THE CARNAL SELF EXPANDING THE DIALOGICAL SELF
(COMMENTARY)

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ABSTRACT. Dialogical theory is a helpful frame of reference for psychotherapy research, which provides a perspective for the study of psychotherapy process in terms of meaning construction and exchange. This paper will firstly review the basic features of the dialogical approach to the theory of Self and of the process of psychotherapy, as taken into account in the papers by Avdi (2012), Gonçalves and Ribeiro (2012), Martínez, Tomicic and Medina (2012), and Leiman (2012). On the whole, the authors use the term "dialogical" with reference to a general theory of therapeutic change. The implications of such an use of the dialogical concept will be discussed, with special focus on how the relationship between intrapsychic and intersubjective dimensions are taken into account, both at the levels of theory and methodology of analysis of the psychotherapy process.

Toward an embodied attachedness of the dialogical self

The present contribution stems from the central research interest about the 'location' of the multiple voices related to the Dialogical Self Theory (Hermans, 2001; 2002). In particular, my attempt will be focused on highlighting some practices of 'rooting' in order to question and expand the current version of dialogue and its methodological assumptions.

As a matter of fact, by drawing from some re-interpretations of Bakhtin's notion of 'dialogue' and 'poliphonic novel' (Cresswell & Baerveldt, in press), it becomes compelling to include a better envision of the 'embodied self'. In this line, the very notion of 'dialogue' is put into question together with its primary conceptualization in cognitive, abstract, linguistic terms.

Bakhtin's notion of dialogue entails the ontological quality of 'everything that has meaning and significance' (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 40) and as a status of 'people's life' itself, rather than of 'one's head'. In this sense, Bakhtin's perspective on dialogue is neither individualistic nor disembodied, whereas the current approach of dialogue is strongly related to the notion of 'core self', strictly separated from the context.

The 'I-Other' relationships become a 'before … and' connection, rather than a simultaneous experience. In other words, this assumption relies upon the classical distinction between the individual and the cultural, absent from the Bakhtinian view on self (Cresswell & Tuecher, in press), whereas the Russian scholar points out the bodily living of self as socially constituted.

The stress on the 'embodied self' implies the complex fusion of the biological domain within the social, cultural and historical ones. In this sense, the body is a social entity and not a personal one. By referring to corporeality in terms of 'positioning' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) it has required the metaphor of spatial placement, the 'society of mind' (Hermans, 2002), where it is emphasized a rather discoursive conceptualization of dialogue.

The main point, however, is that such a spatial metaphor has enhanced a view of the 'body-in-the-mind', highly cognitive, where some sort of different positions are projected into the self and they are framed according to a rather 'disciplined-way-of-dialogue'. In such a vein, the multiplicity of the body as a social entity becomes entrapped in a mental, fixed order.

Moreover, the 'grotesque body' notion (Bakhtin, 1984b) aims at merging the language and meaning with the body. The 'upside-down' perspective of the 'grotesque body' was just in line with the rejection of the discontinuity between the embodied life and its socio-historical context. By blurring these borders it is possible to see the body at the intersection of the 'public vs private' domains. That is, the body as the personal as well as the social form of human life.

In this sense, the very notion of the carnal attachedness of the self here introduced seeks a more ecological approach to the sense-making, as materially embodied and built up by cultural-discoursive-bodily elements as an indivisible whole. Hence, the carnal self is not dialectical, entrapped in any fixed dualism (mind vs. body, nature vs. culture, materialism vs. idealism, discourse vs. matter). Rather, it is *located* in multiplicity.

Such a notion of materiality tries to overcome, in my view, the critiques to both the 'reductionist materialism' and the 'historical materialism' (Timpanaro, 2001). As a matter of fact, the first perspective tended to focus merely on the biological processes in order to explain the human reality, while neglecting any qualitative difference between these latter and the not-human species' ones; whereas, the second is focused only on the 'production' side (*labor*) of human beings, by stressing its specific social historicity. Both of them, hence, lack of an authentic holistic view on historicity, by conceptualizing it either as a mere global chronology of the biological world or as a mere social process. This last one, moreover, only related to the human specie.

On this basis, I think that the notion of 'grotesque body' might enhance the unity of these different aspects of human reality, although it should be enriched by reconceptualizing the broader concept of 'nature' according to the evolution of sentient societies ('human' and 'not human', Traversa, in progress).

According to this ontological unity of dialogue, the individual uniqueness emerges in terms of 'outsideness', that is at the point of 'dialogical penetration' between different speech genres (Bakhtin, 1990). The notion of 'speech genre' includes Bakhtin's view of language itself as an embodied action and philosophy as a practical, social, knowledge. In this line, every human being is located in more speech genres simultaneously, where the 'inner feelings' correspond to the tacit knowledge, the sedimentation of collective practices that are experienced as an ontological given. Novelty, the uniqueness, comes from some specific socio-cultural backgrounds in their ongoing tension: in so doing, the dialogical penetration occurring in a certain context enhances the awareness that each one of us is never fully 'other' to other human beings. We always share some living experiences and this becomes clear through 'intersectional tension'. Novelty, the distinction, does not imply a total, qualitative, 'foreigness', since it would be a non-sensical experience.

The notion of 'dialogical self' as 'intersubjective exchange' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993) neglects the metalinguistic, embodied experiential richness of speech genres, where the 'individual stylization' takes place 'among others', not in 'one's head', in a never solved balance between similarity AND differentiation from a certain community.

Such an emphasis on the carnal attachedness of the self has been central in the current theorizing of socio-constructionism too. In fact, as Cromby (2004) notes, there is an absence of the body from constructionist perspectives, where it only emerges as a 'place to make sense ABOUT', rather than as flesh fostering both enablements and constraints. In this sense, it has been argued that omitting an adequate approach on the 'embodied subjectivity' within constructionist psychology would lead to reify 'the social', while keeping out all the 'humaness' of psychological reality itself (Billig, 1998; Harrè, 2002). In other words, by focusing only on the 'discoursive-social', while ignoring the embodied-material, *conceals*, rather than *addresses*, the mind-body dualism. The risk to conflate the materiality with the discourse could be avoided by fostering an integration between body, language, biology and subjectivity. In so doing, social constructionism would increase its critical potential in relation to individualism and biological reductionism.

By departing from this point, I would now better account for the holistic view on the carnal self by emphasizing how the metaphor cannot exist out from the materiality of bodies and place/time; and the language itself, as an embodied action, is not a mere 'mediator' *between* the person and the world (Traversa, 2010).

Rather, it is where we *live in*, what we know because we *participate* to. That is, because we are *a part of*.

Ecology-in-the-self

The recent attempts to expand the Western notion of the separated Self have been drawing from the notion of 'ecological self' (Naess, 1984). Such a concept entails a view of the human beings as strongly interrelated to the broader concept of Nature. In this sense, we, as humans, are a part of numerous species emerged on the Earth according to the Universe's fundamental dynamism, occurred through differentiation, self-organization and communion. In this vein, our bodies consist of stories of the evolution of life on Earth and the evolution of species is inseparable from the evolution of their environment. Such a perspective comes from the 'deep ecology' (Zimmerman, 1990) that has been distinguished from the reform environmentalism for its non-anthropocentrism in approaching the human-nature relationship.

As a matter of fact, the concept of the ecological self signifies a shift in the world view – from a human-centered one to an Earth-centered one – where the anthropocentric world needs to be replaced by a 'bio-centric egalitarianism'. The biospherical egalitarianism includes the notion of the interrelated whole (Devall & Sessions, 1985) where the ecological self is approached in terms of 'Self-realization through identification' (Naess, 1984). The identification here at stake is to be referred to all living beings and collective dimensions of life itself. As Naess points out, the 'Self-realization' is 'the realization of the comprehensive Self, not the cultivation of the ego' (1984, p. 259).

The abovementioned ecological view questions the 'self' as inherently 'individual' by implying inherent interrelations and connections. My point is that such a perspective could expand the individual, skin-encapsulated image of the self coming from the dialogical self theory, while approaching the selves as 'open systems, sustained by flows of energy and information that extend beyond the reach of the conscious ego' (Macy, 1991, p. 12). The larger Self, hence, implies the whole web of life and the individual self is a knot in the web.

Nonetheless, the concept of the ecological self would run the risk to be an 'abstract' concept, detached from a 'lived knowledge'. In our contemporary industrialized society the human-nature dualism is forged by social, economic, political and educational systems, where its members are trained to view nature as 'resources' to be consumed/available for humans. In this sense, the ecological self could be improved by historically-situated self-narratives according to some feminist perspectives on 'the self-in-relation' (Belencky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986), that is ways of being and knowing in connection to others.

Such feminist insights have always been focusing on those aspects of Nature that are usually neglected in the mainstream science as historical and political processes, by emphasizing the women's experience itself because of their special bond to corporeity (due to menstruation, breastfeeding, giving birth). This last point crucially questions the binary between materiality and culture since it fosters the interrelatedness of these domains and its power dynamics.

For instance, although the Naess' concept of the ecological self as identification with Nature attempts to go beyond anthropocentrism, its fundamental component, 'identification', implies that subjectivity is only given to humans. This very formulation does not allow for the movements, gestures and power of the natural world that invites us into a relationship. It would be more suitable the concept of 'nature-in-self' rather than 'self-in-nature', which could reinforce the homogeneity-based model of Naess' 'identification' (Kawaura, 2003).

The need to recognize our central interdependence with the not-human world requires us the limit, the patience and the respect of 'other voices' to be cultivated. In relation to the present discussion about the dialogical self and its methodologies, I would rely upon such a stress on 'limit' and care for 'other voices' in terms of focusing on a broader spectrum of 'senses' involved in our research practices. Furthermore, I would outline how this more comprehensive approach on narratives serves to include our 'feelings-as-researchers' as a site of investigation too.

As a matter of fact, if the modern Western self was de-contextualized from the natural world and overtly anthropocentric, the postmodern emphasis on a de-located 'multiple self' has trivialized our connection with other people and the natural world. In her critique of the 'epistemological fantasy of becoming multiplicity' the feminist author Susan Bordo (1990, p. 145) argues:

> *If the body is a metaphor for our locatedness in space and time and thus for the finitude of human perception and knowledge, then the postmodern body is no body at all.*

It has been argued that the very notion of a disembodied self, 'shifting place to place and self to self' (p.145), discloses its masculinity, as it shows the willing to control what is felt as weak and to-be-dominated - the body - by undermining the physical existence (Griffin, 1995).

The physical existence of human beings and its gendered feature also deals with the scientific enterprise to foster a not-gendered, neutral, disembodied and 'free' version of the 'post-human' subject matter. As it is visible from certain cyborg literature and pictures (Rossini, 2003), such an attempt has been often re-proposing highly sexualized and heteronormative entities, rather than 'neutral' version of human beings. That is,

what has to do with the embodied life is always related to configurations of knowledge *as* configurations of power.

Hence, the carnal self conveys a complex dialogue between the biological, the social and the historical domains. Nonetheless, it is imbued with power dynamics too, that I am now turning on to better account in terms of the dialogical self methodologies.

A feminist approach to a materially-based dialogical self

In the present commentary the subject matter and its methodology are strongly linked. So, I will approach the different views on the dialogical self research practices (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012; Avdi, 2012; Martinez, Tomicic & Medina, 2012; Leiman, 2012) by stemming from the hermeneutic tradition (Polkinghorne, 1983). In particular, I would emphasize the feminist approach to knowledge and to narrative analysis.

The feminist standpoint epistemology (Belenky et al., 1986) that I am drawing on is focused on recovering all the specific ways of knowing that have been neglected by the male-centered context of science. In so doing, such a feminist inquiry is not engaged in simply adding a women-centered perspective, rather it aims at starting from the women's voices in order to collect a more encompassing view of human reality.

In this line, the feminist standpoint methodology outlines the relevance of knowing through 'empathy', 'vulnerability' and the 'sensuous'. This last point implies that researchers are called in some sort of 'double consciousness' in their work, by using their emotions in the researcher-participant dialogue as a part of the inquiry itself. As Paul Stoller (1997) stated, such a 'sensuous scholarship' aims at overcoming the separation between body and mind, 'the self' and 'the other', in the usual research practices.

The feminist narrative approach (Kawaura, 2003) includes the feminist standpoint epistemology and the narrative analysis, since they share the stress on the socio-historical basis of knowledge; the dialectical nature of knowledge as well as the subjective power of individuals through which they tailor personal meanings out of their experience.

Yet, in recognizing the 'personal' and focusing on 'women', feminist theories/practices have their own edge when understanding human experiences (Falmagne, 2004). As a matter of fact, the feminist research is peculiarly focused on the interactions between the 'personal' and the 'social'. In this sense, women's narratives unfold within the framework of an apparent acceptance of social-patriarchal norms and expectations, but nevertheless describe strategies and activities that challenge those same norms.

Through women's voices it is possible to observe simultaneously how the social constraints (female public under-representation, for instance) as well as the individual

agency work (Traversa, in press). 'Agency', in other words, is a matter of degree. It's not something general or to take into account in absolute terms.

Rather, it is to be understood always *in relation* to social structure, in order to see how – for instance – women are able to carve out areas of autonomy/empowerment despite of their lack of equal formal power and access to balanced work-life condition.

But, this is my very point, it does not cancel what women have to do *much more* than men (social structure) in order to fulfill their personal goals.

That is precisely why it simultaneously shows both the general and the specific, the social constraints as well as the agency.

These feminist inquiries, hence, tend to have emancipatory power and critical approach in themselves, since science is conceptualized as never a merely descriptive process. Rather, it relies upon interpretation at different level of analysis.

I do think that the personal experience *already entails* a political analysis and science is not (and has never been) out of power-relations. So, this is something that someone could explicitly address, in so doing being blamed for the 'impartial' stance, while others could keep on framing their research as 'neutral' or 'value-free' while they are keeping on bringing their position (as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc…) as the tool-for-comparison-and-investigation. And it could never be otherwise. But keeping it overtly, that is by putting all these positionings in question and into account, we could really get a dialogical/realistic science.

The political analysis crosses all the clinical/psychotherapy research interests, because politics is about power-relations, values, inclusion/exclusion, partiality/impartiality. And we are all dealing with these issues.

Psychotherapy's narratives in carnal dialogue

Ambivalence performs a central role along the different approaches to the Dialogical Self in psychotherapy. In particular, Gonçalves and Ribeiro (2012) conceptualize the overcoming of ambivalence itself as the key-process along the Innovative Moments model. They emphasize the struggle against ambivalence as the clients' dependence on a 'mutual-in feeding' – rather than 'dialogical' – process between different voices. This specific approach on uncertainty, contradictions, instability, seems to unfold the clients' impossibility to achieve 'reconceptualization' without replacing a previous 'dominant position' into a new one. Although 'reconceptualization' sheds light on the necessary inclusion of the entire process of therapeutic change – from a 'past' to a 'present' self – my point is that it runs the risk to become a dialectical positioning. In line with different excerpts, I would argue that the Western idea of a 'core' concept of the Self, strictly separated and distinguished from the context, is still working in this approach to the therapeutic change. Moreover, the

constant stress on 'dependence' (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012) as the lack of 'locus of control', or feeling of 'authorship' in change (Martinez, Tomicic & Medina, 2012), seems to be approached uncritically. In this sense, I would find adequate to take into account the Western value of such a conceptualization of agency in psychotherapy. The therapist-client relationship relies upon an undeniable asymmetry of power that could reinforce the idea that 'being assertive' is the absolute goal (Avdi, 2012).

My point here is that the notion of independence is not a value-free one in Western societies. This is especially crucial when it has to do with the socially-constructed categories of 'femininity' and 'masculinity', as the case of 'being a superwoman' shows (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012, p. 86).

In a similar vein, it seems to be unquestioned in the analysis the assumption that the problem is Lisa's 'lack of assertiveness' rather than her husband's lack of empathy, for instance:

"Lisa had a problem being assertive with others, particularly with her husband.

Lisa: Yeah, yeah get back into my feelings, yeah and that's, *I guess, because the awareness I know is there now* [Process of change], and before I never knew it existed (laugh). So I'm an individual, I realize I'm an individual, and I have the right to vent my feelings and what I think is right or good for me and that's been the improvement of the therapy.

Therapist: Yeah, really finding your feet." (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012, p. 84))

'I'm an individual, I realize I'm an individual, and I have the right' are coded as the process of emergence of change. In this line, it is visible that change requires separation rather than a more inclusive – yet not fragmented – conceptualization of the Self. In other words, the ontological relatedness as the dialogism of human reality - in Bakhtinian terms – could be neglected in psychotherapy:

"Lisa: Mm hm, as an individual yeah, which before I-I thought I was glued to him [the husband] [Contrast between the self in the past and the self in the present] Yeah, I didn't have an existence and now I do, and that's a good feeling." (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012, p. 84).

The very notion of dialogue seems to be framed in an intra-individual level, among different voices 'in one's head' (Cresswell & Baerveldt, 2009).

Furthermore, the embodied aspects of 'change', 'resistance', 'action', 'reconceptualization' (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2011; p. 85), could be deepened by following the world of desires coming from the clients, as in the next excerpt:

"My life is a misery, I feel depressed all the time, without the strength to do anything. I do not have any pleasure in living. For me life is a burden. Curiously, yesterday I had some pleasure playing with my son and it felt good." (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012, p. 82)

The relevance of including narratives about 'pleasure', 'good' and 'bad' in more sensuous ways rather than according to cognitive reconfigurations, could address the lack of holistic way in approaching the notion of 'dialogue'. Such a more encompassing account could actually strengthen the 'meta-position' value of reconceptualization in terms of 'an-inclusion-from-below' rather than from a more abstract point of view. In this sense, the 'changiness-in-the-self' (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012) could be better accounted in terms of a not dualistic I- Other but, as an 'otherness-in-the-self'.

The notion of 'dialogal and dialogic exchange' (Martinez, Tomicic & Medina, 2012) has been deployed in order to connect the micro- and the macro-level of the narratives. In particular, Conversation Analysis has enabled to illustrate the real patient-therapist exchanges. With respect to this, I would deepen Celia Kitzinger's use of Feminist Conversation Analysis (2000) in order to argue how it could provide a broader 'interpretation-oriented' analysis, rather than a merely 'data-oriented' one (Billig, 1999). Feminist CA elements entail a more general political analysis since it does not only pay attention to micro-details of interaction, rather it shows how everyday language already includes structures of oppression. In this sense, the main critique to CA as only participants'-talk-oriented has been questioned in line with the argument that it enhances to see the everyday-world under-construction, without subordinating the data to a-priori social categories.

In this sense, I would outline that the CA tools could effectively be used for more comprehensive analysis as in the 'dialogal exchange' (Martinez, Tomicic & Medina, 2012) by critically approaching the notion of 'turn-taking' and 'silence'. Psychotherapy is increasingly called into question in relation to intercultural exchanges and the different approaches to the 'authority' (e.g., the therapist) (Avdi, 2012), the value of pauses and the relevance of silence in framing the turn-taking.

Silence, pauses, concepts of 'authority' are highly entrenched with gender and religion, for instance, as socially-constructed categories. And they do influence psychotherapy. This is the reason why it would be useful to take them into account in terms of therapeutic change. As a matter of fact, suspending believes, questioning the Western I-concept of the Self, holding uncertainty and fostering imagination seem to be central in psychotherapeutic contexts of cultural diaspora, where different constructions of gender and different approaches to religious authorities are prominent (Guzder & Krishna, 2005).

If the 'lack of fluidity of turn-taking' (Martinez, Tomicic & Medina, 2012, p. 114) seems to express a We-position in the therapeutic interaction and in the 'rupture

of alliance', the notion of 'authorship of change' assumes the central role of an I-position. Hence, it is highly emphasized the individual free will and in full control of events as the 'good-change' in psychotherapy.

Moreover, the first plural person as subject of the utterance is mostly accounted in terms of therapist's achievement, rather than an ever present co-construction between patient AND therapist:

"T: .hhh I think that if we (2), in this job, manage to understand, for example, among other things (.) what makes you um::: (.) um::: we could say (2,4a), to position ourselves (2) like this (.) for example, I had the impression here with you um::: that:: (.) if we (2,4a) didn't do something for you to feel freer to speak your mind…" (Episode of change, session 7)

In this extract the therapist presents a common enunciation sharing the responsibility for the utterance with the patient by using the first person plural markers: "that if we"; "we could say"; "ourselves"; "if we". Notice that the therapist also uses the first person singular, but it is used less often than the plural form." (Martinez, Tomicic & Medina, 2012, p. 109)

In my view, the notion of 'interpretative repertoire' (Wetherell, 1998) might improve the micro/macro analysis of the 'dialogal-dialogic' exchanges in order to get a societal account of the therapeutic interaction (Avdi, 2012).

The constant interplay of the 'self-otherness' as a coherent ontological unity in psychotherapy is well illustrated in Leiman's contribution:

"Sol's turn is an illustration of a semi-internal dialogue. Although he seems to speak to himself, he responds to Mick's question. In terms of DSA, the turn represents a double-directed discourse in the sense that Sol's internal dialogue is addressed to the counselor as much as to himself." (Leiman, 2012, p. 138)

Even though it is emphasized the 'reflective function, meta-cognition, mentalization' (Leiman, 2012, p. 125) in the therapeutic interaction, the very notion of 'outsideness' as an inherent part of the Self - in Bakhtinian terms - is taken into account as a 'co-observing position':

"The counselor, Mick, is the addressee whose presence invites Sol into an observer position in relation to his expression. He necessarily hears his own words when letting them out. The counselor's question supports it and creates a co-observing position, which is the precondition of what Cooper calls self-otherness." (Leiman, 2012, p. 139)

The dialogical stylization where the subjectivity takes place in a never ended process is central in the Dialogical Sequence Analysis. Such a semiotic approach makes visible utterances as the *personal* embodiment of *socially* shared meanings (Leiman,

2012). Psychotherapy as the place where the 'word can be heard' is involved in 'integrating dissociated aspects of self' (Leiman, 2012, p. 127).

My point is that such a powerful conceptualization of 'semiotic positioning' could be improved by exploring the carnal aspects of dissociation rather than 'distancing practices'. In this sense, by focusing on fantasies, desires, smells, tastes, could be useful for recovering the embodied attachedness of utterances.

Along this line, I would outline that the 'critical position' emerged in some clients' narratives (Leiman, 2012, p. 136) could be also interpreted as a rather fixed and self-oriented practice, where the potential of a critical approach itself – as authentically 'self-otherness' oriented – is missing. Such a fixation of the clients' narratives, hence, could be explored by focusing on psychotherapy as a joint activity between 'subjects of desire' (Butler, 1999) rather than 'objects of desire' (Klein, 1926). The focus on desire implies that it is both the means AND the subject him/herself and not only in a psychotherapeutic context.

Conclusion: The dialogue is socio-carnal ontology

The lack of a socio-historical account of the dialogism in psychotherapy (Avdi, 2012; Leiman, 2012) sheds light on the difficulty to recover such embodied aspects in an adequate way. The very fact to live in a highly 'immortality-oriented' society, where abstraction and meta-cognition follow the fashion to cut off the materiality of our human life, shows how pleasure and pain are mostly framed in terms of the dualism mind-body. The biological reductionism of such a view leads to a sort of 'decapitation' of human beings, where it seems to occur a strict separation of the mind from the rest of the body (Wilson, 1998).

Such a 'decapitation' also entails an inherent decapitation of dialogue that should be addressed by framing psychotherapy – for instance – as a 'therapeutic conversation, interaction, not only clients' talk' (Avdi, 2012). In this sense, issues of power and resistance are strongly involved in psychotherapy by framing both the constraints and the possibilities of dialogue.

By starting from the embodied practices of human life psychotherapy could focus on the conditions of oppression as the site for agency too. According to the Foucaltian 'technologies of the self' (1988) it is visible that the body encompasses the settled collective background as tacit knowledge. The possibility of resistance relies just on the constant awareness of what is taken for granted, implicitly enacted, through the body.

In such a vein, it would be fruitful to follow a simultaneous 'brainstorming AND bodystorming' (Davies, Browne, Gannon, Hopkins, McCann & Wihlborg, 2006) in approaching psychotherapy and dialogism. As a matter of fact, the therapeutic interaction fits a concept of 'deconstruction'. That is, the analysis in psychotherapy is a

process working on what is 'taken for granted', tacit knowledge. In the very moment it makes them explicit, it also transforms them by a constant construction/deconstruction of assumptions. Moreover, it deals with interpretation from a co-observing position followed by researchers, therapists and clients. In this sense, psychotherapy could further the pathway of 'decomposition' (Barthes, 1977) by focusing on the body as the site of ambivalence. In particular, by questioning the *usual* embodied connection between the therapist-client sessions, by focusing on the *usual* embodied practices in conflict-situations, psychotherapy could contribute to 'compose and decompose' in new ways our embodied life.

Transformation, hence, stems coherently from words, sensations, desires, thoughts, gestures, pleasure and pain in very sensuous ways. Telling stories always entail an embodied experience of otherness, that should also be explored in terms of which are the displayable/not displayable bodies in question.

'Ruptures', 'performing change', 'lack of fluidity in turn-taking', are highly embodied moments of power and resistance. The embodied details of memories, narratives ('How do you feel in this story?', 'How did it smell like?', 'Do you remember your clothes, your tastes, in that situation?', 'How do you perceive your skin right now?', for instance), often show that what is believed unique, totally subjective, reveals the commonalities coming from the general dominant discourse.

Making visible these assumptions could provide psychotherapy new possibilities, new openings, while not granting the subjects immune for future dominant discourse.

In sum, our human limited condition – when not conceptualized in anthropocentric terms – enhances to highlight the fragility of dialogue. As well as its inherent metaphor of human life: we are splicing structures, we cannot survive without connections (Haraway, 2000).

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