

A polylogue? Where and how to move with and in dialogue?

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Aydan Gülerce: Having provided in the previous articles our views on placing the concept of *dialogicality* in psychology, let us here further elaborate some of our ideas in relation to each other's work through the following four basic questions that are of common interest:

Q1. Dialogicality requires a certain understanding of dialogue. What do we/you understand by the term dialogue?

Peter Raggatt: 'Dialogicality' is a fundamental property of human consciousness. Its foundation is the utterance – 'I speak, therefore I am'. Speaking is typically 'addressed' to an 'other' in some form (specific, generalized, present, absent), but it can also be addressed to the self, in what we call 'inner speech'. If the foundations for speech are dialogical, then it follows that social discourse, thinking, and indeed culture itself, must have dialogical properties. In this approach the meaning of 'dialogue' is extended well beyond notions of conversation with syntax. Indeed, Larrain & Haye (2012) have recently defined our inner discourse as "a dialogue that consists of a constant negotiation and redefinition of ideological territories" (p. 9). One

way to explore these territories or 'spaces' is to use positioning theory. At the most abstract level, thinking requires that we address the object of thought from a distanced position in relation to the object. Likewise, language requires that we represent things with signs that are in distanced relation to their referent. And when we examine the self we are doing so from a distanced 'position' in relation to the speaking subject (the 'I'). All these processes can be linked conceptually by the idea of movement between positions.

The concept of 'positioning' is very important for dialogicality. In this special issue Cor Baerveldt takes issue with this approach. He argues that notions of 'position' and 'position exchange' ignore the lived, embodied experience of the person and 'individualize' dialogue in a way never intended by Bakhtin. The consequence, he argues, is a lack of 'depth' in theorizing about dialogicality. Cor Baerveldt's wish is for a "primordial dialogicality" that is shared and embodied but "neither conceptual, nor propositional". He makes a number of insightful contributions in his critique. It is true, for example, that the concept of 'position' can be construed, I think misleadingly, as static and lacking dynamism, rather like the concepts of 'role' and 'trait'. It fixes the positioned in time and space, a little

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like using a single frame to interpret a movie. But movies are not watchable without their frames, and positions have their own time-space coordinates. Moreover, positions demand counter-positions and there-in lies a source of dynamism.

Let me illustrate this briefly here with reference again to the case of Charles (see this issue). When Charles encounters a childhood moment of radical ambiguity at a football match – his father rejects him on the grounds of masculinity/he loves his father and wants to affirm his masculinity – two opposing, if you like, ‘meta-positions’ crystallize in Charles. These two positions ‘unfold’ in lived time, but they are also traceable in the historical record, and in chronological time, as the data I report demonstrates. In thinking about the notion of ‘deep dialogicality’, I see it as embodied in this painful moment of ambiguity for Charles, and in all the subsequent moments that recapitulate Charles’ dilemmas about his homosexuality and his un-understandings of gender.

Finally, I offer some brief observations on Cor Baer-veldt’s notion of dialogical ‘style’:

- 1 There was little mention of linguistic and discursive processes in this formulation of style. What is dialogical about the notion of style?
- 2 Related to this, if a propositional approach to dialogicality is de-emphasised then where is language in our inquiries?
- 3 The notion of ‘style’ is ambiguous and hard to grasp. It suggests individual differences. Can style be instantiated with concrete examples? Cor Baerveldt argues that style can “never be confronted or interrogated directly, so that we might render a descriptive account of it...”. If this is the case, then how can we know that style exists, other than by purely ‘feeling’ it, as it were, in the moment?

Cor Baerveldt: Peter Raggatt claims that dialogicality is a property of consciousness and that the foundation of dialogue is the utterance. For Bakhtin (1986), an utterance is an embodied speech act embedded within a speech genre, expressing not so much a point of view, but an entire mode of being or axiological stance. Therefore, an utterance is always polysemic, ambiguous and incomplete, such that it requires the demarcating categories of the ‘other’ in order to momentarily acquire the contours that allow it to be identified as a position. What is juxtaposed in dialogical activity are not just spatial positions, but entire lives and bodies that vibrate and resonate and generate new significance in a way that will always remain somewhat equivocal. ‘Positioning’ is not what constitutes dialogue. Rather, positioning is what remains when dialogue is forced artificially into a (pro)positional format.

Hermans and Kempen (1993) have argued that dialogism escapes the logical requirement of non-contradiction (which states that something cannot be *A* and *not-A* at the same time), because *A* and *not-A* can each be stated from a different position, such that their contradiction would merely constitute a dialogical disagreement. Bakhtin, however, follows Bergson in contesting the very logic of

identity and non-contradiction as it pertains to expression and recognizes that in genuine expression *A* and *not-A* can be expressed not just from two different positions, but simultaneously *in the same expressive act*. Herein lies the deeper meaning of dialogicality as a theory of expression and generativity. I applaud Peter Raggatt’s attempt to make DST more dynamic by introducing Bakhtin’s notion of chronotope. Of course, Bakhtin’s chronotope is a notion no less enigmatic than Merleau-Ponty’s notion of style. The chronotope deals precisely with the dynamic relation between the ‘inner’ and the ‘outer’, between human consciousness and concrete historical meaning, which is at the heart of Bakhtin’s understanding of dialogicality. For Bakhtin the chronotope is not merely a sequence of spatial events, but the very condition for the representability of events (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 250).

I would argue that ‘style’ and ‘chronotope’ are notions that serve a somewhat similar function in the work of the Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin, respectively, in that both are concerned with a kind of non-conceptual generality that allows for the singularity, ‘denseness’ and ‘fleshiness’ or concretely lived experience. This concern is not primarily phenomenological, but is shared by a broad variety of expressivist, ‘vitalist’ and post-structuralist thinkers from Goethe to Dilthey and Bergson and more recently Deleuze. Far from having to appeal to ‘vague feelings’, as Peter Raggatt suggests, such thinkers challenge us to abandon the quasi-exactness of abstract thought for a careful yet critical engagement with live-as-expressed. We don’t encounter the other as just a position, but as a fully embodied life. We don’t just exchange positional statements with each other, but we participate with others in a world that is both ‘shared’ and intimately our own. For Bakhtin dialogicality belongs to the domain of lived experience and if dialogicality is therefore a phenomenological notion, it is so only if experience is recognized as lying in the realm *between* ‘positions’, that is, in the realm of expression and affirmative differences.

Aydan Gülerce: Let me bring in various third voices from my framework to reflect on just a few points to illustrate my definition: As I discussed in my paper, I, of course, concur with Peter Raggatt’s claim “I speak, therefore I am” on the significance of the language use (as one of the major ingredients, so to speak) for a dialogical psychology. But the critical question for me is whether “speaking” alone (both, by itself, and to oneself) necessarily suggests genuine dialogicality just as *self-talk* (Vygotsky), *ego-centric monologue* (Piaget), and even “inner speech” (Wittgenstein). It suggests that it might rather imply monologicality, just as “self-reflection” of the sovereign *cogito* (Descartes). Here is how: “I speak (your/the Other’s words), therefore *you/the Other* are”. My existence is a real/sensible/lived experience which does not need words if they were not for *you/the Other* to hear/recognize/acknowledge *my being* (existence/need/desire). My “self” (as infinite subject/ive-object/ive meaning potentials) re-mains “free-floating” in silence and in “private” always as a project (to be “realized/actualized”) in *pain* of the unsay-able/“unuttered truth” and in *pleasure* of mastering (a/your/the Other’s) language, the *jouissance* that “I” made “it/the Thing” (Lacan) “ours”. It is not *mine*, since *I* have excess

(Freud). Whether *our conjoint* “language use” (Wittgenstein) would fuse our “intended” meaning potentials in a *horizon* (Gadamer) or not, is a totally different story (of *dialogue*). When Bakhtin says that the very *being* of human kind is the “*deepest communion*”, “*to be means to communicate dialogically*”[...] “*to be means to be for another, and through another, for oneself*”, his words do not sound like, and are not about, *monological self-talks* to me (even if they were written in prison).

Bakhtin “escapes from the prison” of textual language (in its static, general and normative sense of grammar), so that the “guardians” of the “visible” *formal linguistics* cannot catch the (“unuttered”) *meaning* embodied in time-space of the “invisibility” of *style*. Cor Baerveldt unites with Bakhtin and Merleau-Ponty both of whom shared this philosophical “position” (precursors of *avant-garde* post-structuralism as some critics read today), and I concur. *Discourse* as Bakhtin’s “study object” is not just a “thing” as it has a “life of its own”. Whereas for Merleau-Ponty, the “study object” is the *body* which is “expressive”. They both are fundamentally dialogical concepts. “Starting below” (Merleau-Ponty) is inevitable and necessary, but not only because *style* predates *symbolization*, and hence the entry of *the-Name-of-the-Father* (Lacan) to history in ontogeny—I discussed how I differ from Lacan’s widespread discursive theory of “subjectivity” elsewhere (e.g., Gülerce, 2003). Rather, we keep this *primordial orientation/basic attitude towards life* and un/knowingly reenact, transfer to new situations we enter, and always use our “gut feelings” through “lived experience” to intuit/projectify/abduct free-floating infinite meaning potentials (in the Third realm of any particularized *triopus*).

So, let us now further elaborate our theoretical “posi-tions” on “positon-ings” with the next question.

Q2. *How do we/you define the term “position”? What conceptual distinctions and relations do we/you draw between various “position terms” such as I-positions, subject positions, discursive positions, social positions, and so on?*

Alex Gillespie & Jack Martin: The term ‘positioning’ has been extended from a spatial term to a discursive and psychological term. Originally, it was used to refer to a point within a spatial configuration or system, such as the positioning of mechanical parts or military units. Then the term obtained popularity in the field of marketing, where it was used to talk about the positioning of a new product in relation to the market (Alpert & Gatty, 1969). However, it’s most recent popularity has been in the field of psychology.

The concept of ‘discursive positioning’ became popular with Davies and Harré’s (1990) analysis of how utterances position both the speaker and interlocutor, and thus dynamically constitute identity. Even the utterance ‘hello’ begins to constitute a friendly relationship, while the lack of a response would re-constitute quite different identities. Discursive positions include socially sanctioned rights and responsibilities to act and speak in particular ways, to do certain things, and to take up and perform specific duties. Identifying acts requires an understanding of the particular social practices and narratives within which the acts occur. Different social situations provide different possibilities and reasons for acting (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). Discursive positioning retains the core idea that positioning

is always relative to something, such as the interlocutor or a third party.

The concept of ‘I-position’ brings positioning into the intra-psychological domain (Hermans, 2001a). The idea is that the self comprises a multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions, each with a distinctive voice. The dialogical self is the totality of these I-positions and the dynamic movement, or stream of thought, shifting between these I-positions or voices. Again, the key idea is that positioning is relative to something else, in this case, another I-position. However, this conceptualization is quite far removed from its spatial origins.

As an aside, we would like to point out an ambiguity in the concept of I-position. The idea goes back to James’ (1890) conceptualization of the self as leaping move-ments of self-reflection, as the ‘I’ subject of one moment becomes the ‘me’ object of action or knowledge in the next moment. However, the central distinction for James, be-tween the ‘I’ as subject and the ‘me’ as object is often lost in contemporary research, when, for example, self-report techniques are used to ‘access’ I-positions (e.g., Hermans, 2001b). All that can ever be accessed by self-report are ‘me-positions.’

The concept of ‘social position’ is a recent addition to these positioning terms, but it also marks a return to the spatial dimension of positioning. We have introduced it not to replace the aforementioned concepts but to complement them. Social position is a particularly social psychological concept referring to the concrete situation that people are in. Situations or social positions comprise physical, spatial, institutional, and normative aspects. Situations, we know from research, are powerful shapers of behaviour and thought. The reason why we insist on the importance of ‘social position’ as a concept is that it enables us to conceptualize the relationship between the situations that people have been in and the discursive and psychological positioning that they currently engage in. In this way, ‘social position’ subserves both analytical and developmental functions and perspectives.

Simplifying, for the purposes of conceptual distinction, we would say that positioning in social space (moving from one situation or social position to another, and thus moving between roles and identities) is foundational for both discursive and psychological positioning. Vygotsky famously wrote that cognitive processes appear twice, first on the social plane and then on the psychological plane (Vygotsky & Luria, 1994). We are willing to risk refining this: many discursive and psychological shifts and movements, between discursive positions or I-positions, appear first, in a rudimentary form, as movements of the body between social positions. Our physical positioning within social situations and practices initiates us into increasingly full forms of social and psychological participation within and across situations and practices, including potential modifications of our social and physical world.

Peter Raggatt: I see the concept of positioning as a broad and generic principle behind a range of dynamic psychological and social processes that involve distancing, dialogue, and movement in human cognition and consciousness and in social behaviour. This very wide range of convenience makes the concept difficult to pin

down. Alex Gillespie and Jack Martin provide here, a clear and concise historical overview of the uses of the terms 'position' and 'positioning' as they emerged first in the physical sciences, and then in the social sciences. This history demonstrates that positioning can be all at once concrete, embodied, social-discursive and psychological. Alex Gillespie and Jack Martin are correct when they caution that positioning in the intra-psychological domain "is far removed from its spatial origins", especially when space is defined in Euclidean terms. The 'spaces' we occupy, however, are semiotic and discursive as well as concrete, physical and embodied. They are also correct to point out a conceptual confusion with the term 'I-position', when used by Hermans and others in self-report procedures. The moment an I-position is articulated or constituted it becomes a 'Me', the object rather than the agent of action. While this might be true from moment to moment, I think the objection really misses a more important point – that the I and the Me are reversible, so that any particular Me can take up or become an I-position at the moment of action. I see this ambiguity as more a terminological than conceptual issue.

Alex Gillespie and Jack Martin's concepts of 'social position' and 'position exchange' are a significant theoretical advance because they help to anchor more abstract notions of psychological positioning to real, concrete and embodied social encounters. Clearly, our early physical movements and position exchanges provide one of the templates for psychological positioning. Social 'situations' in adult life, however, carry an enormous baggage of discursive and psychological content (a 'layering' to use their term), and so it is difficult to speak only of 'concrete' social situations. How, for example, can roles and identities be 'recognized' without discursive and psychological means? In this context, Markova (2006) makes a telling observation on the complexities of social and discursive positioning (see also Larrain & Haye, 2012). She reminds us that even "when speaking to others in what we can call an external dialogue, (we) also hold an internal (or inner) dialogue" (p.135). The observation points clearly to the need for a more elaborated and nuanced model for positioning that can take account of the "complex configuration(s) of outer utterances and inner utterances" that make up real social encounters (Larrain & Haye, 2012, p. 17). Contemplating the development and testing of such a model is quite daunting. It would need to include:

- information about history, culture, context, and social representations
- an account of embodied positioning
- knowledge about perceived roles and expectations
- an analysis of the content of discursive exchanges
- a record of inner talk or inner speech
- an account of the influence of a generalized Other
- an account of the influence of specific others actually present
- an account of the role of specific others that have been internalized
- an account of the role of the other-as-agent (of positioning)
- an account of the role of the self-as-agent (domain of I-positions)

- the history of the self as agent (a domain of meta-positions?)

I think a model that can link and integrate these concepts, offers a way forward in research on positioning processes. Depending on the focus of research questions, film and fictional texts, as well as 'live' recordings and transcriptions might be taken as data in naturalistic experiments to test such a model.

Aydan Gülerce: Again, from my prospective perspective, *dialogicalism* invites a radically novel mentality and projects towards dialogically transforming psychologies. While it is important that DST and PET promote sociality, multiplicity, and mobility against the mainstream understanding of stable self as/with an interior central processor, "position-ing" (to my non-native, conceptually deconstructive ears, of course) implies deterministic "occupation" of subjects by soci(et)al/ideological discourses. Also, the term is "oversignified", and hence needs further analytical/practical distinctions of (put in "my language of transformative translations") *vertical* "changing of positions" in time, *horizontal* "changing of positions" in space, *simultaneously mutual* "position exchange" as in *role reversal*, and so on to make meaningful *significations* as a conceptual *sign*. Notwithstanding, supportive examples given describe "identity" and "social roles" and I wonder whether the "other" in those accounts counts for a genuine "other"/difference. I somehow think that, no matter how frequently they are ex/changed and in what *durée* (Bergson) they have been "occupied" by their subjects, in all (ex-/inter-/changed) positions, all mentioned *others* appear *self-same*. In other words, despite the rhetoric of negation of self-identity, they are not authentically *other/non-self* to begin with, just like the *role reversal* belonging to the Master/Slave discourse of Hegelian "dialectical" logic.

Dialectics is a "normalized" discursive/ideology (monological) "position" that many scholars, having been *interpellated* (Althusser) in Western scientific thought, "naturally" inhabit. Yet, it does not account for sufficient difference, or inclusion of radically different *otherness*. In my view, *differential difference* that "transformatively dynamic and authentic dialogicality" seeks, does not necessarily need "oppositional or conflictual positions" (with prefixed/assigned meanings), nor "mediation" (within the *closure* of "guiding" discourse/ideology). However, *dialogicality* requires that difference must be *horizontally inter-changed/negotiated* at the same analytical order, level, and historical time-space - i.e., equivalent in terms of "power", not *asymmetrical* and *vertical* as in Vygotskian ZPD. Children, for instance, cannot give birth to their par-ents (except in fantasy) in irreversible historical-material time-space, and both (negational) roles/positions are situated in the *same* discourse of parenting in any social order.

Following Klein (1932), who first defined the very first "positions" in our very real, embodied, concrete, viscerally immediate lives, I proposed that dialogical "positions" are preceded by "internal-external relational movements" that are fundamental precursors of intentionality (Gülerce, 1991). Unconscious primordial phantasy, anxiety and projectivations (my modification of her Freudian notion of projective identification) operate as precursors of "dialogical

style” which eventually pave the way to our “meta-(theo-retical)-positions” (e.g., Gülerce, 2005). Klein’s work is especially important precisely for in that symbolization is an effect of anxiety (which is not innate), but also transcends it to master reality at the border of the literal/real and the metaphorical/symbolic.

Perhaps, our next question will shed more light on the dynamic developmental processes of the elusive notion of *dialogicality*.

Q.3. Dialogicality presupposes dynamic development. How does dialogicality evolve along the life course?

Tania Zittoun: Developmental psychology has largely shown the ontogenesis of dialogical capacities. Studies on early interactions on perspective taking, etc. show that children progressively constitute capacities to be interlocutors first with carers, then with others (Bertau, 2012). Simultaneously, dialogicality, understood in terms of inner-positions and/or the emergence of one’s unique voice or style, develops. How does dialogicality develop from there on through the life course? The question can be understood in two ways.

What happens with the proliferations of experiences, does one build endless new voices, positions or perspectives? Also, how do the capacities of “being dialogical” that is, to move around the voices and integrate them develop? Current answers emphasize either *positions* or *entities*, or *processes*.

An emphasis on positions leads to two ideal typical answers. According to the first one, increasing dialogicality allows developing more abstract positions (e.g., meta-positions), and generalized Other positions or voices. The second perspective, closer to Bakhtin’s view, proposes that moving through life, meeting many others, living various experiences, one develops a broader palette of voices and positions. My position here is one possible combination of these ideal types, which renounces to any linear progression: one might imagine that in some case life experience brings people to NOT generalize and develop abstract cases; that in some life domains or in some occasions one needs to have the richness of a whispering jungle of possible perspectives in mind, while in others, one needs to be able to move quickly above and have a view from nowhere; and that with times specific voices simply get thicker –when sayings such as “after the rain comes the sun” becoming loaded with life experience (as in the development of Personal Life Philosophies, Zittoun et al., (in press)).

Yet on the other hand one cannot address the development of dialogicality without examining *processes*. What is the capacity to “move through” positions or voices, and how does it develop through life?

Studies on processes such as distancing, or reflexivity suggest that one might learn to step out from a specific voice or position, and move between one or more voices. These processes have been shown to increase with people’s experience through various social settings, and ageing, and also, when specifically trained in social settings, such as therapy or education. Eventually, the creation of new possible voices or positions through processes such as conflict resolution, synthesis (Valsiner & Cabell, 2012), I- moments (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2012) or imagination, as I propose in

this special issue. Obviously the study on processes is still developing and needs more integration.

A final question needs to be raised: as these processes seem to identify inner-psychological processes; how can we better articulate them with the fact that the person is also and always embedded in a social environment, where real dialogues and interactions with others and material and symbolic things take place?

Alex Gillespie & Jack Martin: Tania Zittoun suggests that there are two broad accounts of how dialogicality develops, one which emphasises the psychological development of increasingly differentiated and abstract I-positions and the other which provides a more materialist account, where psychological I-positions are, in a sense, secondary to social situational (or ‘real’) positions. That is to say that the way in which people are positioned in the social world, over the course of their life trajectory, constitutes the I-positions which comprise the personality. Like Tania Zittoun, we do not see these approaches as oppositional, but, our recent work on position exchange theory has been to emphasise the latter (Martin & Gillespie, 2010).

How does the capacity to “move through” voices or I-positions develop? The answer, which we have been working on, is in the very polysemy of the metaphors of ‘moving’ which permeate any attempt to address this question. Are we talking about bodies moving in space or shifting perspectives in mind? This ambiguity contains the seeds of the position exchange answer. Perhaps it is bodies moving through social spaces, with each social position occupied constituting a distinctive, embodied and emotional perspective, which sets up the basis of shifting perspectives at a psychological level. Position exchange theory holds that increasingly abstract psychological perspectives and the linguistic forms that enable them arise within our interactivity with others, an interactivity that is holistically embodied and positioned as we coordinate our movements with the movements of others, and in so doing create a proto-linguistic, gestural, and socio-physical basis for more linguistically sophisticated communicative exchanges and higher-order social psychological ways of acting, understanding, and being.

Tania Zittoun, in her concluding sentence, raises an important question: “as these processes seem to identify inner psychological processes, how can we better articulate them with the fact that the person is also and always embedded in a social environment, where real dialogues and interactions with others and material and symbolic things take place?” We agree that maintaining a distinction between the material and social environment on the one hand and the psychological domains of people is crucial. Without this distinction, position exchange loses its explanatory power. It is, we argue in our article (in this issue), people (i.e., bodies) moving in the physical and social world which creates diverse experiences which in turn creates a plurality of perspectives, voices or I-positions at the psychological level. Thus, it is an individual’s life trajectory, understood as movements from one social situation or social position (i.e., demands, roles, responsibilities, predicaments, interests etc.) to another which creates dialogicality.

This life trajectories approach connects with much of what Tania Zittoun writes, and we would agree with her

scepticism that merely moving bodies around between situations does not necessarily lead to a broadening of the mind and increased dialogical openness. While such movement may be the basis of dialogical openness, it is not, in itself, sufficient. Humans have a host of defences which protect against the threats created by openness (Gillespie, 2008). Indeed, it would be an interesting research question to examine how individuals who have moved (on the physical-social level) between extremely dissonant social positions manage to reconcile the resultant tensions at a psychological level (e.g., children who were bullied becoming bullies, or exploited employees becoming ruthless employers etc.).

Aydan Gülerce: I would think that those “two social positions (i.e., bullied and bully)” might seem “extremely dissonant” and full of tension, which needs to be resolved” only to the researcher as the “outsider” of the “god-eye” observer paradigm of monological and orderly psychology. For both, the “insider” (bullied-bully) who “identifies with the aggressor” (Freud), and the dialogically minded “insider-outsider” psychologist of the participatory research paradigm who “reads” and “empathizes” from “within” the soci(et)al discourse/subject and refracts from “without” (distanciates?), there is no contradiction since “ideology” (Gramsci) “interpellates” (Althusser) “individual egos” (Freud) as “subjects” (Lacan) or “objects” (Kristeva).

What would be a critically interesting question to me, rather, is where to find an omnipotent and omnipresent researcher (God?) who would examine how most/few psychologists would/not develop their primordial dialogical capacity towards doing psychology *dialogically*. It is not clear how the bodies (unselectively?) move (respond as reflex, with/out/-quasi/-agency?) between diverse physical-social-knowledge positions (unconditional stimuli?)

In any case, and by implication of my paper, most DST applications seem quite inadequate/limited for critically dialogical psychologies, not only for their narrow definitions (conceptualizations?) of “dialogicality” but also of “the identity”, “the self”, of “process”, of “time”, of “diversity”, “of distanciation”, of “culture”, of “cosmopolitanism”, etc. not to mention of improper methodology, or the “lack” of (the “use”of) potent psychological *technologies* (Foucault) and so on.

In the hope to find another small chance to explain a bit more our developmental views of *dialogicality*, let us now turn to our final question.

Q.4. How can theorizing on dialogicality give an account for the emergence of novelty and the ability to imagine alternative possibilities that have not been experienced?

Cor Baerveldt: Rather than considering the emergence of ‘new’ meaning an enigma, dialogicality is the idea that genuine expression is in a crucial sense always generative. If we agree with Bakhtin that dialogicality is the fundamental ontological structure of Being-as-event, the enigma might rather be why this generativity is typically not captured in our statements *about* the world, yet becomes available when language is used *poetically*. In this issue I argue that Bakhtin is not a positioning theorist, even though he talks about generative juxtapositions in relation to Dostoevsky’s poetics. Bakhtin is giving us a theory of *poetic expression* that allows us to understand the conditions of genuine generativity.

One of Bakhtin’s key ideas in his interpretation of Dostoevsky hinges on the notion of *simultaneity*. Bakhtin’s dialogism is based on the insight that the relation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ cannot be cast merely in terms of external spatial relations. What Bakhtin derives from his creative dialogue with the tradition of *Lebensphilosophie*, but perhaps even more from his active engagement with the philosophical anthropology of Max Scheler, is the recognition that *life* as it is lived ‘from the inside’ and *language*, as the demarcating categories imposed ‘from the outside’ stand in a dialogical relation equivalent to the relation between ‘self’ and ‘other’. The generativity of dialogical relations is due not to the fact that self and other are positioned in space and capable of taking each other’s perspectives, but to the fact that the categories of self and other are always expressed simultaneously, such that expression is never entirely closed, but neither entirely open. Indeed, expression operates within the transformational and affirmative space of differences and self-differentiation, as Aydan Gülerce (2014) so aptly observes.

To borrow a notion from Merleau-Ponty, in Dostoevsky’s novels there remains an ambiguity (for Dostoevsky this ambiguity is largely moral), but it is not the confused ambiguity that results from mixing things up, but the ‘good’ ambiguity of expression that allows there to be beyond each signification a deeper meaning, a fuller articulation, a different possibility. Peter Raggatt rightfully emphasizes the importance both of temporal organization and ambiguity in understanding the dialogical self. However, by reducing temporality to a mere sequence of dialogical triads and ambiguity to a ‘signifier’ that mediates between I-positions and counter positions, he remains unable to articulate the generative principles that drive narrative progression. Indeed, failing to appraise space and time beyond the purely formal and abstract notion of ‘extension,’ Peter Raggatt is left with a characterization of Charles’ self-narrative that ironically remains rather static, in spite of its allegedly temporal and dynamic character.

I argue that a more generative account of the dialogical self would require us to see seemingly opposed aspects of the self as *generatively juxtaposed* rather than mediated. Such different aspects are *simultaneously* expressed through an entire expressive style rather than by mere positional statements. Style, par excellence, expresses ambiguity in a generative way. Charles’ comment about “the fag being more of the man than the man is” shows more than just his wild self, but serves in stylizing seemingly opposed aspects of himself. Other examples of such self-stylizations are easy to find. Turkish and Moroccan girls in the Netherlands choose to wear headscarves (hijab) in a way that serves simultaneously as a modern identity marker and as a way to remain virtuous in the eyes of members of their ethnic and religious communities, women in higher management dress in a way that expresses both competence and female sexuality, young people spend hours in front of a mirror in order to make their hair look casual; each of those examples show juxtapositions that are inherently generative and may even contribute to new cultural styles. Strikingly, each of the above-mentioned examples shows as well that such generative juxtapositions involve a simultaneity of axiological

stances that is better expressed through an embodied style than by propositional or rhetorical statements.

In this issue, both Peter Raggatt and Tania Zittoun call attention to the role of cultural objects, 'ambiguous signifiers' (Peter Raggatt), 'markers', or 'beacons' (Tania Zittoun) in dialogical expression and both interpret this role in semiotic terms, as a way to 'mediate' between different positions. Aligning myself more with Aydan Gülerce's argument, I suggest that headscarves, dress and hairstyle do not so much mediate between positions but rather express a *productive* or *transformative* ambiguity that allows for expressive depth beyond their merely conventional or semiotic roles. As style they express many, even contradictory things simultaneously. A ring, a kiss, or a rose, does not mediate between "I love you" and "I love you not", but expresses, enacts, or authenticates this love, often in subtle and intricate ways, but only if part, of course, of a properly ritualized and stylized performance.

Tania Zittoun: Cor Baerveldt proposes to examine poetic language and actions as the loci of emergence of novelty. More specifically, he suggests that poetic language and expressive uses of objects can be considered as inherently ambiguous, and that this ambiguity, which implies polyphony, allows for novelty to emerge – there is thus "generative juxtaposition". Such understanding of the ambiguities of expression demands a change in the theoretical framing of dialogicality.

I agree with the identification of poetic language and communication with gesture or through things, as loci of plurivocity and uniqueness. My commentary will explore the dialogical nature of the symbolic, and cultural objects.

First, in a non-mechanical understanding of mind and dialogue, time and meaning are fluid realities. Expressive acts and expression become "beacons" in the flow of time. A word or an action used or understood by a person is dialogical in that it always creates a junction between a before – this history of its past cultural and personal uses – and an after – what will be made possible from that point. If that word or action meets personal experience, it also becomes a junction between the uniqueness of the person who expresses or feels it, and the echoes it might have in the many streams of socially shared meanings. It is thus not only poetic expressions which are dialogical and trigger echoes and shivers of meaning; any symbolic construct does.

Second, Cor Baerveldt emphasizes the simultaneity of generative juxtaposition, in cultural objects such as scarfs, or in expressive statements. Such polyphony can be increased through specific means, and with duration. A single word addressed to me – e.g., "an apple" – triggers a certain network of associations, memories, values which creates such juxtaposition. When two words are addressed to me – e.g., "a sad apple" the field of meaning raised by the first word is modified and redefined by the second in duration – like two music notes that follow each other. Some objects or semiotic constructs are used precisely to generate new alternatives. A metaphor can be such dialogical generative object when it is "fresh" and not conventionalized (Ricoeur, 1997): only in the first case can it bring together two radically different temporalities, or spheres of experiences, and create a gap in which the person is projected – which needs to be filled with new and unique images or experiences.

Similarly, the "composite objects" created in witchcraft (objects made with animal parts, human hair, natural things, etc.) can be seen as convoking spheres of experiences or meanings which are normally distinct, thus bringing participants to break their previous representations or accept different ones (Nathan, 2001). If metaphors and composite object are particularly likely to trigger "enhanced dialogicality", other cultural artifacts expand it over time. The experiences of watching a film, participating to a ritual, reading a novel, listening to a symphony, unfold with duration. Altogether, then, cultural artifacts that demand an enduring experience, that create a junction between different spheres of experiences, and that evoke embodied and emotional reaction, are most likely to trigger infinities of voices or multiples ambivalences, through time – and, as can be documented, bring people to imagine alternative routes for their own lives. Finally, such a broad understanding of dialogicality allows accounting for forms of cultural experiences which are likely to be particularly generative.

Aydan Gülerce: While further conceptual/terminological clarifications are much needed in this increasingly interesting discussion, we do not have sufficient time-space to "occupy" in the hope of joint meaning-makings on/in this issue. Briefly, I will again try to *triangulate* via various voices as a *demonstrative action* of my thinking on the primary concern in this issue. So let us *dialogically* walk (march?) together towards finalizing this text (which is on the *unfinalizability* of Bakhtinian *dialogue*), without getting entrapped in the trivial *signifiers* that do not yet *signify* "dialogical" *polyphony*, but a *cacophony* of modern Psychology, and move beyond the superficial talks of *dialogicality*.

Apart from Bakhtin, there are numerous works in/on human psychology which are awaiting to "couple up" with their "dialogical readers" for deep and broad appreciation towards a *communion* of our humanness/humanity. Rather than individualizing and interiorizing the soul/spirit, as well as psychologizing the political and the social (and hence overlooking the philosophical and the sociohistorical), it would be more meaningful/significant "to trace" the struggle, interchange, and the manufacturing of the "public/private" discourses in society and culture that maintain the *status quo*. Due to its positivist/objectivist obsession with the tangible and the concrete, and the fetishization of the visible *techne*—i.e., modernist instrumentalism (Habermas), scientism (Feyerabend), and phallo-centrism (Lacan) and so on, and hence, the "omitted"/"repressed" discourses that psychology-and-its users exclude, many psychologists on the one hand, cannot competently offer more to Charles' lived life and to society-at-large, but also on the other hand continue to unreflectively disseminate *psy-complex* in culture (Foucault, Rose).

The *dialogical approach* to the development of dialogical psychologies (i.e., historically dynamic, contextually embedded, realistically embodied, multi-foci, multi-loci, multi-directional, multi-level, multi-discursive, and so on), however, presupposes *dialogically sophisticated relational psychologists*. This, by itself, has serious implications for the institutional and educational *restructuration* (Giddens) of Psychology, politics, and (cosmopolitan) culture, of *difference*, in our "new"/rapidly changing world conditions.

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