

***“THE MATERIALITY OF THE BODY SPEAKING ITS MOTHER TONGUE”:
ABOUT DIALOGUES AND PHENOMENA OF RESONANCE***

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ABSTRACT: This paper deals with the notion of “dialogue” as it is used in DST and questions its reach. Our main goal is to expand the investigation of human communication beyond the confines of a linguistically based idea of dialogue. To this end, we link up to current research that focuses on aesthetic experience conceived as an interaction between artefact and recipient, and we introduce the notion of “bodily resonance”. Our alternative framing draws upon the concepts of “vitality form matching” by Daniel Stern and “dynamic patterns of relation” by Beatrice Beebe and Frank Lachmann. First, we describe the phenomenon at stake by using the example of an orally performed poem and its effects on the listener. Secondly, we reframe these phenomena within the Dyadic System Approach (DSA) and highlight how DSA can be applied to different directions of research, whether in early mother-child interaction as clarified in Marie-Cécile Bertau’s work or in aesthetic experience as investigated in our own. In the concluding part, we outline the most significant implications of our approach not only for dialogical theory but also for contemporary aesthetics.

Keywords: aesthetic experience, resonance, voice, orally performed poetry, dyadic system approach, dynamic patterns of relation, forms of vitality

Introduction

“Sound physically penetrates my body and I literally ‘hear’ with my body from bones to ears.” (Ihde 2007, p. 81) “I am auditorily immersed and penetrated as sound invades my own body.” (Ihde 2007, p. 79) How are the reception of sound and the relation between self and other conceived of in these descriptions of the “auditory field” by Don Ihde? And what is the relationship between this conception of perceptive immersion, understood as an essential part of aesthetic experience, and conceptions of self-other within the Dialogical Self Theory (DST), developed by Hubert Hermans and expanded by many others?

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Hermans conceptualizes the dialogical self as a self that is neither “self-contained” nor egocentric nor independent of its environment. Instead, this self is a relational phenomenon, continuously shaped by the influence of others, inhabited by a multiplicity of voices which again are able to occupy different positions. With this overall take – strongly inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism and heteroglossia – Hermans’ approach explicitly marks its distance to the idealistic and dualistic idea of an autonomous self: It favors a processual, embodied, open-ended conception. This communicative relativization of the self is a stance that we share completely.

However, coming from a field of research which investigates aesthetic experience, our critical intervention will question the explanatory potential contained in the notion of “dialogue” from a very specific standpoint. Introducing aesthetic experience to the picture will help reconsider the dualistic framework that seems to be implied in DST despite its different intentions. If “dialogue” is conceptualized as having a “positional nature” (Hermans & Gieser 2012, p. 13) and as being based upon separate and identifiable “voices”, doesn’t this viewpoint still implicitly reproduce a dualistic perspective on the self, its development and the relatedness of self and other? This is the line of thought that we will follow, and that leads us from the notion of dialogical interaction towards processes of transition and transformation as they are described in the Dyadic System Approach (DSA) and aesthetic theory.

Our critical discussion of this very aspect of Dialogical Self Theory (DST) will mainly be centered on the works of Marie-Cécile Bertau. The reason for this is that her psycholinguistic approach adds ontogenetic and performative aspects to DST that highlight the development of the self and of linguistic dialogue. Bertau’s research thereby focuses on phenomena that *precede* the reflexive linguistic dialogicity and thus on the very phenomena that are of particular interest to us. She explores elements of “proto-conversations” that have been investigated by researchers in the tradition of DSA (i.e. Daniel Stern, Beatrice Beebe, Frank Lachmann and others).¹ Whereas Bertau points out the function of proto-conversations as practical preparation for dialogical roles in conversation – i.e. the development of an I-position, the capacity to play different roles, and turn-taking (Bertau, 2012) –, our aim is to complement DST in a significantly different way: By making use of DSA, the particular quality, modes of

¹ The theoretical approach labeled as “Dyadic System Approach” or “Dyadic System View” (in the following referred to as DSA) has been strongly influenced by Beatrice Beebe and Frank Lachmann, and its roots can be traced back to the 1940s and to Harry Stack Sullivan’s “Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry”. Together with Donald W. Winnicott, Sullivan contributed to the beginning of the relational turn in psychoanalysis. Accounts of the development of this approach can be found in Beebe, Jaffe, & Lachmann (1992) and in Beebe & Lachmann (2003). Also Daniel Stern’s investigations of mother-infant-interaction (Stern 1985/2006) have contributed significantly to the development of DSA. Through the connections he has been able to make between his research on “forms of vitality” and the aesthetic field, it is Stern’s work that is closest to our approach.

transition and formative relationships that are associated with proto-conversations will be highlighted.

A systematic problem that might partly stem from the genealogical perspective itself is that the very focus on the development of a linguistically competent and self-reflexive self tends to minimize the role played by bodily relations, both in their permanence and their meaning. A topical example in our context is the perception of prosodic elements, which also plays a fundamental part in highly developed linguistic competency. Consequently, Bertau's focus on bodily interaction as a preparative process that runs prior to dialogue can be productively juxtaposed with central aspects of our approach. But, like in DSA, the significance of bodily interaction is not only to be recognized as a pre-linguistic phase. It is rather to be conceived of as a founding component in human communication all along. This is particularly clear when Daniel Stern, in his last book *Forms of Vitality* (2010), expands insights developed in his extensive research on the interaction mother-child into the field of the Arts. Through this expansion, Stern's perspective becomes even more relevant and challenging for our work on aesthetics, and this is the context in which our article is situated.

For the purpose of this paper, we will focus our interest on one aesthetic phenomenon only: the voice in literature and, more specifically, the effects of a recorded reading of poetry and its capacity to enable bodily resonance. Here, our point of departure is a conception of voice that differs from DST. In voice phenomena a bodily presence becomes manifest, and voice enters the body of the listener not only through her ears but affects her in a cross-modal way. We understand this as a vital aspect of the utterance and its addressivity, and in the following pages we will first describe the phenomena at stake using the example of an orally performed poem and its effects on the listener. We will then reframe the phenomena within the DSA and highlight the different applications of research in early mother-child-interaction as it is made by Marie-Cécile Bertau and by us. In conclusion, we will outline the most significant implications of our approach. It will become clear how our work challenges some of the normative implications of the DST conceptualization of the self as dialogical, and how our insights on dialogues and phenomena of resonance can be integrated in an ongoing aesthetic discourse on these very phenomena.

“Expressing the Dark” – Voice Matters

Listening to Ingeborg Bachmann's poem, “Dunkles zu sagen” [Expressing the Dark], read by the author in a recording from 1952, one notices in the reading voice a kind of mastered grief, of controlled sorrow.² However, this is not the result of an

² In the following we are referring to a recorded recitation, which is available on the CD *Ingeborg Bachmann. Erklär mir Liebe: Gedichte 1948 bis 1957* (1995/2008). The printed version of the poem is available in Ingeborg Bachmann's (1978) *Werke*, Vol. 1, p. 32.

interpretation of the propositional level of the text. It is rather an impression which first and foremost manifests itself through prosodic aspects: in the tone, the timbre, the tempo, and in the falling intonation of the author's voice throughout the recitation. Listening attentively, one gets the impression that an affectively motivated body-voice almost bursts into the linguistically fixed text at certain places. In his analysis of voice in music, Roland Barthes has tried to capture these phenomena that are perceivable and yet so difficult to grasp with words, and he does so by pointing towards the "materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue" (Barthes 1991, p. 270). In our context, the important point made by Barthes is that this vocal productivity cannot be sufficiently conceptualized as *meaning*. The recorded voice enables us to hear a body, an aesthetic experience that should neither be defined as "communication" nor as "representation (of feelings)" (Barthes 1991, p. 271).

The oral mediation of poetry is generally one which creates different effects than the printed text. What comes to the forefront are not primarily the highly stylized aspects as they are epitomized by the literary tradition, such as the use of the Orpheus-motif which is explicitly referred to as early as in the first verse of Bachmann's poem. Rather, one is involved in a seemingly more immediate "person to person" modality (McLuhan, 1995/2004). And the relatively plain sound quality of the recording, as compared to contemporary standards, that was made by West-German radio during the early 1950s, doesn't change the basic topology: One is surrounded by sound and immersed in a process of aesthetic experience. At the same time, however, the listening process involves immediate recognition of indexicals: In this case the instantly perceivable fact that the reader is a woman, and, if one is familiar with regional versions of German language, her Austrian accent.

Usually, when immersed in sound in this way, one is less concerned about – and in fact less able to develop – conventional strategies of interpretation. The mode of experience simply doesn't allow the same processes of decoding, deciphering and comparing that we are familiar with from the encounter with the written form of a complex poem such as this one. Instead, it is this particular recording, this reading voice which creates the standard, and Bachmann's calm and relatively low-key recitation does so with its particular authority. The recitation changes in intensity, thus yielding variations that are perceived as expressively meaningful and are recognizable even to a listener who doesn't understand German. One registers a general openness of timbre but also how the intonation of the reading falls towards the end of the recited stanzas as well as in the very end of the poem: "dein für immer geschlossenes Aug."

Listening to the reading, we are attentive to expressive features such as volume, rhythm, cadence and speed, but also to qualities of timbre. We are sensitive to variations in the vocal performance that are unfolding in time and contributing to the specific dynamic form of the vocal expression. Towards the end of the reading, there are particular points where the voice foregrounds itself: One hears the quality of the

voice, rather than the spoken words made audible from their textual script. On the propositional level the reading voice declares its “Wissen”, its knowledge: “Wie Orpheus weiß ich”. In the recitation, however, it is the fragility in the vocal expression that calls for attention, created through the change to a slightly higher pitch in the reading of “weiß”, then a seemingly pressured “und” which follows “Leben”. In this sequence the recitation has nothing of the force and the forward-oriented directionality which determines the entire previous stanza. What the vocal performance expresses seems to be more of a radical exposure and fragility. Such aspects are not sufficiently recognized and conceptualized when the research literature defines the poem as an example of Bachmann’s characteristic “dialectic between language and sound, word and music” and finds in it an indication of her proximity to the Frankfurt School and its Critical Theory (Kogler 2006, p. 57). It is when the orally performed poem is taken as a vocal utterance in its own right that subtle changes in timbre can be pointed out as expressive, meaningful *and* as related to the different semantic fields of the poem and the tradition of recitation to which it belongs (Meyer-Kalkus 2001).

Changes in timbre are noticeable at the end of the last verse in the first stanza. Here, one gets the impression that the reading voice is increasingly turning inwards: In the recitation of “Dunkles zu sagen” one perceives the sound as slightly more hollow but also as darker in its timbre. Whereas literary scholars have paid little attention to readings of literature and to vocal phenomena such as these ones, Ivan Fónagy’s linguistic investigations of voice phenomena provide significant insights into the very bodily constitution of vocal expressivity and to basic tendencies in what he defines as our “emotive vocal behavior” (Fónagy 2001, p. 19). In the steps of Fónagy one could account for the characteristic “openness” of Bachmann’s vocal style without getting trapped in the sexual connotations that frequently follow from more general reflections on the openness of the female body. For instance, Fónagy points out how the degree of openness in the laryngeal ventricles or contraction of pharyngeal muscles are conceived of as an immediately meaningful part of an utterance: “The way of pronouncing,” he claims, “in other words vocal style, can be conceived as an originally independent non-verbal message, thoroughly integrated into the primary message conveyed by means of a sequence of phonemes” (Fónagy 2001, p. 25).

Towards the end of the verse “[u]nd ich hör dir nicht zu”, it is noticeable how Bachmann’s recitation becomes slower or, more precisely, the intervals between the spoken words become longer. While the volume diminishes, it is as if the slowing down at the end of this sequence together with a similar slowing down in the reading of the very last verse – “dein für immer geschlossenes Aug” – present utterances as if they should not be uttered. It is particularly the recitation of the final line which produces the impression that the reciting voice is reluctant, as if the upcoming closure, i.e. the end of the poem, is being postponed. At the same time one could argue that the aesthetic experience of the reading contributes to a contrary effect: By the end of the recitation

the voice enters the continuing “auditory field” which is not characterized by sound or not-sound but by cross-modal transitions and transformations. Don Ihde labels this continuity, which is not restricted to the auditive but characteristic of all perceptual experience, a “continuity of presence” (Ihde 2007, pp. 80ff.). That is, the sound of the voice is still present after the last line of the poem is spoken. It contributes to the transformation of the following “silence”.

Literary scholars have pointed out how the very title of Bachmann’s poem already relates itself to another text, namely Paul Celan’s poem “Corona”. In this poem the lyrical “I” speaks of an encounter between lovers who are “expressing the dark” to each other: “Wir sagen uns Dunkles” (Celan 1983, p. 37). In the research on Bachmann’s oeuvre, the identification of connections between literary texts such as these two, but also between Bachmann’s texts themselves and a rich variety of other literary and philosophical texts, have been guided by theoretical concepts such as “intertextuality”, “polyphony” (Weigel 1999) and dialogicity (Eberhardt 2002). The focus of interest has been to discover how Bachmann’s literary text positions itself as literature, how linguistic modalities in a fixed literary text (i.e. established motives, allusions, hidden and open quotations) contribute to its “dialogue” with other texts.

Compared to this mode of investigation, one could argue, our focus on voice phenomena and the processes of listening makes the poem a more unified utterance or even reduces its literary complexity, its polyphony, by paying attention to the perception of this one reading voice. Our claim would be, however, that the different approaches complement each other and that an exploration of its basic phenomenology is indispensable if one wants to develop a thorough systematic account of what this literature is. Furthermore, we would argue that a focus on dialogicity conceived of as text-text-relations is an approach to literature that doesn’t take sufficiently into account how the work of art is constituted through aesthetic experience. Hence, our point is not to separate sound- from text-reception in any rigid way. When a canonized poem such as this one is listened to, we are of course also dealing with a text. But even the more conventional reception of poetry through a printed text has an auditive dimension; this mode of reception also involves a “silent sounding” as pointed out by Garrett Stewart (1990, p. 28). What the recorded reading of the poem draws attention to, however, and what we want to point out is this very aspect of literary experience: its sounding and the fact that, when we take the aesthetic experience into account, we are listening bodies *in* literature. Voice phenomena are experienced through tone, timbre, tempo and intensity, modalities that cannot be sufficiently framed if one starts out with a clear-cut divide between subject and object.³

³ For further analysis of these phenomena and contextualization of the recording, see Folkvord (2012a) and Zenck (2006).

This is what Jean Luc Nancy stresses in his reflections on the field shape of sound: how “the sonorous place, space and place – and taking place – as sonority, [...] is not a place where the subject comes to make himself heard (like the concert hall or the studio into which the singer or instrumentalist enters); on the contrary, it is a place that becomes a subject insofar as sound resounds there” (Nancy 2007, p. 17). In Nancy the focus is more specifically on music, but, as pointed out above, this has relevance also for our approach to literature and its capacity to produce bodily resonance. However, this is a dimension that cannot be taken for granted. Nancy emphasizes how music is betrayed and at risk if it “is indexed to a mode of signification and not to a mode of sensibility” (Nancy 2007, p. 57).

Framing Voice Phenomena with Stern’s “Forms of Vitality”

The concept of “vitality affect contours” was first developed by David Stern in *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (1985/2006) to characterize the affect attunement in non-verbal interaction between infants and caretakers as the first *and* most important form of intersubjectivity. In *Forms of Vitality* (2010), Daniel Stern uses the concept in such a way as to make it productive in the field of aesthetics: It becomes an exploratory and explanatory tool for the description of bodily resonance in aesthetic experience.

As a matter of fact, Stern coins a variety of concepts – “vitality affect contours“, “dynamic forms of vitality“ or “temporal feeling shapes“ – in order to be able to probe this very phenomenon. At the center of interest are foundational dynamic forms of perception, and these are conceived of as decisive for our capacity to experience something or somebody as alive.

According to Stern, affect attunement through vitality forms constitutes an independent and characteristic mode of affective transaction. What is perceived is the form, the quality of a movement or vocalization, and the significant characteristics are intensity, intensity contour, pace, rhythm, duration and gestalt. In the case of proto-conversations that are performed as part of the mother-child-dyad, a transformed reproduction of these vitality forms takes place. What is transmitted through vitality forms, however, are not discrete categorical emotions, such as joy or sadness, but rather their dynamic manifestations.

The fact that vitality forms are performed in interaction and cannot be assigned to one participant only – be it another person or a reading voice as shown in the literary example above – is most important in our context. Vitality forms emerge from the affective interaction *between* parts: “The forms of vitality [...] are psychological, subjective phenomena that emerge *from the encounter* with dynamic events.“ (Stern 2010, p. 7, our emphasis) They belong to the world as it is experienced. Vitality forms, perceived in bodily resonance, can not only be observed in the interaction between human beings; they are also part of aesthetic experience in general. Without equating the experience of art with spontaneous human interaction, Stern points out significant

similarities, and already in his early work he claims affect attunement to be a predecessor of art experience.

Intersubjectivity constituted by forms of vitality doesn't consist in a world of shared *meaning*. Interacted forms of vitality enable a dynamic experience that is transmitted in and through bodily performance. Stern's neurological approach, correlated with his fascinating and dense description of the phenomena, clarifies unmistakably that the perception of vitality forms is a deeply bodily process and not an act of interpretation. The research of mirror neurons is not able to explain the transmission of vitality forms, as the activation of mirror neurons has been observed only during the perception of goal directed acts. Explanations based on the functioning of mirror neurons that would cover the more subtle modes of attunement in the social and cultural world have not been developed yet. Instead, Stern identifies a promising approach in the attempt to trace qualitative development in dynamic experience back to arousal profiles of the central nervous system: "The complexity of this system [the arousal system] and its differentiation into separate parts provides support for the idea that the arousal system could produce a multitude of highly specific and complex arousal profiles, each eliciting a specific vitality form." (Stern 2010, p. 62)

With its focus on vitality forms and their immediate effects, Stern's approach enables us to conceptualize forms, performative or prosodic qualities (in our case forms related to voice phenomena), in a way that accentuates their irreducible significance. The conception of vitality forms as belonging neither to the producer nor to the recipient, but rather as emerging from the encounter, creates a field of sensual experience in which sender and recipient are not separate counterparts. Thus, the field must rather be framed as a field of transactions.⁴ This allows for an alternative topology that differs significantly from Hermans' "spatialization of the self" (Hermans 1996, as cited in Bertau 2007, p. 133). From this perspective of aesthetic experience a continuous field is opened up, and that doesn't only contain the encounter between separate entities facing each other but also the immersion of the recipient in sound or his penetration by sound. As Ihde has pointed out, these two modalities should not be conceptualized as static oppositions. What he describes is an oscillation between being "immersed in the other's presence" and perceiving how "the other stands before me." "Speech in the human voice is between the dramatic surroundability of music and the precise directionality of the sounds of the environment." (Ihde 2007, p. 78) Thus, in aesthetic experience, the topology opens up into a continuing field of intensities and processual

⁴ We are here using "transaction" in accordance with John Dewey's conceptual development in his *Knowing and the known* from 1949, published together with Arthur Bentley (Dewey & Bentley, 1949/2008), where "transaction" replaces the concept of "interaction" to point out that the encounter of two actors does not leave the parts as they were: unchanged. Strictly speaking, it is the interaction that allows them to appear as interactors. We will return to Dewey's aesthetics as part of our elaboration below.

formations that undermine the discreteness of signs and linguistic positioning. Particularly evident examples are the above mentioned tuning out of the reading voice at the end of the poem, its diminishing volume and the changes in timbre. These dynamics cannot be represented by linguistic signs and their binary opposition between “sign” and “not-sign”.

Patterns of relations vs. positions in dialogue

Marie-Cécile Bertau’s psycholinguistic contribution to DST directs our attention to the ontogenesis of the dialogical self in bodily interactions. She underlines performative aspects of communication, and already the choice of theoretical sources she employs to address phenomena of “proto-conversation” demonstrates where Bertau’s approach and ours share interests; they are partly overlapping. However, with respect to focus and conclusions there are productive differences between them.

In the following part, we will show how the terminological differences and the divergent contextualization of DST, on the one hand, and developmental psychologists and therapists Daniel Stern, Beatrice Beebe and Frank Lachmann (representing the DSA), on the other, indicate slightly different perspectives and differences which have significant implications.

Our first point leads to one of the core aspects in DST: the notion of “positions” in dialogues and of “I-positions”. In this regard, Bertau has already contributed to a differentiated perspective on the very development of such positions. Our aim is to add further conceptual nuances to the picture and to reach another degree of clarity with respect to some of the qualities that are involved. So, when Bertau in her work on proto-conversations speaks of “paired dialogical positions” (Bertau 2012, p. 64) and a relationship where acts of positioning can be negotiated, thus highlighting the “relational performance” that refines the relational dynamic (Bertau 2012, p. 67), she directs her interest to the formation of I-positions and the practice of turn-taking as a preparation of the capacity to participate in dialogues. This can be productively juxtaposed to Beebe and Lachmann’s focus on emerging procedural schemata, an approach that directs the attention towards the processual and dyadic character of co-constituted patterns of relations (Beebe 2003).

Correspondingly, Beebe’s notion of “processual co-constituted patterns” contributes to a mapping of qualities that leads towards a conception of aesthetic experience compatible with John Dewey’s interactional theory of art. Constitutive for aesthetic experience is its processual character, i.e. the perception of the dynamical patterns of perception itself. Even if the reception of a poem has frequently been described as a “conversation” (Gadamer 1990, p. 182), aesthetic experience is not a dialogue but an emergence. In accordance with Dewey’s radical conception of art, we will here think of the work of art as constituted in vital experience. Energies organized

to rhythms are initiating the process, and these are not aesthetic until they “become a rhythm in experience itself.” (Dewey 1934/2005, p. 169)

Secondly, when Bertau focuses on bodily interaction as a stage of development leading towards dialogue, the child is conceptualized as one that is from its very beginning confronted with alterity and modes of exchange. Turn-taking in dialogues is central in this. In DSA, by comparison, the significance of bodily interaction is not only recognized as a pre-linguistic phase, but it is rather taken to be a founding component in human communication all along. Beebe & Lachmann and Stern investigate this aspect with a particular focus on psychotherapy and highlight the enduring effect of these early proto-conversations. They establish patterns that enable the child and later on the adult to orient and behave freely and successfully in social contexts. At the same time, however, it is emphasized how these early interactive experiences do not necessarily lead to mobility. They may just as well establish patterns that limit the range of experience and restrict the very dialogical capacities that seem to constitute an ideal aim for the development of human subjectivity as it is conceptualized in DST.

Confronted with this notion of co-constructed relational schemata that may determine the communicative behavior of a human being for a lifetime, one might ask how this corresponds with the conceptualization of autonomous, differentiable voices within the human self. Or is it rather that the relational approach in DST, its core concept, that of dialogue, has to be radicalized and expanded in such a way that it can relate to forms of interaction that existed long before it became possible to separate its participants as distinguishable parts, forms that continue to play a significant role in human communication?

Again, what our comparison of positions intends, is to draw the attention to the implicit, procedural and bodily aspects of communication. In processes such as those referred to above, the caretakers determine and limit the field in which voices can be developed. We are pointing to formative processes and modes of influence that can be performed sub-symbolically and that, as indicated by Beebe, might even be carried out below the threshold of consciousness. It is this factor, she argues, that contributes to their determining power: “Because relatively little of the implicit domain becomes translated into the symbolic domain; the implicit is more pervasive and potentially more organizing.” (Beebe 2003, p. 9)

“Voice carries consciousness,” Bertau (2007, p. 137) writes, paraphrasing Bakhtin. In other contexts, she equalizes voice with “diverse psychological processes.” (p. 134) As soon as the relationship between speech and thinking is placed at the core of psycholinguistic questioning, it is, according to Bertau, “almost natural to arrive at a dialogical view” (p. 138). If we, however, introduce materiality and sensuality as supplementary components to the model and integrate Beebe’s “implicit ” modes of transition of conscious as well as unconscious “information,” the journey might develop

differently. Consequently, the third and last difference between Bertau's approach and ours shall be traced in her tendential separation of medium and message.

This tendency is something Bertau, and also the DST-tradition more generally, seems to have imported from Bakhtin, and it connects with the metaphors of internal/external that are derived from the same source. However, in Bertau's conception voice is not only a carrier of consciousness; it is also determined by indexicality and has an auditory shape. Nevertheless, the carrier-metaphor contributes to giving her overall conceptualization of voice a certain mentalistic lopsidedness. More specifically, the way it fails to recognize how symbolic forms generate relations is problematic. When Bertau (2007) argues that "[v]oices are firstly seen as internal, developing as traces from lived experience, incorporating expressive, experiential, and interpersonal elements [...] then manifesting outside," (p. 134) she ties the voice back to the body. Then again, when she underscores that "voice carries the speaking subject out of himself, decentering and orienting him toward the other(s)," (Bertau 2007, p. 137) the function of voice is again that of a mere carrier. It carries the linguistically shaped body of thought out of the speaking subject; transports it from his inner to the outer world.⁵

The nuances might seem subtle, but in our context they are significant. The important point we want to make, is that neither language nor voice can be understood as a transporter of a stable meaning deposited inside the subject. Language does not carry a content to the outer world. It is rather to be conceived of as a media of sense making, of articulation in the double sense: language, and in this case spoken language, generates, divides, sounds, resounds and makes perceptible. The prosodic aspects of language in its everyday use contribute significantly to this articulation. In aesthetic experience, however, as pointed out above, this very contribution is at the core.

Accordingly, our attempt to integrate inter-affective patterns and prosodic aspects theoretically is not primarily concerned with the "what" of a poem or an image. Our emphasis is rather on the embodied "how" of the aesthetic experience.⁶ In this sense our critical intervention questions whether the concept of dialogicity based on the notion of "position" and potentially also on the notion of "proposition" is capable of covering the full range of forms and pieces of informations human communication exhibits. Hence, one can certainly claim that "[v]oice carries consciousness", as cited above, but voice "carries" so much more than consciousness. And, last but not least:

⁵ In his philosophy of culture, Ernst Cassirer defines "media" of consciousness – for example language, myth, art or science – as "world views". These symbolic forms shape our perception through specific patterns of meaning that are culturally handed down to us through history. In the tradition of Cassirer "media" are not carriers of a consciousness that is already linguistically shaped but conceived of as different forms of perception and representation. Our work locates itself within a similar frame of knowledge. See also Folkvord (2012b) and Lauschke (2012) and (2013).

⁶ Cf. Stern's forms of vitality, as referring not to discrete emotions but rather to their dynamic forms (Stern 2010).

Even if vocal phenomena that unfold in bodily resonance determine consciousness, they may nevertheless remain unconscious.

Conclusion

To conclude, it should be emphasized first of all that our aim is not to question the value of dialogicity. As pointed out above, the opposition against a divide between body and mind, and self and other, constitutes, together with the recognition of the self as process rather than a fixed identity, a common basis for DST, DSA and the aesthetic approach we are developing in our collaborative work. However, on a closer look, significant differences depending on divergent epistemological interests and disciplinary contexts have become apparent.

They provide insights into the bodily genesis of dialogicity as well as into a mode of communication that differs from an ongoing exchange of positions. These modes of contact and transmission are easily lost out of sight where linguistic dialogicity not only expresses an ideal aim for the development of human subjectivity but on top of that is used as a term to describe the very constitution of the self. In light of this particular context, we would like to pinpoint the issues at stake with a question that addresses the theoretical intention of DST: Does DST express a descriptive or a normative perspective on the constitution of the self? To us, it is still not clear whether the “dialogical self” is to be understood as a “terminus a quo” or as a “terminus ad quem”: as a point of origin or as that which is aimed at.

On the one hand, the dialogical self is introduced as a foundational model for “self” as such and the consciousness of this self as always already linguistically based. On the other hand, it is pointed out that “the dialogical self can be conceived of as a fundamental human *possibility*,” (Hermans, Kempen, van Loon 1992, p. 30, our emphasis) one that ought to be made real against the cultural tendencies of shrinking and centralizing the self. “Dialogue is something precious,” according to Hermans and Gieser (2012, p. 13).

The heritage from Bakhtin is obvious. His work has conceptualized dialogue as the liberating response to monological tendencies, be it in social systems or in the novels of Tolstoy (Bakhtin 1984). As pointed out by Bertau, Bakhtin’s emphasis on difference as the “necessary prerequisite of movement and dialogue” can be traced back to his socio-historical situation. The motivation of both the concept of voice and that of dialogue is thus to elaborately go against a specific doxa, aiming towards a “liberation of the individual, allowing for his and her plurality” (Bertau 2007, p. 138).

Our perspective is a different one, developed in a different situation. If the plurality of voices, the dialogicity of self, is taken as the starting point, that is if it is used as a foundational model, this would amount to a theoretical approach that fails to integrate the physical materiality of the cultural practices and the embodied procedural

knowledge and habits upon which dialogues rest and rely. In our cultural environment the concern about this very aspect is intensified through technological changes regarding modes of interaction, which in their general tendency rather impede the “intensification of reality” (Cassirer 1944/1992, p. 143) that is associated with a more bodily and spatially oriented approach.

Following from this, we would position our current response to the dialogical approach in DST in a twofold way: first within the tradition of the enlightenment, to which also Foucault’s discourse theory is committed with its particular focus on structures and performative practices that go far beyond verbal determination of positions. As indicated above, these structures and practices take part in establishing and maintaining power. More specifically, our aim has been to investigate what kind of subtle forms of bodily attunement and matching take place simultaneously, so to speak behind the back of the identifiable dialogical positions, as well as before such positions have at all been established. This should not be thought of as an opposition to DST but rather as an attempt to conceptually integrate and reflect on the processes through which its precious psychological and linguistic flexibility can be achieved in the first place – we are certain that it should not be postulated as given. But again, and in order to prevent misunderstandings: We are not trying to introduce a completely new model of communication that is based on the “idea of attunement and fusion of the minds” (Markóva 2003). Our pursuit is rather to demonstrate the multilayeredness of communication as it is enacted both through positioning *and* attunement.

Secondly, we would position our work as part of a current trend within the field of “aesthetics of embodiment.” Its rich development cannot be sketched out within the frame of this article, but let us, in conclusion, highlight some of its central concerns by referring to the work of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht. With his book *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, published in 2004, Gumbrecht intervened at a moment when the very oblivion of corporeality that had characterized influential parts of post-structuralist and de-constructivist theory was already foreshadowed in philosophical aesthetics as well as in literary studies.⁷ Calling for theoretical renewal, and at the same time for a practical work on aesthetic phenomena that takes its own systematic insights into account, the aim was not simply to conceptualize “moments of

⁷ Whereas Gumbrecht’s work positioned itself against the strong tradition of hermeneutics, other important contributions to the young, versatile and interdisciplinary field of study build on insights from the phenomenologists, above all from Merleau-Ponty’s conception of intercorporeality. Another important theoretical source is the American philosopher Susanne K. Langer, greatly influenced by Ernst Cassirer, with her conceptualization of the symbol that is not conventionally motivated but originates in bodily perceptible life processes. Vital is also the renewed interest in American pragmatism, especially the work of John Dewey. Some important recent contributions to this field of investigation are the works of Mark Johnson, especially (2007), Richard Shustermann, Alva Noe, David Freedberg, Sianne Ngai (2007) and Brian Massumi (2002).

presence” and draw attention to the intensity of aesthetic experience,⁸ but also to encourage them as part of educational and academic work (Gumbrecht, 2004). It is from this field of investigation that our work seeks to develop new frames and to contribute to a profound criticism of a framework built from symbols and texts that, with a biased focus, enquires into the sign’s meaning but disregards the materiality of the sign-bodies: What such intellectualistic theory fails to notice, and misses, is the bodily efficacy of poetic language and of the arts in general.

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⁸ Cf. Lauschke (2014) and Folkvord (2011).

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