *first* feedback loop—and open questions that can be fed back, in a *second* loop, once the student's/colleague's feedback-needs are known—*then* there are likely more than one bid on what the student/colleague has to build on (that readily have been *hidden in plain sight*, up to this point).

This last (*third*) feedback-loop adds to the two previous ones, on the same set of premise that applies throughout: namely, that we *cannot* rush to a conclusion—we *have to* proceed step-by-step—because at each step we are conquering new grounds: that is, new terrain of the work is conquered at each step. And without having conquered a news terrain, we *cannot* move on to the next step. So, there are 3 steps where 3 constraints successively *shift* into 3 feedback-loops, where different terrains are covered: relating to the same work. This is what we have covered, so far.

The following joke shows how bad things when we do not give each other enough/new *space*: a young man aspires to become a member of a club that does not gladly accept new members. So, he goes to the chairman of the club and asks to become a member—whereupon the chairman of course says *no!* As the young man is resilient, and refuses to give up, he repeats his plea thrice: and he is allowed to submit to a test. The chairman asks: “two wo/men are standing on a roof, and one of them falls through the chimney—which one of them goes to wash?” Obvious answer!

Or, at least, so thinks the young man: “the one who fell through the chimney goes to wash!” He is very pleased with himself, because he thinks that he has passed the test. But the chairman shrugs his shoulders, and notes that the young man has *failed*. You see, he explained, in our club the members think they are *the same* as one another; upon seeing their sooty comrade, it is the clean one who goes to wash. The young man, dismayed, makes his plea thrice more. The chairman finally gives in, and accepts to test him, again. So, he proceeds to ask him a question.

Imagine the surprise in the young man as he realises that the chairman asks him the exact same question a second time: “two wo/men are standing on a roof, and one of them falls through the chimney—which one of them goes to wash?” The young man, who is now less sure about himself,



Fig. 3—To celebrate the Turkish war of independence, men clad in sheep-skin paint themselves from head-to-toe in chimney soot.

says it must be the sooty one, for the reasons he just heard. *Wrong again!* Says the chairman. The young man protests: *but you just said...* Yes, interjected the chairman sternly—*but now they have learned!* The young man is frustrated and in disarray, but decides he must make one more attempt. He begs. Three times!

But when the chairman asks the same question a third time, he doesn't know what to answer. So he passively repeats the previous answer. *Wrong again!* At this point a member of the club rushes through the room, and asks “what were the two wo/men doing on the roof, anyway?” The chairman said—*Ah, this is the right answer!* From that we may conclude that *as we put people to the test, we have to give them some space*. Not not only *some* space, *but have to give some new space as we repeat the same question*. Which we have to when the same question has different layers.