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Pablo Fossa
Editor

New Perspectives on Inner Speech

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Series Editors' Preface

On the Borders of Inner Speech

This book is a *tour de force* that starts from the observable act of speaking and finds its winding road to the mysteries of inner speech. The reader of this small volume can trace on almost every page the tension between the ease of observing external speaking and the effort to penetrate its internal counterpart. The latter effort is indeed very substantial—and the readers of this volume can observe as the well-meaning authors perform interesting intellectual dances at the doorstep of the cabinet of curiosities of the inner speech—fearing to enter. We see the reason for this fear in the very tentative return of psychology's methodology to the recognition of introspection as the central method (Bühler, 1951; Valsiner, 2017). Thus, the reader may come to examples close to reporting introspective evidence by Chap. 5, for example, in the form of the following account of witnessing a sports accident:

> The feeling that *something was about to happen* was growing inside me, somehow I knew that it was going to end with the guy falling, and he kept going up, and he arrived to the higher point and then he fell and *it was like: 'aaaah*!' (emphases added)

The critically relevant feature of this (and all other) verbal account is the reference to verbally indescribable vague experiences ("something," "aaah"). This vagueness of presentation is natural—as our inner speech has to relate to the anticipated near future and is therefore indiscriminate. The move into imagery fits the totality of such anticipatory focus better than narration.

Thus, the abbreviation of meaning in the case of inner speech is polymodal and cutting across borders of sensory modalities. The guru figure of inner speech researchers—Lev Vygotsky—made it very clear that the inner speech entails abbreviated speech forms that begin to lose the nature of our ordinary external speech.

> Inner speech continually creates a field of meanings, a *psychisches Feld*, which differs from the external situation; this is the strength of abstraction and freedom — we are incapable of changing the field of forces and the external *Aufforderungscharakter*, but by changing the inner field, we change its impact on us also from the outside. The problem of will is transferred from outside inwards, from the plane of behavior to the plane of consciousness: the

> creation of inner fields, for which the presence of meaningful speech is indispensable (Zavershneva & van der Veer, 2018, p. 336).

The crucial feature of inner speech is the liberation of thought from language through abstraction and generalization. The "speaking ape"—as the human beings are in their public worlds—becomes a contemplating human as she follows the Janet-Vygotsky Law (of constructive transfer of relevant meanings from external to internal fields). In inner speech, the synesthesia between different forms of meaning construction media becomes established in a rapid process of synthesis. The access roads to these even if we had a direct visibility of the inner subjective processes would still not be open to purely language-focused methods (narrative analysis, conversational analysis, discourse analysis) since the very language used in external speech is transforming into an abstracted abbreviated Gestalt of musical, visual, or tactile kind. Literally, the phenomenon of inner speech "runs away" from the fixed categories of methods that are applicable to external speech.

Demonstration of how the phenomena of inner speech escape from our standard methods in psychology can be found from an unexpected source—Alexander Luria's account of the man with phenomenal memory capacities (Luria, 1987). In his effort to find out how such huge memory capacity works, Luria (in December 1937) gave him the first four lines of Dante's *Divine Comedy* to remember. Despite knowing no Italian, the mnemonist remembered the lines perfectly and repeated them with very good intonation. The first line

> *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*

was reported by the mnemonist in retrospect as intense synesthetic effort involving visualizations that supported the oral external speech:

> *Nel* – "I was paying my membership dues when there, in the corridor, I caught sight of the ballerina Nel'skaya"
> *Mezzo* – "I myself am a violinist, what I do is to set up an image of a man, togerger with (Russian *vmeste*) Nel'skaya, who is playing the violin" (Luria, 1987, p. 45)
> *Del* – "There is a pack of Deli Cigarettes near them"
> *Cammin* – "I set up an image of a fireplace (Russian *kamin*) close by"
> *Di* – "Then I see a hand pointing toward a door (Russian *dver*)"
> *Nost*ra – "I see a nose (Russian *nos*); a man has tripped and, in falling, gotten his nose pinched in the doorway"
> *Vita* – "He lifts his leg over the threshold, for a child is lying there, that is, a sign of life—vitalism" (Luria, 1987, p. 46)

The revelation of the synesthetic scenario creation by the creator illustrates the impossibility of study of inner speech by way of linguistic methods. This leads to a major claim—methods of the study of inner speech need to be polyphonic, and transcend the borders of images in different modalities.

As a compilation of theoretical and empirical advances related to inner speech phenomenon, this book may provoke new debates and ideas. The editor Pablo Fossa has already succeeded in taking on the challenge to discuss in a new fashion one of the major contributions of Vygotsky to the modern psychology that of the grounding of human thought in what is not immediate intelligible (Kozulin,1999). In the inner speech, one of the most intimate and important psychological process is

taking place: the generation of thoughts in the form of words meanings. The fascinating process of a thought that becomes itself out of what is not yet thought is what this volume is ultimately about.

It is remarkable that a young group of scholars, mainly located in Latin America and masterfully led by Pablo Fossa, are pursuing one of the most interesting of Vygotsky's lines of inquiry. This is a very promising move in the current academic panorama since the 1960s that may lead to new understanding of how inner speech constitutes a space of self-other dialogicity, establishing a fundamental link between individual consciousness and cultural dimension.

Tartu, Estonia — Jaan Valsiner
Salerno, Italy — Giuseppina Marsico
May 2022

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Chapter 1
Inner Speech: The Private Area to Remember, Play, and Dream

Pablo Fossa

1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of inner speech has been an ancient concern in the history of knowledge. The first writings that refer to this phenomenon are found in Platonic philosophy, specifically in the Theaetetus, as well as in the confessions of San Agustín (2010). For Plato, "the soul, when it thinks, does nothing but converse with itself" (Plato, 427/357a.c, p. 69). In the twentieth century, it is Lev Vygotsky who takes up this phenomenon to argue that it constitutes one of the greatest challenges in the study of human consciousness and an obligatory object of study for those who wish to delve into the passages of (inter)subjectivity. Vygotsky (1934) proposes that inner speech as a psychological phenomenon consists of an intersection of two higher psychological processes: thought and language. From the description of it, inner speech is the expression of the intellectualization of language and the verbalization of thought. This is why, from a Vygotskian understanding, inner speech can be conceived as *verbal thought*. For Vygotsky (1934), inner speech corresponds to an internalization of the Piagetian egocentric language. Vygotsky (1934) criticizes the Piagetian notion that egocentric language – and its corresponding correlate, egocentric thought – disappears at school age when social speech appears in the child. For Vygotsky (1934), the child's egocentric language does not disappear, but is internalized and established as an inner function. Here is the main argument to link inner speech to problem-solving: If inner speech is an internalization of the child's egocentric language and egocentric speech has problem-solving as its main function, then inner speech also maintains this same function as the main feature.

Since this Vygotskian description of the phenomenon of inner speech, a significant body of knowledge in psychological research has been devoted to explore the

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phenomenon. Studies on the phenomenon of inner speech are mainly theoretical elaborations (see Emerson, 1983; Morin, 2005; Rosenthal, 2012; Cresswell, 2013). There is scientific evidence that has explored the phenomenon of inner speech in its discursive nature and as a process of human cognition (Heery, 1989; Kinsbourne, 2000; Ridgway, 2009, among others). As I have already mentioned, much of the literature has explored the phenomenon of inner speech from its cognitive-intellectual function, that is, from an orientation toward problem-solving (Roberts, 2008; Villagrán et al., 2002; Damianova et al., 2012; Da Costa & Barbosa, 2012). Other research has explored the relationship between inner speech and planning (Lidstone et al., 2010; Baddeley & Hitch, 2000) and memory and reading comprehension (Baddeley & Hitch, 1974; Abramson & Goldinger, 1997; Sokolov, 1972); others have explored the neuroanatomy of inner speech, specifically from neuroscience (Girbau, 2007; Morin, 2005, 2011; Morin & Hamper, 2012), while other works have explored the dialogic orientation of inner speech (Bakthin, 1981, 1984; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Finally, various studies have studied the relationship between inner speech and mental wandering, specifically focused on inner speech as a failure to concentrate or maintain executive control of a given task (Mason, 2007; Christof et al., 2009; Horovitzab et al., 2009; Fransson, 2006; Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010; Smallwood et al., 2008, among others). This is how inner speech has been addressed in modern literature, mainly from its role in problem-solving. Different theoretical and empirical manuscripts have been oriented to the role that internal speech would have to solve different problems of daily life. However, to a lesser extent, the phenomenon has been addressed to understand other activities of the inner life, such as memory, play, and projection of the future. Few studies have explored the phenomenon of inner speech in other contexts in which the temporality of consciousness is intrinsically related, such as the experience of remembering (past), playing (present), and imagining (future) (Barros et al., 2020; Tapia Aróstica & Fossa, 2021). Recent theoretical elaborations and empirical evidence have defended the idea of inner speech at the service of other "tasks," which are far from problem-solving. I am referring to the internal tasks, the deepest motivations of human subjectivity. Here, memory, play, and imagination play a fundamental role, which has nothing to do with solving problems, but with remembering the past, entertaining ourselves in a private space during leisure time or during unattractive activities, and in the projection of the future, whether distant or near. In any of these cases, the inner speech is established as a liminal zone of rehearsal or preparation for the emergency that is about to occur. This experience takes place while we walk down the street, when we ride a bicycle, when we travel on a bus, or when we wash the dishes. The experience of being with ourselves, without solving problems, but simply remembering, playing, or projecting the future, prepares us for action and constitutes a fundamental engine of human development and an expression of the cultural constitution of the human psyche. Inner speech, then, is not only a space for problem-solving but also a space for mental wandering (Fossa et al., 2018), as well as a place for creativity and resistance (González et al., In Press). The nature of the phenomenon makes its research difficult, so creative methodologies have been developed to access it. A multitude of

techniques have been developed in order to be able to investigate a phenomenon that is so intimate that it "escapes" when we wish to study it. Experimental designs, self-report studies, life diaries, autobiographical accounts, retrospective studies of autobiographical memory, and "thinking aloud" strategies, among others, have intersected in research to be able to "approach" or know a part of the inner speech phenomenon. To speak of inner speech is to speak of the great problem of human life: the existence of otherness, internalization as a fundamental process for psychological development, and the influence of culture on the constitution of human subjectivity.

In summary, this book attempts to present updated theoretical advances on the phenomenon of inner speech. In the same way, this book presents new methodologies to approach the study of inner speech empirically. The reader will find creative methodologies and new theoretical elaborations in the following pages of this book, with the aim of contributing to the debate and reflection of researchers and students interested in this inherent and profound phenomenon of human consciousness.

1.2 Contributors to This Book

In this book, new theoretical and empirical perspectives on inner speech are presented. Regarding new theoretical elaborations, in the first place, Fossa and Pacheco (in this volume) develop an integration between the notion of inner speech in Vygotsky's theory and the theory of pre-reflective consciousness in Husserl's phenomenology. In the development of the chapter, the authors propose that, in Vygotsky's work, specifically in thought and language, some antecedents are evident that could make us think of a different dimension of inner speech. Although Vygotsky attributes the function of problem-solving as the main function of inner speech, accounting for a reflexive and controlled dimension, Fossa and Pacheco propose the existence of what they call pre-reflective inner speech. Integrating Edmund Husserl's theory of the functioning of consciousness, one might think that inner speech, being a function of consciousness, also has a pre-reflective, uncontrolled, passive, and involuntary dimension. This chapter opens questions for future empirical work to explore this dimension not investigated in the current literature.

On the other hand, De Luca Piccione and Freda (in this volume), taking theoretical elements from cultural psychology and psychoanalysis, present a theoretical elaboration in which they defend that otherness plays a fundamental role in the constitution of identity. Although De Luca Piccione and Freda (in this volume) propose identity as a dynamic, transformative, and eminently dialogical phenomenon, it is proposed that inner speech expresses a dynamic and dialectical interaction between the intersubjective and the intrasubjective, which constitutes identity, as a liminal process of construction of meaning. Regarding new methodological strategies and empirical approaches to capture the phenomenon of inner speech, Pinheiro, Mélo, and Barros (in this volume) present a creative methodological strategy based on the analysis of online diaries, to capture the interiority of psychic experience.

Through this strategy, the authors show how subjective agentivity and its relationship with alterity are constituted, being from that internalized intersubjective place from where we understand the world and life.

On the other hand, Vergara, Cea, Calderón, Troncoso, and Martínez-Pernía (in this volume) develop a methodological strategy to explore the subjective experience of inner speech through the paradigm of empathy for pain. The authors develop an experimental phenomenological approach in which 16 healthy people are exposed to physical accidents involving athletes. After the presentation of stimuli in the laboratory, they carried out a phenomenological interview to explore the inner speech during exposure to the stimulus. The authors conclude that inner speech during situations that display an empathic connection constitutes a pre-reflective, pre-verbal, and corporally felt process, showing evidence of a different dimension than what cognitive sciences have shown regarding the phenomenon of inner speech.

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Part I
Theoretical Advances on Inner Speech

Chapter 2
Reflective and Pre-reflective Inner Speech

Pablo Fossa and Cristóbal Pacheco

2.1 Introduction

Vygotsky (1934/2001) dedicated the last moments of his life to write *Thought and Language*. In this work, Vygotsky develops a complete theory about the internal dimension of human language. Moreover, in his work, the main function attributed to the phenomenon of inner speech is problem-solving (Vygotsky, 1934/2001). This allows us to think about the reflective, controlled, and executive character that Vygotsky gave to this function of human psyche, probable due to the influence of traditional psychology, the development of cognitive theory, and his interest in studying instructional/educational processes. However, in some passages of his last work, Vygotsky (1934/2001) accounts for more structured of inner speech – forms of inner speech mediated by external language – and about more primitive forms of inner speech, namely, incipient forms of language or a more diffused, less structured inner speech. This raises the question about the role of reflection in the phenomenon of Vygotskian inner speech.

Another important author that studies the phenomena linked to human consciousness is Edmund Husserl. In developing his transcendental phenomenology, he proposes two dimensions in the functioning of consciousness: an active or reflective dimension and a passive or pre-reflective dimension.

In this chapter, an integration between Vygotsky's (1934/2001) approaches to the phenomenon of inner speech and the Husserlian theory about reflective and pre-reflective consciousness will be developed.

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2.2 Inner Speech in Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Psychology

Vygotsky (1934/2001) is one of the main authors in psychology who has been interested in the development of cognitive processes, including inner language. For him, inner speech is the experience of talking to oneself in silence, that is, it constitutes a silent language, a sub-vocalized speech, or how he declares it in his last work, *Thought and Language*¸ a verbal thought. With the concept of verbal thought, the author establishes a clear relationship between inner language and thought, a fundamental interaction when understanding the inner speech phenomenon. In his own words:

> Inner language is a special formation regarding its psychological nature, a special form of verbal activity, with its own characteristics and which maintains a complex relationship with other forms of verbal activity. We believe that it is not indifferent whether one speaks for oneself or for others. The inner language is a language for itself and the external language is a language for others. It cannot be admitted that this radical and fundamental difference between each other functions has no consequences for the structural nature of both verbal functions. … This is not simply about vocalization. The presence or absence of vocalization does not explain the psychological nature of inner language, but rather the consequence that follows from that nature. The inner language not only precedes the external, but is contrary to it. External language is the process of transformation of thought into the word, its materialization and objectification. Inner language is a process of the opposite sense, that goes from outside inside, a process of evaporation of language in thought. (Vygotsky, 1934/2001, p. 306–307)

The phenomenon of inner speech constitutes one of the last theoretical developments in the life of Lev Vygotsky. In search of studying the inter-functional relationships and the units that make up the interaction between psychological functions, Vygotsky (1934/2001) dedicated the last time of his life to the study of the complex relationships between thought and language. In this context, Vygotsky (1934/2001) carries out a profound review of the phylogenetic and ontogenetic investigations of the development of thought and language up to his time. In his analysis of phylogenetic development, Vygotsky (1934/2001) states that the course of thought and language have different and parallel evolutionary origins. Although there is evidence of the possibility of thinking and problem-solving in animals, specifically in primates, there is also evidence of forms of communication – language – in other species prior to Homo sapiens (Vygotsky, 1934). However, in the ontogenetic development of the human being, specifically around 2 years of age, something happens in human development that human language appears in a more complex way than in previous species. Vygotsky, reviewing the research of developmental psychologists Piaget (1923) and Stern (1924), and even replicating some of their experiments, proposes that it is the intersection of thought and language that allows thought to become verbal and allows language to become intellectual (Vygotsky, 1934/2001). Vygotsky (1934/2001) criticizes the positions of Stern (1924) and Piaget (1923) regarding the birth of verbal thought. For Stern (1924), language appears in human development once and for all, lacking a genetic orientation. For Piaget (1923), on the other hand,

language appears through the term of autistic thought (language) and its transformation into egocentric language.

Vygotsky (1934/2001), following an eminently (micro)genetic orientation, proposes that language is not born once and for all and that it is not a transformation from autistic language to egocentric language, but rather the intersection of thought and language; products of cultural challenges established by socialization and culture are those that allow the inter-functional relationship of thought and language, allowing what we call verbal thinking. For Piaget (1923), egocentric language (language for oneself) disappears at the entrance of school age, thus appearing a social-communicative language (directed at others). For Vygotsky (1934/2001), his explanation lacks genetic orientation. The investigations of Vygotsky, who replicates several Piagetian experiments, show that egocentric language does not disappear in child development but is differentiated, a process in which one part is oriented outward (social-communicative language, language directed to others) and another toward the interior (inner speech). In short, a function that was previously audible – vocalized, later, from school age onward – is an inner function (Vygotsky, 1934/2001).

Inner speech has then been described by Vygotsky (1934/2001) as verbal thought or non-vocal language, having as its main function problem-solving in school age, in adolescence, and throughout adult life.

Inner speech, following a mainly Vygotskian orientation, differs from vocalized speech in at least three ways: phonetic, syntactic, and semantic. At the phonetic level, inner speech is a language without sound. At the syntactic level, there is a tendency to predicatively predominate in inner speech, that is, a tendency to keep the predicates and omit the subjects. Finally, at a semantic level, inner language is a different form of language, with a greater load of meaning than vocalized language. This is due to its closeness and link with the deepest areas of consciousness (Vygotsky, 1934/2001).

At this point in Vygotsky's work, an important link between inner speech and affectivity is glimpsed (Cornejo, 2012, 2015; Fossa, 2017, 2019, among others). The forms of expression, content, and type of inner language are directly related to the affective-volitional sphere of consciousness, that is, the affective-motivational dimension of the human psyche.

Vygotsky (1934/2001), in his attempt to study the holism and microcosm of human consciousness (Cornejo, 2015), establishes the two main elements and dimensions of psychological functioning, namely, the generative character of emotions and the inter-functional relationship between the different psychological processes. With this, Vygotsky (1934/2001) refers that the unit of analysis of psychological functions is the complex unit that integrates the intersection of two or more cognitive functions, deposited on the basis of an affective matrix that generates and organizes this functional interaction (Barros et al., 2020; Fossa et al., 2020). For Vygotsky (1934/2001), the specific relationship between thought and language differs in quantity and quality during the different moments of ontogenetic and microgenetic development. It is in this context that Vygotsky makes explicit his referenced idea regarding the development of cognitive functions: "In the

ontogenetic development of the human species, its growth curves come together and separate repeatedly, they intersect, during certain periods they align in parallel, arriving even to merge at some point, then forking again" (Vygotsky, 1934/2001, p. 91). Notwithstanding this, in his analysis of the internal dimension of human language, Vygotsky (1934/2001) also points out the affective nature of cognitive activity. In Vygotsky's words:

> Thought is not the last instance in this process. Thought does not arise from itself or from other thoughts, but from the motivational sphere of our consciousness, which encompasses our inclinations and our needs, our interests and drives, our affections and emotions. Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency. Only she has the last answer in the analysis of the thinking process. If we have previously compared thought with the cloud that casts a rain of words, we should compare the motivation of thought –following the metaphor– with the wind that sets the clouds in motion. (Vygotsky, 1934/2001, p. 342)

In short, from a Vygotskian perspective, the phenomenon of inner speech has been understood as a different form of language – with the characteristics previously explained – which arises from the interaction of two cognitive functions: thought and language. The Vygotskian definition of inner speech as verbal thought or thought in words is directly linked to the main function attributed to this psychological process: problem-solving. The notion of thought in words and the problem-solving function, both attributed to the phenomenon of inner language, account for a form of executive, controlled, goal-directed, voluntary, propositional, and referential cognitive activity, that is, a reflective dimension of cognitive experience. However, at least from a Vygotskian perspective, it is not possible to understand a pre-reflective dimension of inner language. Although some current works have attempted an approach to this pre-reflective dimension of inner speech (Cornejo, 2012; Fossa, 2017, 2019), it is only possible to complete a true theory of pre-reflective inner speech by revisiting the theory of consciousness Human in the work of Edmund Husserl and the development of his transcendental phenomenology.

2.3 Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology and Pre-reflective Consciousness

Edmund Husserl, directly influenced by the approaches established by Brentano, introduces the concept of phenomenology, rescuing the character of experiences related to something, indicating that all experiences necessarily refer to objects. Husserl calls these objects intentional objects (Husserl, 2002). He also raises, in addition, the immanent as a necessary character of all phenomenological knowledge, not referring to the immanent as a real ingredient of experiences, but also as to the immanent in an intentional sense (Husserl, 2012). The role of intentionality, rescued from Brentano, represents a fundamental role in understanding cognitive experiences, sentimental feelings or acts, reason or the acts of practical reason.

However, not all experiences present a character of intentionality, defining that sentimental impressions do not present intention (Lambert, 2006). When exploring the concept of phenomenology, it should be noted that its origins are found in the Greek word "*fenomenon*," which means "to show itself," to put in the light, or to manifest something that can become visible in itself (Barbera & Inciarte, 2012). The true origins of phenomenology have as their main reference Franz Brentano, and his understanding of intentionality, which arises as a search to make a distinction between mental phenomena and physical phenomena of the human being (Brentano, 1874). From a more elemental view, Brentano argues that a psychic fact is irreducible to a physical fact; therefore, from their intentionality, consciousness and phenomenon are mutually required correlates (Failla, 2017). Phenomenology, according to Husserl (1990, 2002), is defined as an a priori method and science that emerges from it and is destined to provide the organ for a philosophy of a rigorously scientific character and to make possible in a consequent development a methodical form of all sciences (Husserl, 1990). Being considered an a priori science, it is directly associated with the experience of the subject, which is considered an "intentional experience"; this is not part of the object, but of the consciousness of whoever observes the object (Bolio, 2012). Faced with the incorporation of subjectivity as a constitutive and central element in the definition of the world, phenomenology emerges as a direct response against psychologism and positivism, prevailing in European culture. According to what is established by Husserl, "the most important part of the truth is on the antipsychologist side; only that the thoughts have not been properly exposed and are clouded by many inaccuracies" (Husserl, 2012, p. 89).

In modern psychology, the transcendence of consciousness as a reflective character unit seems hard evidence to question. However, from phenomenology, it is possible to distinguish a past approach which is linked to the approach of pre-reflective consciousness, as an area of study linked to the identification of a particular experience. But, should human existence be only observable from a reflective dimension?

The complex problem of human functioning presumes an extensive observation, which is subject to an approach that embraces the human being as a being incarnated in the reality of the world of life, a reality that exposes the subject to a passive dimension of functioning, which characterizes an existence thrown into the world of things. Heidegger (2020) clearly exposed how Dasein is thrown into life itself and must be understood as an entity closely linked to culture, history, and context; it is a being that builds his personal nature from experience and connection with his immediate environment. Previously, based on the approaches of Husserl (2012), it is possible to make a distinction of the embodied nature as well as the passive nature of the human experience, although the author identifies consciousness as intentional, the very existence per se passes from a reception continuous of stimuli, experiences, and experiences, which are stored in our subjective experience, inhabiting a pre-reflective level as part of a passive and elemental constitution of the human being.

2.4 Life as an Exercise of a Passive Dimension

The passive dimension of human consciousness is related to an important part of the work of Husserl (1999), who established how this characteristic goes on to configure a significant element of human existence, understanding the man as a receiver of data and pre-categories, who responds to specific moments in which the conscience presents a connection with the world of life. Prior to Husserl's approaches (2002), it is possible to distinguish similar elements in what is stated by Kant (2019), who, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, highlights the difference between "sensitivity" and "understanding," inhabiting a dimension prior to reflection on the exercise of sensitivity, which is associated in an a priori manner, prior to any conceptual identification with the particular object or experience. The so-called productive imagination is positioned by the author in a dimension prior to theoretical or reflective conceptualization.

On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty (1945) rescues Husserl's approaches based on his "passive synthesis" of existence, arguing that the initial approach to experience is not an intellectual or rational approach. In this sense, he defends spontaneity in contact or natural bond with the tacit world. Similar approaches are found in Deleuze (1978), who fully considers Kant and Husserl's approaches to make a critical observation of passive synthesis, exposing the importance of subjective experience in shaping reality.

It is in the attempt to start a journey linked to the world of the pre-reflective, where we seek to reach a dimension little explored from traditional scientific positivism, in that the approach to this universe represents a challenge in its determination, understanding, and classification. From a perspective based on the pre-reflective as an elemental constitution, the concept of "embodied subject" has been coined, which seeks to achieve an overcoming of existence mediated by the reflective nuance from a Cartesian perspective, harboring passivity and experience as essence of the own existence not only of the conscience but also of the body and language.

Charles Taylor exposed in detail the need to achieve a definition of man beyond a being anchored to a rationalist approach to reality and its environment, making a defense of the embodied situation of man (Llamas, 2001). Taylor raises the need to generate an ontological understanding that can go beyond the ideals of rationalism, linking itself to how reality is configured individually from one's own experience (Calandín, 2011). It is possible to distinguish similar elements in the proposals of Humberto Maturana (1997), who stated that a way of approaching the particular reality of each person must arise from an "objectivity in parentheses," which is based on the subject experiencing an embodied reality in which action and meaning, as well as his personal experience, are intimately linked.

It is feasible to indicate, then, that there is the possibility of developing an existential ontological foundation that exceeds an atomistic or pre-deterministic biological explanation in the configuration of human functioning, a foundation that shelters an approach to unexplored dimensions of human nature, which are found related to the intentional in the absence of a reflective exercise. The answer to a

question based on the mind-body relationship is associated with the individual understanding and analyzing its own characteristics, which are intimately linked in the exercise of the particular existence, housing experience, history, meanings, and sensations, which are not linked to a reflective-categorical dimension, but rather respond to pre-reflective elements typical of subjectivity and private experience.

2.5 Pre-reflective Cogito in Intentional Awareness

The passive dimension – passive synthesis in Husserl's conception – of human consciousness exposes an approach to vital experience as a path that passes beyond perceptual possibilities at a reflective level, positioning man as an entity that surpasses all possibility of categorical definition or conceptual determinism. The existence of a pre-reflective consciousness is linked to the beginnings of transcendental phenomenological approaches, which expose the need to achieve an approach to particular reality, from an unprejudiced perspective, favoring a link to "the things themselves," beyond any adornment or superficial element that is added by the figure of the observer.

Consciousness for Husserl (2002, 2012) responds to a unit that is associated with a certain intention, responding this to the ability of consciousness to be linked to something determined. However, this unit that is closely related to experience would function autonomously, providing a value to how consciousness lives from an intentionality in a pre-reflective dimension at an existential level. Husserl (2014) associates consciousness with subjective experience, establishing that the exercise of experiencing represents a spectacle that takes precedence over a conscious perception of a given stimulus and situation. For Husserl (2014), the preponderant thing is the immersion of consciousness in the experiential plane, intentional and not reflective, although fully experienced.

Similar approaches have been exposed by Gallagher and Zahavi (2013), who associate the experience not as an achievement of objectifiable events, but as an event proper to subjectivity, which houses a particular representation of a perceived reality. Thompson and Zahavi (2007) make a description of pre-reflective consciousness, achieving a clear identification of its main characteristics, which are associated with the following:

1. It does not require a subsequent act of reflection. It occurs directly with the experience of the object or situation experienced.
2. It does not correspond to a certain judgement or belief.
3. It is a passive and involuntary dimension.

Gallagher and Zahavi (2014) make a distinction between the reflective and pre-reflective experience, referring that the analytical consciousness founded on a thought in detention with respect to one's own first-person experience is linked to an exercise totally different from that experienced in the so-called phenomenological consciousness, which, by presenting a pre-reflective character, is based solely on the

experience, from a reflective passivity that does not allow an observation exercise at a particular level. Based on what was proposed by Thompson and Zahavi (2007), pre-reflective consciousness unfolds in a primitive dimension; beyond what is understood in the analytical tradition of philosophy, linked to an understanding of consciousness as a capacity for a detailed and analytical self-perception, it differs in its passive character, embodied and experienced from a reflective impossibility.

The observation of pre-reflective consciousness embraces a necessary field of study, insofar as the subjective particular experience does not necessarily respond to an analytical exercise of a reflective nature, but rather is linked to a set of sustained events, which are not actively perceived during the course of the experience per se. It is the encounter with a pre-reflective dimension of consciousness, which houses the central elements of subjective experience, which establishes the need to relate the experiential identification, not from a reflective dimension as an exercise in introspection, but as a need to experiential evocation, which allows to identify the intentionality of the particular conscience, as a representational object of experiences, emotions, and particular conformed realities.

2.6 Language Sustained as an Embodied Dimension

The social-communicative or consensual language expresses or refers to a nominal meaning, a set of experiences or objects or things found in a given context, that is, language as a categorical symbol. This form of language respects a sense of connection with the factual world, a union that speaks of the contextual nature and of our particular reference to that context. Understanding language from the present dimension supposes a form of ordering, explanation, and mastery of its elementary and executive components, in addition to the pre-identification of its instrumental utility.

In Herder's (2015) thought, the first lights emerge regarding a differentiated understanding of language. For the author, language is linked to an instinctual quality of human nature, which does not necessarily respond to a reflective value, a space that is developed in a second order, fundamentally based on linguistic reflexivity. Similar approaches are found in Wittgenstein (1953), who, in his second stage of thought, relates language to a "particular way of life." That is, language is directly linked to a subjective unit, from which the world is experienced not only symbolically from the limits of language, beyond its symbolic representation, but language maintains an intimate link with particular experience. The author's assumptions are related to the difficulty that language presents as a means of transmitting representations or meanings, since reference as such is not necessarily associated with the experience that a subject present with a certain thing or situation, the understanding of a way of life from language, implies a guided effort of involvement in a way of life, which uses a specific language at a reflective as well as a pre-reflective level.

When speaking of pre-reflexivity in language, it is appropriate to understand language as an embodied dimension of our experience, a component that

accompanies the subject in his experiential development, beyond an instrumental component of representation. This idea is extensively addressed by Lakoff and Johnson (2017), based on the metaphorical logic of language as a space for approaching subjective experience. Its main approaches are based on three specific ideas:

1. The mind is embodied; it is linked to the particular experience, as well as the representation that the particular language makes of the natural world.
2. The mechanisms that promote reason in the individual are not directly linked to reason; they are of a preconscious nature. The reasoning from which language arises has a pre-reflective origin.
3. Reason and language are not objective representations of reality; they are anchored to the experiential and sensitive dimension of human nature.

Language is a phenomenon attentive to emergence and experience, elements that develop from the contingency of the immediacy of the world of life, which is characterized by indeterminable progress and without the possibility of stopping. Given this, the human being must function in imprecise contexts from elements that go beyond the reflective domain, as an instantaneous experience of the immediate.

Human language then maintains a passive pre-reflective dimension, which is an embodied part of existence and an element of the subjective experience. This dimension of the experience arises from the set of particular experiences and responds to the language of the immediate, of the contingency, of the uncontrollable. On the other hand, human language maintains an active dimension at a reflective level, which pursues the development of a process of an analytical nature of language, in which its instrumental and representational character is manifested.

The passive pre-reflective dimension of language is linked to the naming of situations that arise immediately in the external world, which are referred to or named from the experiential possibilities at a particular level. Regarding the active dimension, the reflective exercise motivates to establish a representational exercise of the things of the world, the names, adjectives, and specific names, which arise as a need for ordering at a particular and collective level.

2.7 Pre-reflective Inner Speech

From a traditionalist perspective, language is considered an indivisible unit of human nature, whose function is directly related to the expression of a certain group of ideas in a naturalistic dimension, developed from shared understanding possibilities. In this way, language keeps a dialogical role based on the transmission of messages, thoughts, ideas, or needs, being its shared exercise which gives it an indisputable utility.

Beyond a traditional perspective, language corresponds to one more element that characterizes the human species, as well as the senses; the executive at the bodily level and the biological apparatus that presents a certain functioning, all these units

have presented a wide range of study from the natural sciences. It is important to mention that the study of these characteristic units is associated with a functional, executive perspective and based mainly on an active and reflective role regarding its usefulness, responding to the explainable identification of its metacognitive functioning, which favors a domain with respect to its certain characteristics. From the historical beginnings, linked to the development of psychology as a scientific discipline dedicated to the study of reflection as the essence of the psyche, it has been possible to distinguish an intention based on the active role of the human mind, as a synonym of experience, existence, and identity. From a Cartesian position based on the "cogito, ergo sum," the reflective exercise has a predominant role in the way of understanding the human species and its relationship with the external world, which empirical-rational exercise guides one's existence.

The first investigative approaches from the hand of pioneers such as Wundt and James harbored the need to embrace introspection as a reflective, contemplative, and meditative exercise, in order to identify the thinking voice typical of the subjective experience. However, the absolute acceptance that the understanding of the human being and its own interpretation of reality are based solely on an introspective-reflective exercise abstracts us from a wide possibility of exploration, which is linked to the passive elements of consciousness, the terrain of pre-reflective experience, what has not been meditated, what has no form, which only responds to the immediacy of the purest experience at an experiential level.

This chapter seeks to rescue elements that are often ignored in the studies of the natural and social sciences, but not for that reason of less importance or less relevance at a scientific and investigative level. The link to the study of the pre-reflective quality of consciousness has a wide investigative possibility, which goes beyond the categorical, positioning ourselves in alternatives of recognition of emotions, language, perception, and experience, from the feeling, but not from the thought that frames the experience in a categorical set, covered with adjectives, explanations, and definitions, not the description that is sought to be achieved in this type of phenomena of an experiential nature.

From the approaches of phenomenology, it is possible to achieve an approach to the immediate experience, to the experience in an unrepeatable moment, to a being not possessed in the reflective dawn that stains human nature, as a dimension dependent on the mind that gives form and life.

In an approach to the characteristics of inner speech, perceived as a pre-reflective dimension of human existence, phenomena, such as mind wandering, immediate verbal responses, and intimate moments of self-verbalization, are associated with the occurrence not conditioned by the cognitive, responding to an emergency embodied as responses of an experiential nature. It is appropriate to visualize, the way in which we speak, interact, and categorize everything that is striking to us on a daily basis, how language constitutes a powerful tool that translates the concerns of the spirit, providing clothing to the intentions that arise in the experiential moments, prior to what can be reflected and elaborated from the cultural content. In this sense, we can understand existence as a continually developing pre-reflection and response to the immediacy of the moment itself, which has already passed.

According to what has been developed in this chapter, it is possible to distinguish then that the passive dimension of language is related to the world of pre-reflective inner speech, which is purely experiential and cannot be shared, keeping a highly experiential intimate value, developing automatically during the flow of experience. For its part, the active dimension of consciousness and human language arises during introspective exercise, the reflection on a personal level conducted and meditated on the basis of particular thoughts, perceptions, and opinions.

Reflective inner speech implies a metacognitive monitoring of the process of speaking to oneself, very clearly described in the Vygotskian work. The possibility of a pre-reflective inner speech implies the existence of a first-order form of inner speech, without displaying metacognitive elements, a sustained inner speech – of a passive nature – that is, there is an experienced, but uncontrolled, inner speech that occurs without further reflection and without cognitive control on the part of the subject. In summary, what we want to raise in this work is the possibility of the existence of voluntary inner speech with executive control and involuntary inner speech without executive control, as some current studies have tried to account for (Fossa, 2017, 2019; Fossa et al., 2018). In several passages of the Vygotskian work, specifically, when he establishes the motivational affective sphere of consciousness as the basis or motor of psychological activity and, therefore, of human thought and language, Vygotsky (1934) sheds light on a further dimension either passive or pre-reflective of psychological activity. These passages probably account for his romantic, phenomenological, and anti-traditionalist orientation to approach the phenomena of human consciousness.

2.8 Conclusion

From this chapter, it is possible to highlight the value and the need to rescue experiential elements that are housed in the pre-reflective dimension of consciousness, a space currently undervalued from disciplines such as cognitive, psychological, and social sciences, being a niche in which it is possible to distinguish a past existence from what is thought or articulated from reflection. In recent times, opportunities have arisen for the exploration of pre-reflective experience from phenomenological hermeneutical methodologies, which provide auspicious insights at both a practical and theoretical level, favoring the concrete execution of philosophical approaches by authors, such as Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, in the development of investigations regarding the pre-reflective development of the different human dimensions. A phenomenological look at the notion of consciousness and inner speech in Vygotsky allows us to understand how, from a faithfully Vygotskian approach, inner speech is understood mainly from a reflective dimension. The passive dimension of human consciousness developed in the work of Husserl and other phenomenologists allows us to complete the Vygotskian theory of inner speech by moving toward what in this chapter we have called *pre-reflective inner speech*.

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Chapter 3
The Otherness in the Constitution of the Psyche: Arguments from Psychoanalysis and Cultural Psychology

Raffaele De Luca Picione and Maria Francesca Freda

3.1 Introduction

Human experience is always dominated by simultaneous bivalent thrusts of a relational matrix: one toward differentiation and the other toward indistinction; one toward separation and the other toward fusion; one toward the opening and the other toward the closing of the interpersonal borders (De Luca Picione, 2021a, b, c).

We find this original ambivalence in all the important passages of life, in all the developments and crises that impose profound changes in the life of individuals and of the community.

In the experience of love, sexuality, mourning, play and competition, and art, in the encounter with a stranger, but also in the experience of the unexpected event and the crisis, each person is confronted at the same time with a double scenario of opening to the new and closing within the perimeter of the familiar and already known (De Luca Picione & Valsiner, 2017).

These double complementary and antagonistic movements allow us to detect the centrality of inter-subjectivity and relationship in human experience. Whether it is a movement of opening or closing, whether it is a desire to meet or avoid, whether it is curiosity toward the new or rejection of uncertainty, the Otherness is always called into play in its various contingent forms.

Otherness constitutes the complementary and antagonistic part of the human psyche. It is a question of a complementarity from a genetic, dynamic, structural, topological point of view (De Luca Picione, 2021a, b; Morin, 1993).

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When we think of otherness, we must recognize that it is not only the expression of an external individual who calls a person to confront/clash with, but it is simultaneously an expression of the person's internal world that introduces a difference (a different voice, a different perspective), thus making dialogue possible. Furthermore, under the general idea of otherness, we believe that there are many forms of intra-inter-psychic diversities, which simultaneously interrogate the psyche and trigger the movement and the development of itself.

Both psychoanalysis and cultural psychology have highlighted the inter-subjective foundation of the individual and the function of the others for the initiation of subjectivity. Both Freud and Vygotsky have stated –without any possibility of misunderstanding – that the development of a person finds its anchoring in the terrain of social relations.

In the opening words of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), Freud declares that there is no distinction between individual psychology and social psychology. This is just an academic simplification and simple reduction that can be very misleading for the study of the psyche:

> The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at a first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well.
>
> The relations of an individual to his parents and to his brothers and sisters, to the object of his love, and to his physician—in fact all the relations which have hitherto been the chief subject of psycho-analytic research—may claim to be considered as social phenomena; and in this respect they may be contrasted with certain other processes, described by us as 'narcissistic', in which the satisfaction of the instincts is partially or totally withdrawn from the influence of other people. (Freud, 1921/1955, p. 69)

For his part, in *The History of the Development of Higher Mental Functions* (1917), Vygotsky concludes that there is a general law of development in which the social dimension precedes the individual one:

> We can formulate the general genetic law of cultural development as follows: every function in the cultural development of the child appears on the stage twice, in two planes, first, the social, then the psychological, first between people as an intermental category, then within the child as an intramental category. This pertains equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, to the formation of concepts, and to the development of will. We are justified in considering the thesis presented as a law, but it is understood that the transition from outside inward transforms the process itself, changes its structure and functions. Genetically, social relations, real relations of people, stand behind all the higher functions and their relations. From this, one of the basic principles of our will is the principle of division of functions among people, the division into two of what is now merged into one, the experimental unfolding of a higher mental process into the drama that occurs among people.
>
> For this reason, we might term the basic result to which the history of the cultural development of the child leads us as sociogenesis of higher forms of behavior. The word, "social," as applied to our subject, has a broad meaning. First of all, in the broadest sense, it means

> that everything cultural is social. Culture is both a product of social life and of the social activity of man and for this reason, the very formulation of the problem of cultural development of behavior already leads us directly to the social plane of development. Further, we could indicate the fact that the sign found outside the organism, like a tool, is separated from the individual and serves essentially as a social organ or social means. Going further, we might say that all higher functions were formed not in biology, not in the history of pure phylogenesis, but that the mechanism itself that is the basis of higher mental functions is a copy from the social. All higher mental functions are the essence of internalized relations of a social order, a basis for the social structure of the individual. Their composition, genetic structure, method of action-in a word, their entire nature-is social; even in being transformed into mental processes, they remain quasisocial. Man as an individual maintains the functions of socializing. (Vygotsky, 1917/1987, p. 106)

Almost simultaneously, Freud and Vygotsky reiterated the need to not distinguish the individual's psyche and social dynamics as separate processes, on pain of losing the possibility of conceiving in dynamic terms the development and interdependence between the two vertices of observation, namely, the individual and the social (Suárez Delucchi & Fossa Arcila, 2020). Considering the individual psyche as separated from its historical-social-cultural-relational-affective context implies the reification of the individual and its identity as an entity already given, already programmed, and defined regardless of the contingency of relational encounters and the unpredictable events of its life (De Luca Picione, 2020, 2021a, b).

Although Freud has been criticized for a rigidly intra-subjective and individualistic view of the mind (mainly for the misunderstandings and confusion that his notion of drive has produced[1]), the relational value of the psyche has been firmly placed in his work. The relational valence of the psyche has seen subsequently taken up and elaborated in different ways by many psychoanalysts (including among others, Klein, Winnicott, Bion, Lacan, Sullivan, Ogden, Kohut, Bowlby, Fonagy, Stern, Mitchell, Benjamin, etc.).

The historical-cultural tradition initiated by Vygotsky has highlighted the importance of semiotic mediation by signs as tools for thought and action. Also from this perspective, we observe the fundamental function of the Other as provider of the signs, as a guide and facilitator (scaffolding) of the process of learning and internalizing symbolic resources. The result of this process is the ability to control the attention and the conduct, the capability to pursuit a purpose, and the capability to overcome the instantaneous reactivity to a stimulus:

> Humans are social by nature, that their development constitutes, amongst other things, the mastery of forms of activity and consciousness which have been worked out by mankind in the process of historical development. (Vygotsky, 2019, p. 82)

The central point is that we pass from an initial moment of hetero-directionality (in which the Other contributes to guide from the outside, based on a fundamental imitative posture) to a moment of self-directionality (in which the presence of the Other has been internalized and subjectivized).

[1] For example, the German term *trieb* has been translated into English as *instinkt*.

The recognition of sociality and Otherness in the constitution of the person has several important implications:

– The psyche is not an organization already given. It is constituted by means of the embodied-affective-symbolic-cultural exchange with the Other from the very beginning of life (in the forms of care, symbolic rituals, education, play, social habits, language, storytelling, etc.).
– The psyche is not a unitary, monolithic, indivisible organization. It is the result of a continuous and recursive process of externalization/internalization (Valsiner, 2007, 2014, 2020, 2021); of introjection, identification, and projection (Bion, 1967; Freud, 1921; Jung, 2014; Klein, 1946; Lacan, 2006; Winnicott, 1953, 1962); and of an internal differentiation between several voices and positions (Hermans, 2002).
– The identity of the person is a process in constant development whose dynamics are inherently dialogical, both inter-psychic and intra-psychic. The structural irregularity of the psyche is the main condition of such an intra-psychic and inter-psychic dialogical process. Identity is characterized by a continuous complementarity and antagonism with otherness in an area of liminality that constitutes the dynamic space of encounter and transformation.

3.2 The Polymorphism of the Psyche

Since the origins of psychology and psychoanalysis, the changing/transformative/constructive character of the psyche has been highlighted. This process raises the difficult question of the relationship between the unit and the parts, between individuality (in the sense of "indivisibility/uniqueness") and collectivity (in the sense of social connection). We find this relationship expressed in the Greek Zeno's formula "unus ego et multi in me" (namely, "In me there is a single I and there are many ones").

Many psychological and psychoanalytic models have elaborated a vision in which the psyche is not a compact and homogeneous element, which can be circumscribed in a definite and clear way, which can be localized and circumscribed within a specific space (De Luca Picione, 2021a, c).

Vygotsky said the human being is a *home duplex* (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 54).

Below we consider some of the psychic models that have taken into account the polymorphism of the psyche.

According to William Stern, the psyche emerges from the constant negotiation between two directions: "the internal infinity" (the deep feeling of a person with respect to the Self) and "the external infinity" (the imagination and knowledge of the world "out there"). It is possible to perceive a part of the latter, but much of it remains beyond the reach of a person. In Stern's words, a person is a "*unitas multiplex*" of biological, psychological, and moral processes. This complexity is organized through a *teleomechanism* process, which is a trajectory of planning, intentionality, and self-determination aimed toward the future (Stern, 1935).

According to James (1890), human experience is characterized by being able to construct *multiple realities* (so-called sub-universes of reality), each of which is characterized by its incommensurability, its own criteria of definition, and its own temporal specificity. These sub-universes are the product of the human psychic structure, as characterized by a *multiplicity of selves*. The ego is understood as the position from which experience is made, and each of them corresponds to a specific world. James uses the term *polypsychism* to indicate the plurality of egos, which consciously experience several specific worlds. For example, science, madness, dream, myth, common sense, art, and religion constitute different sub-universes of reality. However, their delimitation is never clearly defined. Consciousness is characterized as a flow (the so-called stream of consciousness), that is, a continuous process that passes from one state to another without interruption. James believes that every world, as long as it is the object of attention, is real in its own way. In James' vision, consciousness cannot be cut in single pieces (nor in the extreme case he admits an unconscious part), because the various I's flow along its stream and the different conscious positions of the subject "merge into each other." To indicate this state of transition, James uses the notion of *fringe*, understood at the same time as the halo that surrounds the objects of attention and as the consciousness of this halo.

Through the fringe, human beings can have – close to the central core of the experiences – also "vague and inarticulate" threshold experiences, which can therefore provide the perception of an elsewhere not currently focused, toward which the attention is potentially able to shift. The fringe is the "edge," "trawl," or "halo of the object" that acts as a background for the experience of consciousness and attention, creating the conditions for passage of transformation. James' model is therefore characterized by a great emphasis on the changeability and fluidity of the passages.[2]

Instead, in Pierre Janet's psychic model, the human mind is conceptualized as a *hierarchy of functions* underlying the psychological tension, and at the top of this hierarchy is the function of reality. Going beyond a reflexive stimulus-response mechanism, Janet emphasizes the unpredictable freedom character of human action as a result of a combination of an ancient organization and another newer part that gives its character to present action and be prepared for progress (Janet, 1938). This idea was highly influencing for the same Vygotsky. Indeed, as it is well-documented (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1988), the Russian psychologist was deeply acquainted

[2] James in the course of his works often oscillates between a *continuist view of the Self* (based on a certain unity) and a *discontinuist one* (based on multiplicity). However, the two approaches must not be considered as a logical contradiction but as an essential condition of the self.

In fact, on the one hand, James considers the I as equated with the self-as-knower, and it has three features: continuity, distinctness, and volition. The continuity of the self-as-knower is characterized by a sense of personal identity, that is, a sense of sameness through time. In relation to the I, the Me is equated with the self-as-known and is composed of the empirical elements considered as belonging to oneself. In James' view, the self was "extended" to the environment. People and things in the environment belong to the self, as far as they are felt as "mine." This means that not only "my mother" belongs to the self but even "my enemy." In James' view, the self was "extended" to the environment.

with Janet's works. Reading the following citations, we found a strong link between the idea of sociogenesis of Vygotsky and Janet (Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1988):

> According to the law that I discussed with you every individual repeats in himself the social conducts. The child creates his individuality because one always mentions him in the same way and because one's behavior towards him has a certain unity. (Janet, 1929, p. 268)

> All social psychological laws have two aspects: an exterior aspect concerning other people, an interior aspect concerning ourselves. Almost always the second form is posterior to the first one. (Janet, 1929, p. 521)

Furthermore, Janet introduces a genetic perspective in the classification of tendencies, identifying in the higher and more recent hierarchical levels the function of reality, the adaptation to reality, and the feeling of real action. In this hierarchical framework, different tendencies occupy a specific level based on the efficiency, complexity, and systematization of actions. They range from a basis of the hierarchical organization made up of elementary tendencies (e.g., reflex acts) up to increasingly complex operations of thought (abstraction, imagination, hypothetical thinking) which require a constant process of synthesis to organize all the different parts of the psyche. Pierre Janet begins to pay attention on the *dissociative processes* of the psyche, i.e., those processes of disaggregation, disarticulation, and psychic discontinuity (from the point of view of identity, memory, perception) when the synthetic function is put in check (e.g., by action of a traumatic experience) (Janet, 1887).

For his part, Freud elaborates two different models of the psyche, called the first topic and the second topic. The *first topic* (Freud, 1900) corresponds to a topographical model, in which the mind is divided into three provinces: unconscious, preconscious, and conscious. The *unconscious*[3] is the place of the repressed, of everything that cannot or must not emerge into consciousness and whose core is made up by childhood experiences.

The *preconscious* is made up of a series of contents which are not currently found in the field of consciousness but which can be recalled with an act of will. The *conscious* is the part of the psychic apparatus, which – through the sense organs – is in direct contact with the outside world (but also the inner world perceived as an object) and consciously uses thoughts, memories, and desires to perform voluntary actions in one's life, carefully examining reality. Between the provinces of the unconscious and the preconscious, there is the action of a psychic censorship and a mechanism of psychic repression that prevents inappropriate desires, representations, and memories from becoming aware.

The *second topic* (Freud, 1923) introduces a radical transformation of the first topic. Freud elaborates a "structural model" of the mind, made up of psychic "instances." Here, we no longer speak of places, but of mental functions. The psyche

[3] Freud attributes to the unconscious a series of very specific ways of functioning, including: a) the absence of contradiction, b) the absence of temporality, c) the primary process – that is, a process aimed at the immediate satisfaction of needs –, d) the confusion between external reality and psychic reality, and e) the condensation and the displacement of contents.

is now tripartite into *id*, *ego*, and *super-ego*. The *id* is completely unconscious and is made up of drives. The *ego* is the result of the modification of a portion of the id, produced by contact with the outside world. The function of the ego is on the one hand to mediate between the internal and external worlds and on the other hand to mediate between the drives of the id and the censorship requests of the super-ego. The *super-ego* is a psychic formation constituted through a process of identification with the parents, leading the child to assimilate the values, norms, and parental prohibitions, but also the values, ideals, and social canons. Freud uses the metaphor of the onion: the psyche is made as an onion, where each layer is constituted by a set of identification. The psychic processes of incorporation, introjection, and identification with the Other are the basis of the development of the psyche.

Jung also elaborates a differentiated and dynamic model of the psyche (Jung, 1959, 2014). The *Self* is understood as a total and multiple organization, of which the ego represents only a small conscious part, while most of the processes are unconscious. The *unconscious* is made up by both a personal and a collective unconscious, in which there are sedimented ancestral experiences of humanity that are available to each individual. Collective unconscious constitutes a transgenerational and phylogenetic heritage. It is the origin of instincts, of the contents of thought, of feelings, and of everything related to the mind. The contents of the collective unconscious are the *archetypes*, namely, the universal and impersonal images, expressed in the myths, rites, and religions of all the peoples of the world (Jung explores many archetypes, e.g., the *person*, the *shadow*, the *anima* and *animus*, the *child*, and the *old*). With reference to archetypes, James Hillman (1975) conceptualizes the psyche as "polytheistic" in the multiform background of the different archetypal configurations, intending to emphasize the need to specify and differentiate every event of experience, the connected states of consciousness, and the relational style with the world. In the Jungian perspective, each individual is grappling with the search for a personal balance between two polarities, the being possessed by archetypes (so-called psychic inflation) and an excess of control by the consciousness. The developmental result of this dynamic process is the *individualization*, namely, the realization of a whole Self that integrates both the unconscious and the conscious components and the presence of the Other in itself.

3.3 The Function of the Other as a Catalyst for Psychic Development

In many post-Freudian psychoanalytic models, we find an effort and increasing attention to the role played by otherness in the dynamics of identity development, differentiation, and separation (De Luca Picione, 2021c). In Melanie Klein's model of object relations (1967), there are a deepening of the unconscious relational dynamics between child and mother and the development of somato-psychic unconscious fantasies, which are the first form of symbolization of the relationship with the mother and with the outside world.

Also in Winnicott's work (1962), the possibility of development of the psyche is made possible by the function of the Other. Winnicott recognizes the importance of the environmental protection that the mother exercises toward the newborn. Winnicott believes that *holding*, *handling*, and *object-presenting* are the main relational processes that act in the gradual development of the child's identity, integration, and independence (as a process of separation and autonomy). The *holding process* is provided by the maternal containment that allows the child to feel the integration of the body, to overcome fragmentation, and to perceive the continuity of his own existence. The *handling process* takes place through maternal care that exerts sensations on the infant's body, allowing the skin to be felt as a delimiting membrane that distinguishes *me* from *not-me*. The *object-presenting* process is the mother's operation of presenting the world to the child. This exposure to the outside allows to present the child a gradual perception of the world as something other than oneself and as not created by himself and his illusion of omnipotence. The most relevant implication of these relational processes is the initiation of a process of symbolization and sensemaking that arises the subjective world of the individual. In fact, the formation (between 4 and 12 months of life) of the *transitional object* and of the transitional space – that is, a third psychic area called the "zone of illusion" – allows the creation of a fluid space of relationship between fantasy and reality, between the internal world and external reality, between oneself and the Other. The transitional space is a potential psychic area, which is neither internal nor external, but separates and at the same time connects the inside and the outside, the me and the not-me, the object of desires and the things of the objective world. The transitional space is a vital and creative area that accompanies the development of the subject throughout life and is at the heart of play, art, and culture.

Also in Wilfred Bion's model (2014), we find a great emphasis on the function of otherness for the first initiation of the psychic constitution of the subject, of the ability to think and to give meaning to experience. Bion believes that the process of projective identification (initially introduced by Melanie Klein[4]) is not only defensive but that it fulfills important communicative and relational functions. Bion believes that this specific relational process allows the construction of the mind and initiates the possibility of thinking. By communicating one's emotions to the Other (through projective identification), the projected raw emotional contents can return to the subject under a metabolized form, that is, psychically processed/digested by the other. The child urgently needs a psychic apparatus that can help him too transform his brute perceptive and emotional experiences into symbolized forms, thinkable thoughts. Through the process of maternal *rêverie* (name that Bion adopts to designate the mother's response to the projective identification of the child), however, the child not only benefits from a "psychic food already digested" and

[4] Klein's projective identification (1946) is a defensive unconscious mechanism: the subject produces an unconscious fantasy, in which a segment of the self is experienced as if it were placed in another person. Then the subject remains identified with the other and try to control it. Bion goes beyond this vision and retains the projective identification is the first form of inter-subjective communication between the infants and the mother.

therefore easier to absorb, but also he appropriates of the same way of thinking (*alpha function*) (Bion, 1967). Without the alpha function, all sensory information, perceptions, and emotional experiences are experienced not as phenomena but as things in themselves, as concrete objects, as autonomous entities. These reifications – due to their psychic indigestibility and the anguish and the sense of death they cause – are expelled (evacuated) from the psychic system to the outer world and are experienced as threatening and persecutory objects.

3.4 The Constitution of a Third Space ("Meta") as a Condition for the Possibility of the Encounter and Dialogue

By avoiding a reified vision of the psyche – that is, with its own identity, homogeneity, and separateness from its relational and contextual system – we are highlighting the centrality of the function of otherness. In fact, it is only starting from the dimension of otherness and its various expressions that the individual psyche can instantiate itself, develop, and transform.

This process is inherently dialogic; however, it should be clarified that this dialogue does not have the nature of a simple bilateral exchange, nor it is the passage of information between the various participants. Rather, we consider dialogue as the process of transforming the psyche and integrating the perspective of Others within the construction of a shared framework. We are saying that in order to make possible the relationship with the Other, then the definition of a stable space of sensemaking is necessary, which works as guarantor, super-ordered frame, stabilizer, and promoter of the encounter with the Other. This question is central and requires some clarification. We consider the sensemaking as a semiotic process with a recursive and dynamic effect in the time that expands or shrinks the systems of relation with the other subjects involved in a relational scenario (Salvatore & Freda, 2011; De Luca Picione & Freda, 2016; De Luca Picione et al., 2018). In order to realize the sensemaking process, there is a need of two necessary conditions:

1. A shared symbolic frame, in terms of pertinentization, which at the same time defines constrains and possibilities for the sensemaking process (Salvatore et al., 2021a, b).
2. The presence of other points of view that are acting in the same shared frame.

By accounting that, there is a shift from a naturalistic vision of the dialogue (intended as a natural condition between people who exchange information by means of codification and de-codification without any context) toward a study of the semiotic dynamics that is based on dialogue (as a way to construct models of interpretation and agency, starting from the relations with other points of view).

The importance of the presence of a "*super partes*" frame as a condition of possibility and guarantee of the dialogue has been elaborated in different ways, by

emphasizing the affective, emotional, relational, contextual, but also symbolic, cultural, and structural dynamics.

For example, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan re-elaborates the notion of the *Other* (with a capital letter) in an original way, recognizing the pre-eminence of the symbolic and structural order that pre-exists every single individual (Lacan, 2006). The Lacanian *Other* coincides with the laws of language and, consequently, with those of culture, which orient the formation of the mind of human beings. Each individual is always born in a system that pre-exists him, namely, he is in a relationship of structural dependence with language. Only starting from this condition (which generates both a structural dependence and a "lack" in existential terms) an individual can become a subject. While within the dual relationships with the *other*[5] (based on the imaginary effect of identification with the other individual) clashes and conflicts are also possible, instead, the relationship with the *Other* (as a "super-ordered thirdness") ensures the possibility to be in relationship with other individuals and to share a common symbolic system. For example, let us imagine two people who in a discursive dynamic contrast their views and their opinions (it is a dual relationship), yet they are doing so starting (and thanks to the possibility) of a super-ordinate system of language to which both they are obeying and sharing.

In the socio-psychoanalytic model of Carli and Paniccia (2003), the dimension of sharing that makes a relationship possible is called *collusion* (a term of Latin origin that means "playing together," but also "secret agreement"). By collusion, the authors mean an unconscious process of socialization, which comes from the emotional sharing of contextual situations. In other words, colluding means emotionally sharing the same affective symbolizations within a context experienced in common. This emotional-symbolic process founds and organizes the construction of social relations and social reality. From this psychoanalytic perspective, affective symbolization is the most important way for human beings in order to relate to reality and to know it. Collusion therefore represents the relational dimension that founds every possible encounter between people.

From a different but not contradicting perspective, the possibility of instantiating a relationship with the other is considered as a *field process*. The notion of field makes possible to consider both the synchronic and diachronic processes, the relationship between the parts and the whole, and the identities and their transformation and relational developments. The notion of field is by now a solid acquisition of psychology and psychoanalysis (Baranger & Baranger, 2008; Ferro & Civitarese, 2018; Lewin, 1951; Stern, 2013a, b). The notion of field introduces the *emergence* as an unpredictable and never fully knowable process (Stern, 2015). The emergence provides the constitution of another reality that cannot be reduced to each single individual in interaction (see, e.g., Ogden's (1994) *analytic inter-subjective third*, i.e., the inter-subjective product that is different from the individualities of the participants themselves in the analysis). The characteristics of a field are therefore the inextricable relationality, the interdependence (i.e., the transformation of a specific

[5] The *other* (in this case specifically with a lowercase letter)

part produces effects on the whole field and on the interaction system), the non-localization of the individual interaction systems, the simultaneity, and the plasticity.[6]

For his part, the psychoanalyst René Kaës believes that the understanding of psychic processes requires the reformulation of a model – which he defines as the "third topic" – capable of contemplating the inter-subjective and trans-subjective dimension in addition to the individual psyche. The third topic introduces the *heterogeneous*, *ectopic*, and *heterotopic* character of the unconscious into the psyche. Kaës reformulates the idea of inter-subjectivity, freeing it from the meaning of a dual relationship on a behavioral basis, and he grounds it on the idea of "unconscious alliances" between people (Kaës, 2014). Starting from the studies on the *group psychic apparatus*[7] (Kaës, 1976), the third topic is based on the articulation between the common and shared psychic reality, the internal world of a single subject and the space of the bond between the subjects. In this sense, each individual is a "singular plural" (Kaës, 2007), as it is both the result of a series of relational sediments and the transitory knot of a developing inter-subjective bonding process.

Beyond the psychoanalytic context, the notion of the field as a supra-individual dynamic relational system has found interesting developments in semiotics and cultural psychology.

For the sake of our discussion, it is worthy to consider Lotman's notion of *semiosphere* (Lotman, 2005). The semiosphere is the semiotic space outside of which the

[6] It is worthy to note for the purposes of our work on internal and external dialogicity that Vygotsky himself uses the notion of field referring to internal discourse:

> Inner speech continually creates a field of meanings, a *psychisches Feld*, which differs from the external situation; this is the strength of abstraction and freedom — we are incapable of changing the field of forces and the external *Aufforderungscharakter*, but by changing the inner field, we change its impact on us also from the outside. The problem of will is transferred from outside inwards, from the plane of behavior to the plane of consciousness: the creation of inner fields, for which the presence of meaningful speech is indispensable. (Vygotsky, 2018, p.336)

[7] The group psychic apparatus is a psychic device whose extension can incorporate other bond configurations as well (couple, family, institutions, and so on). According to Kaës, the psychic apparatus of the bond is supported in a multiple and reciprocal way on the differentiated and undifferentiated group formations of the psychism of each member that forms the whole. The psychic apparatus of the social bond cannot be reduced to the individual psychic apparatus (Kaës et al., 2018). Each bond configuration is an appeal structure with respect to the psychic places necessary for its conservation and functioning. In such places, objects, images, instances, and signifiers are represented. Their functions and reasons are embodied and played by some subjects (Kaës et al., 2018). Kaës includes a number of reasons underlying the need for bonding. First of all, human being is always born within a bond (that is cultural, emotional, idealized, dreamed) that pre-exists him. His biological immaturity at birth imposes the need for a social bond for survival. People bond for the pleasure of being united in the dream of an idealization. They also make a bond against the fear of separation, to maintain the illusion of unity, to maintain the illusion of the narcissistic completeness between the ego and the outside world. The bond protects from the fear of the night, of the dark, of the unknown, of the unexpected. Through the bond, the continuity of psychic life between generations is ensured.

existence of semiosis is not possible. It has two fundamental characteristics: the *need for delimitation* and the *structural irregularity*. The semiosphere is the set of signs that belong to a space closed in itself, within social life, where the relationships between different individuals and the communication and processes of new information can be realized. The semiosphere can be considered as a single organism, an overall semiotic space, which in its unity makes the single sign an act significant in relation with other signs (text, fragment of language, perception, memory, image, etc.). The semiosphere is the structure/system/process, thanks to whom the other can relate. In fact, the semiosphere provides a set of translation filters on the border that enable the relation with the other (i.e., the stranger, the unknown).

By connecting semiotic and psychoanalytical stances, Salvatore has elaborated the notion of "semiotic capital" (Salvatore et al., 2021a, b). It consists of the amount of intangible symbolic resources that enable people to internalize the systemic bond to the public and social sphere. People make experience of semiotic capital as a basic drive for their thoughts and actions. Semiotic capital enlarges and at the same time binds the variability of the subjects' thoughts and actions, thus determining the conditions of predictability, integration, finalization, and reciprocity of social exchange. The idea of semiotic capital conceptualizes the actor-system relation in terms of models of *thirdness* and *otherness* (Salvatore et al., 2021a, b).

These arguments have a fundamental implication for our discourse. The guarantee of a third area of meeting with the Other is the foundation for both inter-subjective and intra-subjective dialogue of the psyche. The dialogue as a transformative and relational modality occurs both at a level of hetero-dialogicity, that is to say with an external other (which can be both real and imaginary), and at the level of self-dialogicity (that is to say with oneself, among the different perspective positionings of the self) (Valsiner, 2002). It is therefore important to highlight the link between a relational space (made up of cultural symbolic dimensions but also unconscious and virtual ones) and the possible encounter with otherness.

3.5 Conclusions: The Liminality of the Psyche

By considering the contributions from the cultural psychology and psychoanalysis, we can argue that identity is a liminal process of sensemaking, namely, an affective semiotic process aimed to organize itself between continuity and discontinuity, between different points of view on the world and different systems of inter-subjective relations.

As we are seeing, identity cannot be considered as an entity nor as the description of a static system. Rather, identity is a liminal process in continuous transformation in the relationship with otherness. This process is aimed at organizing the specific partial configurations at each moment into levels of greater complexity and generalization, but also the irreversible becoming of the transformations, namely, the identity is a process aimed to hold together the past experiences, the present contextual organization, and the future (expected/imagined/not-yet-known)

scenario. The psyche, therefore, represents the supra-system capable of holding together the oscillation between identity and otherness over time. Unity must be a structure that is undergoing a transformation. Jaan Valsiner (2014) has developed a model of psyche that elaborates profoundly the notions of borders and semiotic processes. Each psychological phenomenon occurs as a proximal phenomenon that emerges at the border of the person and the external world and in the present, namely, at the border between the future and the past. The psyche is constantly engaged in an incessant transformation between *inside/outside* and between *past/future* (Valsiner, 2014). Thus, the polyphony of the psyche is realized by means of all these different forms of alterity (inner and outer, past and future, parts and whole).

The psyche is a genetic, dynamic, and exo-self-defining process. As we have seen through different models and arguments, the psyche is constantly struggling with research and the effort to keep together its unity and multitude, its uniqueness, and its variability. This dynamic is not to be read as a demonstration of its *diminutio*, namely, in a perspective of deficiency, weakness, ignorance, and incompleteness. The psychic relationship between identity and otherness is inherently dynamic (constructive and destructive) and acts on multiple levels in a dialogue between different instances and positions (see "Multiple Relations of the Ego–Alter," in Marková, 2016, pp. 108–109).

Vygotsky valued the higher functions of the psyche (among them, principally the consciousness, the volition, and freedom – Cimatti, 2021) yet without never reducing the human being to a solipsistic individual. He anticipated clearly such a perspective:

> Consciousness is a dialogue with oneself. Already the fact that the child first listens and understands and then acquires verbal consciousness points out that: (1) Consciousness develops from experience; (2) Speaking with himself = consciously acting, the child takes the position of the other, relates to himself as to another person, imitates another person speaking to him, replaces the other person in relation to himself, learns to be another person in relation to his proper body. Consciousness is a double. Thence the child does not know "I": "Bobby" fell, instead of "I" fell. This is possible thanks to the reversibility of the word: The reaction is a stimulus. But this is called imitation. All speech is imitation." (Vygotsky, 2018, p.75)

Psyche's development is linked to the way in which it is able to integrate the function of otherness into it and to establish systems of "inter-subjective third party."

Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the importance for the psyche not only of stability but also of innovation and transformation. Variability is the rule rather than the exception for any natural, biological, and psychological phenomenon. The scientist Maruyama (1963, 1978) has highlighted that it always exists together with a *morphostatic trajectory* – aimed at homeostasis and the reduction of changes – and also as a *morphogenetic trajectory*, which is aimed at the amplification of perturbations, at the drive for transformation, and to the production of variability.

It is not just a matter of a ready responsiveness to the stimuli (a reactive posture aimed to return to a previous state of equilibrium); rather, it is an interplay of proactive and agentive ways aimed to anticipate desired scenario: "the environment acts in relation to the development of the higher specifically human properties and the

forms of activity as a source of development, i.e. interaction with the environment is the source of what the child assimilates of these properties" (Vygotsky, 2018, p. 82).

Edgar Morin contributed to clarify the "complementary and antagonistic dynamics" between the different components of a system (Morin, 1993). They are at the same time differentiated parts with a degree of autonomy and independence; however, they are related within the dynamics underlying the identity and unity of the system. There is a complex relationship between part and unit, in terms of openness and closure, and explicitly of identity and otherness, observing that it is always present at all systemic levels (internal and external). The problem of the living organization is that of being simultaneously open and closed. This is the problem of *endo-exo-reference elaboration*. Morin says it is the problem of the border that isolates the cell and at the same time generates communication with the outside world. Knowledge presupposes a separation from the outside world, but it also presupposes a separation from oneself. Morin reiterates that knowledge rises from a prodigious iceberg of non-knowledge in our relationship with ourselves. The unknown is not only the external world but also ourselves. This condition of uncertainty is therefore bivalent and is the foundation of the relationship with a double form of otherness: an *alter-ego* and an *ego-alter* (Morin, 2007).

> There are two associated subjective principles: the principle of exclusion and that of inclusion. What is the principle of exclusion? Linguists have noted that anyone can say "I", but that no one can say it for me. The "I", in other words, is something totally banal, and at the same time something absolutely unique. And this is true even in the case of identical or homozygotic twins who have exactly the same genetic make-up. […]
>
> But this principle of exclusion is inseparable from a principle of inclusion which makes I possible for us to integrate other selves within our subjectivity, we can integrate our personal subjectivity within a more collective subjectivity-within a "we." (Morin, 2007, p. 75)

These considerations lead us to consider the psyche as a polyphonic dialogue between different internal and external instances (Bakhtin, 1984) that emerge from the refraction of one's own identity in a multitude of Others:

> I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a thou). Separation, dissociation, and enclosure within the self as the main reason for the loss of one's self. Not that which takes place within, but that which takes place on the boundary between one's own and someone else's consciousness, on the threshold. And everything internal gravitates not toward itself but is turned to the outside and dialogized, every internal experience ends up on the boundary, encounters another, and in this tension-filled encounter lies its entire essence. This is the highest degree of sociality (not external, not material, but internal)... The very being of man (both external and internal) is the deepest communion. To be means to communicate. Absolute death (nonbeing) is the state of being unheard, unrecognized, unremembered. To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another. (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287)

The psyche is therefore always placed on a border (De Luca Picione, 2021c) with a constant oscillation between stability and instability. This liminal condition is the very matrix of the psyche and its primary source of constant transformation. This liminal dynamic always takes the form of an oscillation:

> […] human living, as they arise from the human potential condition of permanently looking and striving for coherence and stability, on one hand, while unceasingly realizing instability and difference, on the other. This means that what we realize in our I-world relationships we do in terms of pairs of opposites, according to a symbolic imbalanced combinatory movement between and among opposites […]. (Simão, 2016, p. 23)

The constitution of the psyche is made possible by a process of mediation, regulation, and growth between two antithetical poles: one of total rigidity/separation/closure and the other one of extreme fragmentation/fusion/dissolution. In the works *Mysterium Conijunctionis* (1956) and *Psychology and Alchemy* (1944), Jung used the alchemical adage "*Solve et Coagula*" to describe the dynamics of transformation of the psyche. In the developmental effort to integrate the opposites and the antagonistic and complementary drives, the psyche goes through both processes of *dissolution* and *solidification*. The former allows the transformation, the loss of old habits and the creative introduction of novelty, the abandonment of past identifications and psychic projections, while the latter makes possible to preserve and consolidate new acquisitions, learnings, and skills. However, both processes cannot be exclusive and unique; the psyche is characterized by the interpenetration of both.

The transformative dynamic of the psyche is a strictly liminal process, since it is founded on the construction of an experiential place "in-between," in which the opposites coexist side by side or one inside the other; the fantasy and the reality flow back one into the other; the necessity and the possibility are merged (Barros et al., 2020; De Luca Picione & Valsiner, 2017; Stenner, 2018; Turner et al., 1983).

As we have seen, the polymorphism of the psyche, its development, thanks to the constant mediation of the Other, a "third space" as the possibility of encountering otherness, are all processes in constant evolution, characterized by a never-ending oscillation between opening and closing, stability and disorganization.

Liminality is the constitutive condition of the psyche in making the intra-inter-subjective experience of creativity, transformation, innovation, and experimentation. The novelty emerges through the free recombination of familiar elements with non-familiar elements, of the identity and the otherness, of the memory and the unexpected.

Liminality makes possible the space of play and imagination, which re-assembles and often subverts the established order of classifications and rigid social categorizations. The liminal area is a space of multiple virtual possibilities and potentially active opportunities. In psychic and social development, it is necessary to go through liminality despite the anguish and awareness of the risk and danger.

The liminal condition of the psyche makes possible the creation of a blurred, potential, and median border between the internal and external world. On such a border, psyche finds possibility of creative subjectification of relations with the otherness and the possibility of dialogue.

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Part II
Empirical Advances on Inner Speech

Chapter 4
Expressiveness and Psychic Internality: The Use of Online Diaries in the Contemporary Forms of Life

Marina Assis Pinheiro, Roberta de Sousa Mélo, and Clarissa Dubeux Barros

4.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to develop a reflection on the theoretical-methodological meanings of the metaphor of psychic internality in Psychology, through a reflection on epistemological-interpretative perspectives involved in the conception of interiority. The problematization of the metaphor of the private interiority of the psyche will follow the criticism issued by Hacker (2000), based on his reading of Wittgenstein's second philosophy, as found in *Philosophical Investigations* (2009). In this work, we find not only the fundamental reflective operators of linguistic pragmatism in its inherent dialogicity typical of ordinary uses of language but also a critique of the psychological vocabulary and the language games in force about consciousness, sensations, and corporeality. In light of this, we approach the notion of language games of the psychic spatialization of subjectivity (Hacker, 2000; Wittgenstein, 2009). Therefore, it is intended to discuss the dialogical nature (Bakhtin, 1990, 1999; Pinheiro & Leitão, 2010) and, consequently, always bordering the self-other of the psyche, recognizing that the properly psychological processes are necessarily marked and constituted by the otherness of the world, through intersubjective relationships and their forms of sign emergence.

In the proposed reflection, as a way of bringing to life the theoretical discussion mentioned above, the research experience of the authors with the use of online diaries on daily life during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil will also be approached. This research was conducted with groups of participants made up by women confined at home and explored the cultural mutations provoked in the personal culture and in the collectivities in progress along with the reality triggered by the coronavirus. During a 15-day interval, four participants sent the researcher

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reports about their thoughts, feelings, activities, fears, etc., in short, everything they would like to say through voice messages sent via applications (e.g., WhatsApp or Telegram). The maximum interval between each diary was 2 days, with the participants being interviewed at the end of the 15 days by the researcher, with the purpose of exploring meanings, tensions, and challenges articulated in the daily messages.

In this sense, it is proposed that the intimacy (Pinheiro, in press) of the symbolic elaborations produced in such diaries does not need to be recognized as an internal process, or the sharing of an inner speech, or even a nebulous, ambiguous, and imprecise mirror, from the mental theater of consciousness. Differently from that, we propose that the reports are a hybrid symbolic production formed by the agentivity of a *self*, responsive to the interpellations of the most diverse social and historical otherness. The ambiguity and the ambivalences produced in the signs-field of experience, the traces of the other – i.e., of the alterity in us – are considered as typical of so many other superior psychological processes such as imagination, creativity, remembrance, argumentation, etc. Further on, a case (Laura's) will be introduced as a way of bringing about other interpretative possibilities, different from the grammars of internality. Based on enunciations produced by the participant, a reading will be developed anchored in the function in which corporeality and the processes of signification and temporality play in the inexorable psychic dialogy of the self-with-others.

In order to start the proposed argumentative work, we can say that the idea of psychic internality/interiority has always been a problem for Psychology as a science. If, on the one hand, classical behavioral objectivism had to deny it, stating that its ontological condition would be inaccessible via observable empirical evidence, on the other hand, it constituted a baffling metaphysical ghost delimiting the dilemmatic differentiation of its investigative territory in relation to the other humanities.

As we know, such heritage comes from a long history, with the Cartesian tradition being a strong *landmark*. Cartesian dualism conceived the thinking substance, the *res cogitans*, as immaterial in contrast to the corporeality, *res extensa*, to which geometrical laws were applied, since all materiality occupies a delimitable place in space. The inner world would be of the order of the *res cogitans*, where the bodily senses are sources of stimulation, but never of knowledge. Accordingly, corporeality was subjected to a great split that identified/reduced it to the state of a thing and extension. Nonetheless, such corporeality, as a sentient agentivity of the world, was never completely subordinated to the status of a thing, since the body is what makes the object a thing (Esposito, 2016).

The dualisms arising from such separations entail problems that resonate even today in contemporary Psychology. Dualist splits – as nature and culture; subjectivity and objectivity; and internal psychic privacy and shared social exteriority – are producers of simplifying reductions capable of making Psychology subject to epistemopathologies (Koch, 1981). Such epistemopathologic formations would turn Psychology into a collection of curiosities that have no dialogue with the holistic, vital, and significant complexity of people and their ways of life or, worse, would turn it into a field of scientific validation of social values.

When reflecting on the historical and epistemological matrices of the birth of Psychology, Luis Claudio Figueiredo (1996) highlights that the project of modernity with its ideals of self-achievement was based on values and practices where psychic internality was pivotal. Internality was thus constructed by three historical vectors oriented by the production of subjectivities based on (a) the grammar of individualism that proposes a sovereign *self* and generates self-contained, self-known, and self-dominated identities; (b) romantic social matrices, characterized by an understanding of a *self* made up of crises and tensions between an internality formulated by values, such as spontaneity and impulsiveness, which are impossible to be self-restrained in relation to public life; and (c) liberal ideals in which rationalism would consolidate the common good at the expense of forms of individual happiness.

In this sense, it would be interesting to think about how historical processes acting in these forms of subjectivation in contemporary Western societies have turned into a subjective landscape very different from the novels mentioned by Vygotsky as examples about inner speech (Vygotsky, 2010) and which we will discuss further below. In contemporary culture, if we think about the *editable ego* (Pinheiro, 2016) of virtual social networks, we find forms of subjectivation that are very averse to the notion of internality. These forms of symbolic-imagetic avatarization of oneself are forged in performative and extrospective practices that run across the field of online to offline relationships. In these practices, the activity of editing and displaying everyday ordinariety, even daily, is still fictionalizing and co-dependent on an audience that is also avatarized and witness to the virtualization of oneself.

Given the argumentative limits of this text, we discard the possibility of developing here an exhaustive reflection on the processes of subjectivation at play in the psychic internality and its vocabularies in Psychology. The specific purpose of this chapter is to offer the reader (1) a brief questioning about the meanings of privacy interiorized in the grammars of socio-historical and cultural perspectives of Psychology (Bruner, 2002; Valsiner, 2012; Vygotsky, 2010); (2) an approach to Wittgenstein's linguistic pragmatism critiques of language games from internality to the psychological individual; and (3) a discussion based on a research instrument for online diaries (Barros et al., 2021; Pinheiro & Mélo, 2020), about another grammar of a dialogical nature, which would dispense the spatialization of the psyche to talk about subjective agentivity and its psychic processes in the face of the alterity of the life of intersubjective relationship.

Thus, we hope to sensitize the reader about the effects of internality spatialized in the current ultra-individualistic ways of life and to encourage him/her to pay attention to how dialogical ethics, anchored in the ideal of democratic utopias, can illuminate the very way we conceive, describe, and produce knowledge about the subjective sphere. In the sense, we think of dialogical ethics not as an effect, but as a matrix of the ways used by Psychology to theorize the human becoming in a *continuum* between subjective singularity and the possibility of the individual to become the strong poet of his/her history (Rorty, 1995) in the face of socio-historical contingencies (inherent to complex, open, and indeterministic systems) of the relationship between people and cultures.

4.2 Internalization and Inner Speech: Versioning, Meanings, and Psychological Functions of the Metaphor of Internality in Socio-historical and Cultural Psychology

One of the psychological functions that bring the predicative mention of psychic internality in its own name is the concept of *inner speech*, as we know it through Vygotsky (2010) in the article *Thinking and Speech*. In this text, of a markedly reflective and argumentative nature with the Psychology of the time, we read a frank defense of inner speech as a psychic function. It would come from a development process in which, through the interaction between individual and culture, the child individuates and creates a self for itself from a fundamental social-alteritarian condition. This developmental path mirrors a conception of the human being that would forever be a tributary of language as a fundamental unit of consciousness. As we know, in this work, Vygotsky argues against the Piagetian theses of the disappearance of egocentric speech related to an autistic stage of thought that would be replaced by social language and by the possibility of decentering child reasoning.

In this discussion, Vygotsky, supported not only in his investigations but in approaches to literature and philosophy, radically refutes the proposition of the existence of a speech that would be deprived of its social function. Quite differently, Vygotsky claims that all language would be social and that the study of word development would be correlated with the understanding of the development of consciousness. The author understands that the so-called egocentric speech would be a speech that does not differ from social otherness, a speech that throughout development would be internalized, losing its vocal aspect. In descriptive terms, inner speech would be like the language of an individual's thoughts talking to his/her own buttons, so to speak. The inner speech would have the characteristic of being formed by signs and abbreviated enunciations, since the individual dominates its own enunciative context, as well as the predications of his/her psychic action. It would be prototypical of situations in which the individual finds himself/herself before solving problems, having as a mark of his/her subjective event, i.e., the affective intensity.

In the inner speech, there would be, therefore, the primacy of singular meanings over the lived ones, meanings that are pregnant with affection that would be externally translated, in the social-addressed speech in relation to the other with all its possible intonations. Vygotskian inner speech would be a psychological function rather than a positional topology. Thus, it leaves clues about the function of the dialogical singularity that always transforms messages from social, historical, and interactional otherness:

> If "language is as old as conscience", if "language is a practical conscience that exists for other people and, consequently, for me", if the "curse of matter, the curse of the moving layers of the spirit hangs over the pure consciousness", then it is clear that it is not a simple

> thought but consciousness as a whole that is linked in its development to the development of the word. (Vygotsky, 2010, p. 77)[1]

In this quote, a certain Cartesian tradition is questioned in terms of another form of transcendence. This other form of transcendence would allude to the logical and historical precedence of language in the development of human individuals, where Vygotsky concludes: "The word is to consciousness as the small world is to the big world, as the living cell is to the organism, as the atom to the cosmos" (Vygotsky, 2010, p. 77).

Accordingly, despite the inner speech being conceived as a psychic function engendered through a development in sociocultural fabrics, Vygotskian internality would be more a predication of individuation processes and inclusive separation (Valsiner, 1998) from social otherness. It is not approached as an ontological realm situated within one's being, in a dimension immeasurably different from its expressive and linguistic veins. Its ontogenetic developmental trajectory would mark its origin and nature along with the externality of the world of human relationships and communicative exchanges.

The development of the word as a unit of analysis of the development of consciousness would be a path that would try to account for the double face of language that is singularized in the agenciality of consciousness and its affective reflectivity, embodied source of meanings, belonging to an individual who is tributary to social otherness. In this discussion, it is interesting to return to Bruner's critique of a certain positivist matrix in Psychology that establishes a distrust of verbal data based on an undue discrepancy between "what people say and what they actually do" (Bruner, 2002, p. 25). In his words:

> Since the rejection of introspection as the central method of psychology, we have been taught to treat such verbal accounts as unreliable and even, by some strange philosophical tendency, as untrue. Our preoccupation with the criteria for verifying meaning, as Richard Rorty has pointed out, has made us devotees of prediction as a criterion of "good" science, including "good psychology" here. (Bruner, 2002, p. 25)

In this passage, Bruner recovers the history of the birth of Psychology in the psychophysics laboratories (Wundt), which, guided by the value given to the experimental method, turned the introspective activity of experience into a descriptive-objective activity of volumes, proportions, sounds, and asymmetries. Cartesian empiricism caused psychology to deviate from the meaning of human experience at its very birth. Vygotsky, in a pioneering way, sought precisely to recover this lost meaning, without resorting to individualizing metaphysical subjectivisms, considering, therefore, language as the mark of a social-constituted subjectivity. Vygotskian subjectivity would be so unique and agentive, since it

[1] Original quote in Portuguese: "Se 'a linguagem é tão antiga quanto a consciência', se 'a linguagem é uma consciência prática que existe para outras pessoas e, consequentemente, para mim', se a 'maldição da matéria, a maldição das camadas móveis do espírito paira sobre a consciência pura', então é evidente que não é um simples pensamento, mas toda a consciência em seu conjunto que está vinculada em seu desenvolvimento ao desenvolvimento da palavra" (Vygotsky, 2010, p. 77).

produces meanings, intentions, and innovation, as well as being subjected to the historical laws of phylogenetic, ontogenetic, and socio-historical development.

Bruner, in *Acts of Meaning* (2002), proposes that Psychology should be interested not only in what people do, in an attitude of disregard for language, but also in what they say they do, what they say about what made them do what they did, and also what people say that others did. For the author, what people say about their worlds should be the first interest of culturally oriented psychology, because it is understood that this saying is both reflection and construction of this world itself in the performative-creative face of language. From this perspective, ambiguity would be precisely the mark of human activity, in its permanent effort to reduce it as an interpreter of the possible futures of its own enunciations. Ambiguity, therefore, would not be a flaw and inaccuracy of the representational function of language, but, above all, the mark of human possibility as a creator of futures.

Contemporarily, in the Cultural Psychology of Semiotic Dynamics (Valsiner, 2012, 2017, 2019), internalization is proposed in its dual processuality along with externalization. The dialectical internalization-externalization dynamics is an interpretative key in understanding the relative autonomy of the personal world over the public. "Both internalization and externalization entail constructive transformations of signs – thus making each individual into a unique person, while based on the same general background within the given society at the given time" (Valsiner, 2017, p. 150).

In the semiotic turn produced by Valsiner, culture is conceived as a process of mediation through signs that represent, but also pre-present, anticipate, and transform, aspects or capabilities of the immediacy of the world and people's forms of life. Accordingly, the signs would be mediation and transcendence to the stimulus-response circuit, generating a cultural-subjective and creative arc. In it, repertoires of meanings originating from previous experiences are activated through interpellations of the present that seek, thus, to reduce the uncertainty and indetermination of the future through the production of new signs. The latter would be permanently emergent interpreters of the incessant inconclusiveness of our chains of meaning. For this reason, Lívia Simão (2016) proposes that culture is a kind of beyondness, i.e., a moving symbolic border.

By considering culture as a semiotic system, Valsiner proposes that human action would, therefore, be guided by internalized signs, appropriated/privatized by subjectivity conceived as a personal or subjective culture and situated and addressed in public domains of human interaction. In this sense, culture is thought of as a function proper to the psychic world of each singularity that actively transforms the messages coming from the cultural otherness. The author highlights that – "irrespective of a label" (Valsiner, 2017, p.150) – on the notion of internalization, the focus is on the function of culture to understand the relationship between individual and culture and not what we call it. The duplicity between internalization and externalization, or even the continuum between the singularity of personal culture and the situated intersubjectivity of the addressability of the enunciations, leads us to consider internality a special kind of activity related to reflectivity about ourselves.

Would not internality be an inherited metaphor that is used to account for the authorial, agentive, and transforming face of the self? If so, why do we keep such an expression out of language? Would not what we put as profound internality or privacy be a learned vocabulary to talk about a special form of reflectivity about oneself in the position of temporal-dialogical border next to the otherness of the world of relationships and the very tensions of the dialogues with oneself? If language, or even non-symbolic semiotic systems, speaks of the infinite continuity/porosity between the self and the other, why do we insist on internality as a vocabulary to address a certain autonomous and creative face, singularizing of the being with others?

These questions may seem merely a quarrel of nomenclature, a mere semantic aspect, an outdated expression in relation to the current meaning of Cultural Psychology and its uses in different contexts. Nonetheless, are not the limits of our language the limits of our world, as Wittgenstein I would claim? For this reason, in the next section, we will enter in a Wittgensteinian approach about the shadow region of the uses of the language games of psychic internality in Psychology, in order to highlight its impasses and possibilities of reconstruction of its grammars.

4.3 Wittgenstein and the Critique of the Inner Privacy of Consciousness

In this chapter, the discussion is based on the Wittgensteinian contribution to the ways in which Psychology uses expressions and creates its concepts (such as the internality under discussion) through culture and its discursive practices. For the author of *Philosophical Investigations* (2009), the way in which psychology constructs enunciatively its investigative questions would already be a significant part of its problems reflected in methodological challenges of Herculean proportions.

We emphasize that the transit of the present text through linguistic pragmatism does not happen in an exclusive and restricted epistemological affiliation. The linguistic turn in the Human Sciences requires from us the attitude of openness to all that has been deconstructed and questioned in this radical philosophical movement of the twentieth century. This includes not only the demolition of Cartesian dualism but also the identification of the maintenance of this strong schism in *softer*, apparently opposite, and supposedly renovating versions of scientific know-how. Wittgenstein II is a fundamental thinker in the exercise of more critical recognition about the performative effects of the vocabularies that we choose to guide our understanding of the self-other-world relationship in science and in life.

Unlike a type of philology or a strictly semantic study, Wittgenstein II understood that our vocabularies constitute the very way of understanding the world and the objects of experience. This would mean a mode of enchantment of our understanding by language, from which philosophy should help us to disentangle ourselves (Wittgenstein, 2009, §109). This does not mean any essentialism or search

for a Platonic truth, prior to or more real than the linguistic formulations. Quite the contrary, the anti-essentialism of the pragmatics of language understands that the pivotal question would not be situated in a correspondence between word and object, but in envisioning how the change in the way we speak can represent a transformation in our culturally produced ways of life actualized through language games.

It is in this spirit that Wittgenstein II articulated very elucidative provocations and counter-arguments in relation to the Cartesian traditions about privacy and psychic internality, as treated by Hacker (2000), in the work *Wittgenstein: On Human Nature*. In this sense, before we access the pragmatist provocations about the internal privatism of experience, it is valid to resume, even if briefly, the cornerstone of its perspective, i.e., the question of the uses of language.

From this perspective, the meaning of words is given through the use we make of it. This fundamental proposition of Wittgenstein II thus deflates an understanding of meaning not as an advent or appendix to the use of words. In an opposite direction, language use is the dimension through which and in which meaning actualizes itself, in other words, it becomes human action. Accordingly, intelligibility or the possibility of understanding in a given communicative field emerges through our participation in language games proper to a given culture or form of life.

The notion of *language games* does not find in Wittgenstein a proper definition, an ostensible definition. By the way, for the philosopher, the question about the being of things belongs to essentialist grammars, passionate about correspondences between language and the state of things that would be just a myth or a specific type of language game as he himself addresses in a radically opposite philosophy in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 1994).

We only learn a game by participating in it; *Philosophical Investigations* warns us through the classic example of what we can learn about playing chess from the name of its figures alone (Wittgenstein, 2009, §31). In his words, "How would we explain to someone what a game is?" I think by describing games, and we could add to the description: "this and similar things are called games." And do we know, ourselves, more than this? […] We don't know the limits, because no limits have been drawn (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 69).

Thus, the notion of language games requires its recognition in Wittgenstein's grammar in its fluid, open, and ambiguous face. The rules or modes of action and discourse are more intuited than consciously conceived, experienced by the individual as an organizing and performatively inventive weave of his participation in specific cultural practices or, as we explained above, forms of life (Meira & Pinheiro, 2007):

> The teaching of meaning would be the teaching related to the use appropriate to the possible contexts in which it can be applied through intensive immersion in its living dynamics, as when we learn a foreign language. That is why the act of participating in a language game is participating in a form of life where language is constituted as an action of performative and perlocutory effects, of anticipated and unpredictable consequences in the I-other-world relationships. (Pinheiro, 2020, p. 653)

From the introduced premises, we can now approach with a little more accuracy the nature of Wittgensteinian criticisms about the interiorized privacy of experience as opposed to a shared social externality.

According to Hacker (2000), Wittgenstein understands that Cartesian dualism naturalized a metaphor, generating the image of the soul as possessing an essence, the thought, and the body, as matter and extension. Accordingly, consciousness would be seen as a kind of inner theater in which we see, through our senses, the world in front of us, given through stimuli. In this understanding, the primary consequence would be the private nature of the experience of consciousness, its representations to which only the individual would have privileged access. This powerful dualism would be maintained in other dualities, such as mind and brain, brain and body, internality and externality, and affectivity and rationality/consciousness.

According to Wittgenstein (2009), if our cognitive/mental functioning occurred in a representational/designational-instrumental linguistic dimension, a man receiving a written errand about a cow would spend most of his time with paper in hand imagetically representing the cow, concerned not to lose the meaning of what is recorded. As argued, in the second Wittgensteinian theory, this is not how we operate in language. The very use of language would constitute our way of thinking:

> Only within a language, I can keep in mind something as something. This clearly shows that the grammar of 'keeping in mind' is not identical to that of 'representing something', and similar things. (Wittgenstein, 2009, §35)

In this passage, we recognize the first critical approach to the precept of an inner world only accessible to the individual who possesses them via introspection and an empirically observable exterior world. The grammar of *keeping in mind* would, therefore, depend on the participation of a certain language game and not on the nature of a mind or an individual that has it in itself. Starting in this proposition, the philosopher alters us that the nature of this possession, of experiences, or even of what could be called ideational and non-material contents is not equivalent to the possession or ownership of other material objects, extending in space.

Wittgenstein problematizes this language game about private property and an episteme distinct from internality in relation to external and public events through the issue of pain. The genius of the problem addressed by the philosopher would allude to the most incommunicable face that pragmatism could access and, simultaneously, to the record that humanizes us: pain.

Saying in the hospital emergency room that my pain is at level 4 on a scale of 0 to 5 allows us to infer about another patient's 4. The scale is merely a necessary game for the triage of urgency among a set of other expressive signs that cross the individual. To possess a pain would not be identical to the language game of possessing a pen or a stone in one's pocket. Going even further, it would not make sense to say that an individual has a pain, but does not know that he/she has it, or, even, is not aware of it, of what hurts. Knowing that one has pain is concomitant to having the pain. There is no way of understanding pain as a process that is beyond the reach of the process of "becoming aware of." With these questions, the philosopher would not be denying the mental and assuming a shallow behaviorism based on bodily or

even verbal movement. Far from this, the critique goes through the deep questioning of introspection as an internal perception and differentiated of an ontological register incommensurable to the public and shared register of experience.

According to pragmatism, what we conceive of as introspection would be a special form of activity, produced in a particular form of life. It would be, above all, a discursive activity about ourselves when we seek to symbolize, determine, and characterize the nature of what is felt. It is not like entering a theater and watching a play that runs independent of our desires and wishes, but a production of discourse and understanding about what we feel. In the case of pain, for example, there would be no distinction among having pain, giving, and being aware of it. There is no way of imagining a pain that goes unnoticed. Being aware of a pain is not discovering it; it is expressing it (Capistrano, 2002, p. 261).

In the inventiveness of this expressive language game, introspection is thought of as a situated activity. It is interesting to look at how the language game of internality seems obsolete, when we think about the record of its *expressiveness* and not of a discovery that something would be there and then in the depths of being. Therefore, "The human body is the best picture of the human soul" (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 238). With this, the philosopher would not lead us to the denial of the subjective, but to the understanding that it would be on the surface that the field of human depth operates, its expressiveness, i.e., its permanent embodied face with the other.

As Bezerra Jr. (2001) points out, the emergence of a type of subjectivity, a *self*, is based on the acquisition, or the development, by human organisms of a special ability, namely, the ability to configure their experiences through significations. This does not mean that the mind or subjective experience is embodied, just as our biological structures are inscribed in a broad context that is simultaneously biological and cultural. Based on a pragmatist reflection, the author emphasizes that "human beings are always (even before being born) in permanent contact with the world, interacting with it: it is action in the world that guides the agencing of its structures and resources, in a *continuum* ranging from biological skills to cultural acquisitions" (Bezerra Jr., 2001, p. 42).

Accordingly, the question would not be to deny the non-linguistic dimension of experience, but to understand that our corporeality is a necessary but not sufficient condition in the meaning-making process. Mental life would then be specific to the ways of human life in which we undertake specific language games to give form to experience, to its expressiveness. It would not be inside the brain or in the theater of consciousness that we feel toothache. In the same way that the brain does not think, it does not have sex, nor is it frustrated. Only we humans, with a given way of life and its language games, with this biological and corporal equipment are capable of thinking as an individual's holistic expressiveness.

The critique of the language games of internality occurs exactly at the point where its Cartesian heritage not only disembodies experience but is able to individualize, pointing to causalities, dysfunctions, and neurochemical failures, as the ultimate causes of our malaise. Common in some computational and neuroscientific metaphors, this kind of ultra-individualization embraces logics that remove the relational and systemic nature, alienating the individual from the creation of its own

metaphors and from the production of forms of understanding-action that are more authorial of its life trajectory. For example, trying to convince a young man in his first psychotic break of the importance of following the doctor's prescription because "his illness is like someone with high blood pressure, you have to take the antihypertensive to control it" is very different from allowing and acknowledging the issues of the young man who did not understand how he felt in full enjoyment of his health and needed to take pills. The metaphor of hypertension makes him passive about an ailment that afflicts him. This kind of metaphor makes him passive and oblivious about the nature of the treatment, but also about his life story, about the world of possibilities that he can create to understand the blind marks that cross his path.

It would be in the work of articulating meaning in relation to the otherness of ourselves and the most diverse otherness that expressivity emerges as a thirdness: neither internal nor external. Language, as well as the intersubjectivity that constitutes us, would be a permanent expressive-creative work, because expression would not be a metaphor of another object in mind or ahead, but a fundamental activity of life as relation, of being with others, being these others a part of ourselves, of who we once were or would like to be.

Expressiveness, as an action of shaping, becomes almost the action not of representing but of presentation (Innis, 2020), making present, creating living images of what we feel that range from non-linguistic embodied senses to exosomatic dimensions typical of culture and of social institutions. Here, expressiveness is distinct from representation, since it would be itself a way of giving life to oneself and to the other to the most diverse interpellations of the alterity of existing.

4.4 The Dialogue of Online Diaries: Intimacy as a Border Territory

Based on the epistemological reflections generated by the pragmatist criticisms about the private internality of the psychic experience, we now take the challenging exercise of problematizing a research instrument that could be seen as directly related to introspection, namely, the use of online diaries about everyday life. With this, it is intended to produce, at this stage of the chapter, a theoretical-empirical reflection on the dialogicity involved in the construction of such diaries. It would trigger expressive-creative dynamics of ways of life, in this case, in a situation of home confinement during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil (Barros et al., 2021; Pinheiro & Mélo, 2020). Thus, we intend to discuss how this research instrument engenders a very different process from a representational and disembodied reading of experience.

The enunciations produced in the context of online diaries can be considered not as external "products of a process," resulting from internal dynamics, or as blurry/ambiguous and unreliable verbal products of a more immediate and truer internality,

inarticulate and incommensurable to the symbolic system. In an opposite sense, the expressive experience engendered by the diary is conceived as inseparable from its own process, whose interactional event is developed by the holistic nature of the person's subjective, embodied, and dialogical temporality.

We consider that the exercise of constructing personal diaries is a valuable form of expressive-symbolic elaboration and reconstruction of the experience. In this sense, daily intimacy is thought of as a process of authorship, catalyzer of subjective records and of a perspective of the *self* in its agentive and fictional mode of self-other-world relationships (Pinheiro & Simão, 2020). Thus, this research device is integrated into the reading we propose around the notion of the intimacy, from its understanding as a process consubstantial to the plots of intersubjective relationships, which would therefore exceed its definition as a subjective space typical of psychic internality.

The intimacy that is processed and intensified in the context of the production of research diaries is of a chiasmatic order (Merleau-Ponty, 2014); it supposes a fundamental movement of intertwining with the world of life. Thus, the dialogical dynamics of intimacy necessarily translates into its disengagement from the foundational self-centering of the subject of the cogito, supposedly impermeable in its pure individuality. Far from this confinement-in-itself, intimacy is mentioned here in its transformative potentiality of producing migratory subjective movements (Valsiner, 1998, 2012).

Therefore, the enunciations in personal diaries reveal themselves as meanings of the individuals' responsiveness, always unprecedented in the midst of their engagements and articulations with otherness (intrapsychic, social and historical, as well as intersubjective). The recognition of intimacy as an experience constructed from these interpenetrations coincides with the understanding of singularity as a subjective uniqueness, as an authorial force that reveals itself in the contingencies of the world-of-life. In this sense, "there is no absolute coincidence that would dissipate our singularities" (Santos & Gutelvil, 2017, p. 153), given that the very experience with which subjectivity is produced in coetaneity is always original.

While it contains the inscription of otherness, intimacy taken as a process is always an interpretative experience of the world of life and, therefore, of these resonances in us. Thus, the symbolic elaboration of the innermost part of diaries is also what operates by launching them into the world, this movement being ensured by the individual's position certainly not in the Cartesian space, but in the aesthetic world (Merleau-Ponty, 2014), a world that should be described as a space of transcendence and a space of incompossibilities, hatching, and dehiscence and not as an objective-immanent space. Thus, the diaries bear the mark of a type of secularism, the incessant experience of expressing the individual to the world. Then, the individual "must also be described as a spatial situation, accompanied by its 'locality'" (Merleau-Ponty, 2014, p. 201). In this sense, it is important to highlight that the location experienced bodily or the position of the *self* in the arena of cultural voices does not necessarily imply the criticized subjective spatialization. Although we may recognize some terminological family resemblance (Wittgenstein, 2009), linguistic pragmatism teaches us that it is important to reflect on the use of words in their

context to think about signification. Both in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and in Bakhtin's dialogism, the idea of space-position emerges as markers of the historical-concrete-material conditions of relationships with the otherness of the world, or even as the embodied, carnal, and situated sensitivity of the self, in a transforming becoming marked by the condition of permanent inconclusiveness.

Therefore, the creative possibility would always be a guarantee of the individual in the face of life, the point of his/her resistance, and, therefore, singularity. Each experience that is lived means an exclusive position in the world, a unique form of existence on aestheticizing borders. This responsiveness in which the individual's authorial capacity is expressed in the form of his/her intentions, expectations, ambivalences, and prospects for the future only makes sense when understood in its entanglement with a world that, concomitantly, provokes and is produced by it. Consequently, it is through the domain of the symbolic that the mark of the unique quality of the experience and memory of a *self* is established and communicated. Thus, the device of personal diaries points us to a human reflectivity that is always affectively invested, conciliating the sensitive and the language. Non-linguistic meanings can even transform the plot of symbolic signs of personal culture, but it can never be constituted, alone and exclusively, as an epistemic foundation of experience.

The purely conscious and voluntarist model of individual, "a disembodied, immaterial and disembodied individual" (Bezerra Jr., 2001, p. 20), having safeguarded its relationship of exteriority in relation to the other, is also an inert, crystallized, and, for this very reason, lacking the creativity inherent in the processes of symbolic elaboration of existence. This is because, imbued with the dissociative, separating, and segregating procedures typical of the Cartesian tradition, which, with its "purifying identifications and classifications" (Figueiredo, 2001, p. 220), undertakes the obstinate task of keeping it as hermeneutically split, the rational individual becomes a bastion of the modern project that excludes ambivalences, ambiguities, and contingencies (Figueiredo, 2001).

Far from a differentiation, such a model expresses an invariant and, therefore, universal, always identical experience. In the same measure, it translates into the denial of a differentiating dynamics of subjectivity itself (Rolnik, 2001). It also happens that this hermetic experimentation of the world is opposed to the interest in forms of symbolic production of personal and reconstructive impact of the lived experiences. Hence, it is an internality that, once territorialized as fixity, does not allow the projection of the interpretive capacity and the work of redescription of what is experienced by the individual, thus dissipating the conditions for elaborating the meaning of the experience and, consequently, its expressiveness.

In another direction, the diary as a device for accessing the subjective allows us to identify the simultaneous and reciprocal action of three fundamental registers of psychic experience, namely, body, temporality, and expressiveness. These three dimensions are, per excellence, objects of control by the rationalist-solipsist individual of the modern tradition, a target of the grammar of calculation and of the predictability which operates in the end the imaginary of rationalization of life.

In turn, the creative intimacy provoked by the research diaries advocates the reading of these records as the dialogical eventicity that they are. Thus, body, temporality, and expressiveness are open and transitive signs, precisely because they are equivalents to its subjective, processual, and situational production. They are, so to speak, from the same flesh tissue, detached from a rigidly determined time-space in the models of forms of life.

The elaboration of online diaries catalyzes an authoring process facing different circumstances of life, promoting the action of saying/expressing from what is bodily experienced. Accordingly, the enunciations reveal to us the experiences of the individual-in-situation who sees himself/herself, in his/her own discontinuities, challenged to elaborate new responses to the questions of the world of life. The subjective impacts of the objects of experience correspond to the incarnation dynamics of new perceptual and sensitive realities, described and shared by our interlocutors from the productions of their diaries. Therefore, the daily intimacy is also a place to register the relationship of the self and the body, but it is not the relationship of a pure Self with an object, since "my body is not an object, but a means, an organization" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2006, p. 377). Accordingly, the enunciations point us to ways of crossing the unusual, which requires the reorganization of knowledge and significations based on what is learned in the flesh sensitivity of the self.

As a record of an event, the elaborations of the diaries seem to trigger the possibility of organizing a temporality by the individual himself/herself, thus surpassing unidirectional perspectives of time. The expressive dynamics accessed by the diaries productions are supported by the understanding of temporality as a demarcating category of existence that is not self-determining, as it requires the affective mark of our relationships with other entities and their rhythms and cadences.

As an experience value, time is expressed through mutual affectations and reciprocal relationships that, however, lead to meanings that are uniquely elaborated and attributed. Thus, temporality would also be the mark of our engagement with the world and would thus imply the agentivity of the very individual who experiences it (Simão, 2015). Moreover, since it is constituted in processes of meaning through which meanings previously produced by the individuals are articulated, temporality corresponds to the duration of an individual never reduced to itself, since this is constituted by its always open and transitive uniqueness. In this sense, the productions of the diaries explain the experiences in which the interlocutors construct new horizons from the experience of transformative temporality.

The enunciations in the diaries also lead us to understand how the experience can always be mobilized as a way for the subject to "respond differently from the usual" (Bezerra Jr., 2001, p.40), which means thinking about the experience of temporality not as a linear succession of events, but as a translation of the "feeling of oneself" through which the psychic and the body are expressed as a hybrid composition (Czermak, 2001), mobilizing unprecedented responsiveness.

The individual's expressiveness is also based on an always emergent and irreversible temporal structure. The different styles of elaboration revealed in the diary production activities suggest their own ways of organizing and addressing what we

wanted to share with the researchers, with a routine management now thought of by this dialogue. In what we intended to bring as an esthetic experience of a time of nebulosity, we recognize the willingness to talk about a world lost as a result, for example, of the pandemic, but also of projections around a "new normality" that, once "novel," can never be identical to what has been and what is.

4.5 The Laura Case

We would like to start the discussions around the contents of the diary produced by the interlocutor Laura (at the time 42 years old, a lawyer and mother of a 6-year-old child), highlighting her engagement with the research device. Recurrently, the participant pointed out the value of the daily exercise as a reflective moment of an everyday life that, despite its emergency character, already figured as invasive of her existence. In this regard, we can refer to a fragment in which, revealing to be surprised by the density of the contents of her own elaborations throughout the participation in the research, the participant justifies her preference for voice recordings:

> I like to listen to myself. I don't know why, but it makes me think better. That's why I switched to audio.

At times, Laura established continuity between her enunciations, suggesting, again, the reflective dynamics recognized in her involvement with the production of the diary:

> One thing I've gotten really thoughtful of these days, [from] one of the conversations I gave you. This new world, this new normal, how is it going to be. (...) I kept thinking, rethinking, rethinking how we would change this.

Accordingly, almost all of the referrals in her records were accompanied by the mention of the enthusiasm that Laura saw as underlying the movement to name and shape what challenged and disturbed her in her intimate experience of the viral event.

From the interlocutor's commitment to the procedures involved in her participation in the research, her concern with "meeting what was expected" and, thus, "being able to contribute" to the purpose of the study also stood out. In this regard, it is important to reiterate that the entire research design was guided by the ethical concern to conduct the dialogue with the interlocutor in order to ensure her comfortable relationship with the research devices. Therefore, we sought to continually emphasize the appreciation of their spontaneity and the recognition of what they considered significant in their experiences. Even so, she still drew attention to her expectation of matching her productions to what she imagined to be expected. In this, we identified an interesting effort to share, making understandable what, although unique and characteristic of her experience, could also make sense for the researcher and for herself.

In this sense, the practice of research itself launches us, right from the start, important reflections for the more general objective of recognizing subjective

meanings "of organization, coherence and delimitation of experience" (Czermak, 2001, p. 309). In other words, the application of the research instrument already opens, in itself, paths for understanding the flows and reciprocities between the subject and the other-researcher, in which their ability to create and fictionalize to "say about themselves" reveals itself in response to inquiries from the study itself.

In the first records addressed by Laura about her intimate experience of family confinement, the house is also identified as a sign by which a sense of time-space is demarcated in which excessive demands are instituted. Such demands while incessantly asking for her presence-in-situation ambiguously desert it, in the sense of operating a kidnapping of the old experiences of the self, of being with her own self spontaneously available:

> I miss going to the supermarket a lot, from my work routine of coming and going every day. And my time alone, which is another thing that, like, I miss. You, in isolation, at home, you end up with no privacy. Now, I'm waiting for my son to finish getting ready; my husband is not at home, he went to work, right. But moments when you are alone are rare. Almost none, actually. (...) I always have something to do, and the worst: I never have time to have nothing to do and be alone.

Accordingly, the home is reconfigured as an experience in which several discontinuities are felt bodily. Above all, the feeling of exhaustion is frequently alluded to by the interlocutor, since her first enunciations. In this case, the cartography of care produced by Laura calls our attention to meet the productive demands that are mixed in the dedication to paid work, household chores, and child care. It is interesting to note that the past experiences referred to as "seeing oneself alone" do not necessarily equate to experiences in an isolated spatiality: the memory of going to the supermarket, for example, indicates a recollection of a temporality experienced as its own rhythm, while the domestic environment confronts her with the acoustics of the different voices that, at times, clashes in the search for their investments.

By the way, the experience of the temporal organization established by the social scenario of the pandemic is one of the dimensions with the greatest impact and conflict in the relationship with her child. If, in the initial reports, the interlocutor balances her observations between the intense load of attributions involved in the exercise of mothering and, in another direction, the possibility of a closer relationship with the child, caused by the experience of confinement, the subsequent records point to an even more significant increase in other demands that, once again, put themselves in conflict with the time dedicated and lived with the child:

> Today was complicated. Millions of meetings, conferences. My poor son had to ask for lunch twice, because the first time I couldn't hear that he was already hungry. This makes you feel guilty, you keep thinking "damn, I'll continue to be charged at work, I need to do my best to take good care of him and I really want to take care of him and he's not doing anything wrong in asking me to eat, poor thing". But is complicated. A little guilt trip, a feeling of insecurity, a feeling of "what am I doing?" "What is right?" "What is wrong?" It's difficult.

It is important to note that the spatial distribution of her body and the child's body in the same environment does not guarantee, throughout the routine, the feeling of accomplishment regarding the affective investment that would correspond to the

ideal motherhood. Laura reports her feeling about remembering the happiness spoken by the child in being able to spend more time with her, due to the confinement. He desired that the confinement would never end. The participant's unique experience signals the densities of these new interactions, a sense of being-with-the-other that is reconfigured at each encounter that is always surprising, even though it occurs repeatedly in the same situational topology that is her home. In other words, the territorial fixity to which domestic confinement is equivalent is diametrically opposed to the processual and open character of human relationships, which is not undermined even in the situation of confinement (Pinheiro & Mélo, 2020). Thus, in each narrative, the interlocutor highlights the record of the affectivity of her relationship with the various otherness that interpenetrate in her routine.

Understanding these dynamics is also the focus of the study by Anita Oliveira (2020), dedicated to understanding the experiences of motherhood in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing them as an open and plural space-temporality, and emphasizing, through the bias of a "Feminist Geography," the "meaning disputes that reveal the home as a relational and conflicting spatiality" (Oliveira, 2020, p. 154). Laura's tensions and conflicts, as well as the joys she associates with other events experienced with the child, suggest that "maternal subjectivity" is not imprisoned, therefore, in an ontological and pure model, impenetrable to events in the world of life.

Also, in relation to the above statement, another dynamic calls our attention: While Laura is affected by a feeling of guilt at the sensitive experience of her son (in this case, hunger), in her own incorporation of the exhausting routine seem to be at the mercy of the imposition of an organic rhythm that establishes the inevitability of a pause. So, after a sequence of reports dedicated to expressing her tiredness and the "desire to sleep, to sleep three days in a row," her body finally seems to give in to the intense rhythm of the days:

> "Today I finally slept a lot better. Like, hey, I slept all night, which is really good for tranquility, for the person's head. There are these days where, like, after days without sleep, nights without sleep, you end up rolling over from exhaustion, but the next day is better. You wake up well, well, well, really better."

The experience of "rolling over from exhaustion" illustrates, therefore, a dynamics in which Laura seems to delegate to the body the power to establish a crucial limit for her actions in the face of the logic of a time that she recognizes as a tyrant, but to which she inevitably sees herself tangled up – to the point of being confused with its own duration – as a condition of a form of life that she can only accompany it.

Therefore, if, on the one hand, she complains about the fading of the boundaries of time/space that once delimited the fields of her various activities, she also recognizes giving in to the orders of the routine that was then taking shape. This assent seems to be a way of realizing something that she does not yet know how to refer to, but which reveals itself as a resource in the face of the anguish caused by the scenario of indeterminacy, of deep uncertainties. Recognizing herself as a "controlling person" and with a practical sense, she highlights the immersion in productive time as something that allows her to feel at least in flux, in traffic, in movement:

> "Looking forward to the weekend so I can breathe and be calm again, but that's how we have to do it. For now there is no other way out, things have to be done. I can't do the things that burden me today and wait, hope that better days will come."

The experience of the time of domestic confinement appears, in fact, as an important affective record in Laura's statements, a kind of great enigma that, on the one hand, disturbs her due to its discontinuities:

> It's funny, right? It seems that we've been indoors for a longer time, we haven't seen people for a longer time. There's a funny thing about time, right, and at the same time inside the house it's rushed, and at the same time it's slow too. It depends on the time, it depends on what you're doing.

The recurrence of the adjective "funny" outlines a temporality that mobilizes estrangement and is interpreted based on the perception of its ambiguities. There is, in these terms, a change in the cognition of time, despite the maintenance of the temporal grammar by which the objective and real world had already been organized (Gell, 2014). That is, this variation in cognition takes place in view of the continuity of the standard time that previously governed the modes of social organization: by way of example, the number of hours of the day remains quantitatively unaffected in relation to the ways of life in which one processes the experiences before the emergence of the pandemic. However, the temporality of domestic confinement seems to be read by Laura as ambiguously accelerated and of slow cadence.

The slowness is possibly perceived by the resistance of this time to the desire for everything to pass and for the future to resume a familiar experience of time. The speed, in turn, can be understood here as an excess of presentification, as an exacerbation of the uniqueness of the experience that, in view of the cloudiness of the future, is what it has to experience.

The perception of oscillations occurs contiguous with what she identifies as emotional instability:

> These are days with a lot of feeling and a lot of peaks, you know, a lot of ups and downs. But we keep walking. Everything has a very different connotation because everything gets much more intense, right. You, under normal circumstances, would not so easily lose your temper, you would not be so easily moved by something. It's very funny how this isolation has these things. These last few days were very intense, a lot to be done at the same time, a lot to deliver, but also a lot for my son's school and organizing the house, and everything else. I was sad, I was angry, I was happy, I was calm, in the sense that everything will be all right. Then you despair again and go, "My God, when is this going to end?"

Paradoxically, it is in the very discontinuities revealed by current experiences that Laura identifies the persistence of an already known ethics of life, and in which she recognizes problematic elements, especially with regard to the homogenizing structuring of the fields of action characteristic of the capitalist model of organization of the life. In a particular way, the suffocation of the singularity and of the particular conditions of existence, given the primacy of productive logics, translates as a type of pendulum that has its movements always rearranged amidst the fractures perceived bodily and symbolically. Evidencing her annoyance at the charges arising from different areas of their relationships, Laura notes in a pessimistic tone:

> Everyone says it has to be different, but we keep doing things the same way. (...) Even worse, in fact, because the circumstances have changed for the worse and we continue to insist on the same routines.

The bet made on the possibility of the decentralizations typical of the pandemic to generate new bonds of solidarity is undermined by the usual situations. Laura, however, refuses to see herself in compartmentalized and mutually exclusive subjective movements:

> It's funny that today in this world (...) the woman who decides to have a family, to have children, she is extremely criticized and judged and demanded to be the best. No, if I decided this, I know I'll have less time, but that doesn't make me a worse professional. My dedication there at work is the same, it doesn't even make me a bad mother because I like to work. (...) Or, you chose to work and chose to be a good professional, so you can't have a family. I can have it both ways, maybe I'm not the best mom or the best professional, but I'll be the happy person doing both and that doesn't stop me from trying to be both. So, it's complicated, you're judged on both sides. You are judged by the mothers at school because you work so hard and you are judged at work because you decided to have a child and you don't have the same dedication and productivity that you expect from a modern woman.

In one way, Laura embodies the daily rhythmicity that brings her anguish and of which she is critical, like an organic surrender to the demarcations of this temporal organization. On the other hand, she uses an "hourglass of her own" in her exercise of fictionalizing a future, as a minimal appeasement strategy, a psychic survival resource in the midst of the anxiety caused by the present conditions. Thus, despite the criticism to the erasure of the variability of possible responses to the same shared plan of culture, it is markedly in the voracious field of actions that she creates a sense of her own existence, recognizing herself in crossing over.

It is not by chance that the interlocutor frequently updates us, in a methodical way, with respect to the projections of specialists regarding the possible resumption of face-to-face activities:

> I've seen some news now that life normalizes in eleven weeks. Even though it's a long term prediction for me because eleven weeks now is long term for me, but it's a perspective. There is an end; there is something like a milestone to happen. (...) As I told you, it's important for me to know where I am going, why I am going, even if it's distant, but it's important to have a destination. It can be changed as everything has been, but at least it has a direction, a plumb line, an arrow pointing somewhere.

In the final passage of the enunciation, the sign of the arrow can be read as an operation of a metaphor that resumes the orientation of traffic on the roads, the experience of movement toward the world. In her case, the unknown path comforts her more than it frightens her. Travelling is the first and last possibility.

By sending us a photographic record of a plate filled with apple pieces, offered to her child at snack time, Laura justifies her choice to comment on a child's trait in relation to diet. In a relaxed way, which does not remind us of the burden of guilt explained in the narration of the event in which she forgot to prepare the child's lunch, she explains to us:

> I also sent Paulo's [picture of] apple because there's one other thing that I don't know if I mentioned, but he's a bit methodical like his dad, and it's funny that he complains that I

> can't cut all the apples the same size, in the same shape. Every shape of my apple is different. He gets annoyed and complains every time. But he eats. Complaining, but he eats. But I can't, so it's beyond my ability to cut all the little pieces of apple exactly the same way. Samuel [the husband] says that it is my manifestation, that it is my authenticity.

The aforementioned image, when accompanied by Laura's elaborations, seems to synthesize well a stylistic of the intimacy of confinement that we recognize throughout her enunciations, from which we identify an expressive activity that is very attentive to the future and notably dedicated to confronting disproportionalities, excesses, and inconsistencies, such as the pieces of fruit that, even with the discontinuity of their sizes, continue as an expression of an affective intensity produced in the individual's relationships with others. The daily intimacy of Laura's enunciations shed light on the dialogical and authorial expressiveness on her part and on the demands of the other. The participant's engagement with the research device led to the production of a temporal and reflective gap in which what we could recognize as private interiority is constructed as a work of giving form (to herself and, simultaneously, to the researcher), fictionalizing, and, consequently, giving life to the embodied interpellations of her sensitivity about being-with-others in a world state of maximum strangeness.

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Chapter 5
An Experimental Phenomenological Approach to the Study of Inner Speech in Empathy: Bodily Sensations, Emotions, and Felt Knowledge as the Experiential Context of Inner Spoken Voices

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5.1 Introduction

Inner speech, also known as the "little voice in the head" or "thinking in words" (Langland-Hassan & Vicente, 2018), has been subjected to theoretical and empirical research for almost nine decades, starting mainly with the pioneering work of Vygotsky (1986). In his book *Thought and Language* (1986), he highlighted the importance of inner speech for self-regulation and problem-solving and depicted it as a phenomenon with multiple meanings condensed, an internalized form of conversation, in which linguistic exchanges with others are progressively reproduced privately and internally in the children's own minds, with the peculiarity that the grammatical subject of the sentences is always omitted in inner speech. In this sense, he claimed that "predication is the natural form of inner speech; psychologically it consists of predicates only" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 243). Inner speech has also been benefited from the contribution of well-known authors, such as Oliver Sacks (2011), who attributes to inner speech the capacity for the development of the identity, and Voloshinov and Bakhtin (1986), who affirm that inner speech constitutes "the skeleton of inner life" (p. 29). Additionally, other authors have suggested that inner speech would enable engagement in meaningful social relationships (Daniels,

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1996; Hermans & Hermans, 2010). Nowadays, a perspective has been complemented with evidence that supports the idea that inner speech is also shaped by multiple symbolic social representations (Larraín & Haye, 2012; Marková, 2006; Wiley, 2016).

More generally, the importance of inner speech for high-order cognitive functions is widely agreed (Emerson & Miyake, 2003; Lidstone et al., 2010; Tullett & Inzlicht, 2010; Williams et al., 2012; Winsler et al., 2009). Moreover, a diversity of cognitive functions has been associated with it, like reflective thought, task-switching, logical reasoning, planning, conscious thinking, reading, emotional self-regulation, and theorizing about other people's minds, among others (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015; Martínez-Manrique & Vicente, 2015).

Although the relevance of inner speech for human psychology is widely recognized (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2015; Langland-Hassan, 2021; Langland-Hassan & Vicente, 2018), the study of the phenomenology of inner speech, that is, what it is like for a subject to experience his or her internal voice, has received much less attention by researchers (Langland-Hassan, 2021). The most influential studies employed either the *Descriptive Experiential Sampling* (DES) method (Heavey & Hurlburt, 2008; Hurlburt et al., 2013; Hurlburt & Heavey, 2018) or the *Varieties of Inner Speech Questionnaire* (VISQ) (Alderson-Day et al., 2018; McCarthy-Jones & Fernyhough, 2011). In the studies developed by Hurlburt et al. (2013), they have found, for instance, that (1) people experience inner speech as being in their own voice and the same style of external speaking; (2) inner speech is felt much more as something actively done (as inner speaking) than as something passively felt (inner hearing); (3) some people experience their inner voice as located in the chest, others in the head, and others more specifically in certain regions of their heads; and (4) there are cases in which people experience meaningfully speaking to themselves but without any words (unworded inner speech) (Hurlburt & Heavey, 2018; Hurlburt et al., 2013). Also, Alderson-Day et al. (2018) suggested that people can experience different types of inner speech according to their difference in a five-factor structure that comprises the degree to which their inner speech is (i) dialogic, (ii) condensed, (iii) evaluative, and (iv) regulatory and (v) other people's voices are present (Alderson-Day et al., 2018).

Although these kinds of studies do bring progress to the study of the phenomenology of inner speech, this area of research is still in its very beginnings (Langland-Hassan, 2021), and in particular, the methodologies often employed are totally susceptible of being complemented by each other and by other novel approaches (Alderson-Day & Fernyhough, 2014). In order to start covering the knowledge gap, this study aims to advance the science of the first-person phenomenology of inner speech in the context of empathic experience endorsing an experimental phenomenological method. That is, a methodology that integrates experimental psychology and phenomenology (Albertazzi, 2013, 2019). Following Martínez-Pernía, the experimental phenomenological method "consists of discovering the structure of the experience as it appears in consciousness through a research design that incorporates the peculiarities of experimental psychology and phenomenological psychology" (2022, p. 149). Our study is inspired by the enactive approach to the study

of the mind that, deeply influenced by the phenomenological tradition in philosophy, especially the work of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, since its very inception has emphasized the primordial importance of the first-person experience of being an embodied agent in the world (Froese & Di Paolo, 2011; Thompson, 2007; Thompson & Varela, 2001; Varela, 1984, 1991, 1997; Varela & Thompson, 2003; Varela et al., 1991). This approach has been applied both in basic sciences and in clinical sciences (e.g., Fuchs & Schlimme, 2009; Martínez-Pernía, 2020; Martínez-Pernía et al., 2021; McGann et al., 2013) and gave rise to a new tradition of both philosophically informed and scientifically sound methodologies that address the phenomenology of (inter)subjective experience in systematic and rigorous ways (Olivares et al., 2015; Petitmengin, 2006; Petitmengin et al., 2019; Varela & Shear, 1999). More specifically, in this work, we employed a second-person methodology (Olivares et al., 2015) by which, through a phenomenological interview, we gather first-person data on the bodily sensations, emotions, thoughts, and inner speech that appear in the empathic experience of seeing other human beings in pain (empathy for pain). In this way, our study has the potential to contribute to both the study of phenomenology of inner speech and the relationship between inner speech and empathic experiences. Importantly, both contributions stem from our empirical phenomenological findings of the bodily, cognitive, and affective dimensions that not only accompany but also are meaningfully related to the experience of inner speech, what we call the "experiential context" of inner speech.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Participants

Sixteen adults participated in the study (nine women and seven men; mean age, 25.68 ± 2.2 years; year of education, 17.78 ± 1.5). The participant's recruitment was carried out with university students and social media advertisements. Participants who reported any cognitive or physical conditions affecting their normal psychological and motor faculties were excluded from the study. All participants signed informed consent. This study was approved by the Scientific Ethics Committee of the Servicio de Salud Metropolitano Oriente and the Research in Humans Beings Ethics Committee of the Medicine Faculty, Universidad de Chile.

5.2.2 Construction and Validation of the Emotional Stimuli

For the construction of the empathy for pain stimuli, 12 videos were produced using audiovisual material found under Creative Commons licensing on the web. Each video had an average duration of 7–11 s. Videos included images of sportswomen and sportsmen having intense physical accidents during the practice of extreme

sports (i.e., parkour, mountain biking, climbing, high mountain slackline, acrobatic snowboarding). No videos of dismemberment, disfigurement, or death were used to construct the video.

After constructing the empathy for pain videos, they were validated with 147 university students (103 females and 44 males; mean age, 24.2 ± 5.79) with the *Self-Assessment Manikin* (Bradley & Lang, 1994). This self-report questionnaire assesses the person's emotional reaction through three sets of humanoid figures representing the dimensions of valence, arousal, and dominance on a 9-point rating scale (1–9). Higher scores indicate a pleasant valence, more arousal, and having control of the situation; and lower scores indicate unpleasant valence, less arousal, and losing control of the situation. Finally, we built a 60-s video containing seven scenes that were scored as unpleasant, high arousal, and losing control of the situation, which is the standard emotional reaction to an aversive social stimulus (e.g., Azevedo et al., 2005; Hagenaars et al., 2012, 2014). The score of the videos chosen was valence (mean = 2.44 ± 1.69), arousal (mean = 6, 49 ± 1, 65), and control (mean = 4.38 ± 2.45).

5.2.3 Procedure

At the beginning of the study, a brief interview was conducted to corroborate that participants met the inclusion criteria. Afterward, the participants had to be standing and motionless at 1 m of distance from a 40-inch screen TV, installed at the eye's height level. Following, the video was played on the screen, and immediately after it finished, a researcher conducted a phenomenological interview.

5.2.4 Phenomenological Interview

A phenomenological interview was conducted with every participant. This type of interview aims to explore the human lived experience, revealing the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience (Sokolowski, 2008). In this sense, phenomenology aims to guide and clarify scientific research on subjectivity and consciousness (Thompson, 2007). In this study, the interviews were focused on the bodily sensations, emotions, thoughts, and inner speech that appeared in the empathic experience of seeing other human beings in pain.

The main structure of the phenomenological interview consists in practicing a particular approach to the experience, which can be characterized in three main points (Giorgi et al., 2017):

1. The interviewer makes general descriptive questions aiming to collect a narration that helps him establish a contextualization of the different elements surrounding the experience, for example, "tell me about how you generally felt watching these videos of people having accidents."

2. The interviewer focused his exploration on apprehending the phenomenon by questioning how it subjectively emerges. This is achieved through a very detailed and descriptive inquiry about how bodily sensations, emotions, and thoughts arise in the consciousness of the participants in specific moments of the experience. For example, "The moment you saw the person falling, how did your body feel? In which zone did you feel that? Which qualities had that feeling?".
3. The interviewer makes an effort to precise and adjust his understanding about the experienced phenomenon of the interviewee through active listening and questions that aim to make valuable distinctions that clarify the specific sense of what the person is describing. For instance, "When you thought 'why is he doing that?' was it in a judgmental way, or maybe in a curious manner? I do not know, in what sense did that question emerge in your experience?".

To complement the empirical phenomenological interview method, three principles from the micro-phenomenological interview method (Petitmengin et al., 2019) were transversally applied in the whole interviewing process: Firstly, the researcher made questions about not only what the person experienced but, most importantly, how that phenomenon emerged in their consciousness. Secondly, the researcher made an effort to maintain always the interviewee in a state of evocation, that is, a state in which the interviewee experienced what he lived moments ago in a direct way, as if it was happening in the present moment, in first-person. And lastly, the interviewer constantly recapitulated what has been described so far, in order to establish and adjust, if necessary, the sequence of events in which the experience unfolded.

Finally, it is also important to note that a central aspect of the interview procedure was adopting the phenomenological attitude by the researcher who conducted the interviews. The phenomenological attitude, also named "epoché" in transcendental phenomenology (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994), consists of setting aside or bracketing suppositions, prejudgments, and thoughts. To achieve that, before data collection, the researcher disclosed his own experiences and evaluations, in order to be open to observe the phenomenon that emerges without preconceptions (Hamilton et al., 2018), "freshly, as for the first time" (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 34).

5.2.5 Data Analysis

Given the fact that the main objective of this study was to explore the experience of the inner speech and its experiential context, a phenomenological approach was chosen to analyze the data. The method applied was the *Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological method*, also named the *Existential-Phenomenological Psychological method* (Giorgi et al., 2017). This type of analysis captures the meaning of the experience, how the subject makes sense of its own lived experience in the world (Giorgi et al., 2017). This is achieved by a process in which the experience is understood as a psychological consciousness through a non-transcendental phenomenological psychological method (Giorgi, 2021).

Below, we will describe the four first phases of the phenomenological analysis method (Giorgi et al., 2017) (Giorgi's complete analysis comprises five steps, but given the objective of our study, we didn't implement the last one).

In the first step, called "initial reading for a sense of the whole" (Englander & Morley, 2021), the researcher carefully read the entire interview transcript. After this, the researcher makes a brief summary of the experience under study in order to grasp the basic sense of the whole situated description. Then, in the second step, called "adopting the phenomenological psychological attitude" (Englander & Morley, 2021), the researcher embodies the phenomenological attitude, similar to the phenomenological attitude in the interview process, so the researcher disclosed his own suppositions, prejudgments, and thoughts, being open to observe the phenomenon that emerges without preconceptions (Hamilton et al., 2018). In addition to the adoption of the phenomenological attitude, the researcher "reduces" or restricts his frame of reference to a particular region of meaning: the psychological one; this means that he has to focus on a dimension of the experience that "is neither abstractly conceptual, nor objectively physical; it is concretely and personally lived, by a particular person, always socially engaged, in a particular situation in everyday social life, in space, time and history" (Englander & Morley, 2021). The third step, called "dividing data into meaning units" (Englander & Morley, 2021), consists on carefully picking and highlighting the specific verbatims that directly refer to the experience of the participant (meaning units), being the inner speech and its experiential context in this study. Then, after identifying and marking the relevant verbatims comes the fourth step, called "transformation of everyday expressions into psychological meaning" (Englander & Morley, 2021); the researcher must transform the participant expressions into expressions that highlight their psychological meanings (Giorgi et al., 2017). This process of generating the psychological meaning units is critical in the analysis: From the researcher's point of view, it requires an open yet precise way of thinking to generate potential phenomenologically meaningful categories in order to maintain the original meaning of singular verbatims while at the same time allowing a generalization of them to similar experiences of other participants. Carrying forward the process in the fourth step, more interviews are analyzed; the more phenomenological categories are created; some of them converge with the ones that already emerged, becoming part of them; and some other categories diverge from the ones that already emerged, creating new ones. This operation of category formation and stabilization is iteratively repeated until reaching theoretical saturation. The iterative nature of Georgi's method is relevant because categories created later in the process can replace older ones if they are more fitting to each other. The data analysis was supported by the ATLAS.ti 9 qualitative data analysis software.

5.3 Results

Four main phenomenological categories regarding inner speech were found. In this sense, the presentation of the results consists, firstly, of one category that synthesizes the different verbatims that directly and explicitly refer to inner speech (inner

spoken voice) and, secondly, of three phenomenological categories that characterize the particular experiential context in which inner speech takes place (contextual experiential categories of inner speech). These categories described negative emotion, bodily emotional experience, and felt knowledge. Although this experiential context is not inner speech in itself, it is a constitutive aspect of its phenomenology.

Inner Spoken Voice During the course of the video, the participants experienced spontaneous thoughts that emerged explicitly as inner verbal speech in the form of spoken language. They are described as an "inner voice" that expresses a concern related to the worries about the possible consequences the accident could generate to the sportswomen/sportsmen or a concern focused on the unpleasant experience that participants have themselves. More specifically, the contents of this inner voice refer to the beliefs about the consequences of the accident, the negative evaluations and judgments about the person having the accident, and self-regulation and reassurance phrases (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Inner spoken voice phenomenological categories

Meaning units	Inner spoken voice phenomenological categories
P2: "The fact that he wasn't protected or anything, I said 'oh no!' [afflicted voice], I don't know, I thought the worse, that he could fracture his bones"	Beliefs about the consequences of the accident
P8: "When he fell down, I immediately thought that he broke his bones"	
P7: "If I thought about something? It was rather like: 'I hope that his friends make something about it'"	
P11: "The only thing I could thought was 'I hope that he doesn't break his bones'"	
I: "Ok, so that was what you thought"	
P11: "'I hope that this [the fall] could be just an anecdote in the future. Something that doesn't ruined his life'"	
P7: "He tries to stretch his leg to reach the other side of the wall, but he has no firm support yet, so I was like: 'Friend, why do you do this?' [in a judgmental voice tone]"	Negative evaluation and judgements about the person having the accident
P7: "It was like: 'Why are they doing such a stupid thing?'"	
P2: "Then I said to myself: 'Relax, is just a video' [chuckles], is like saying to yourself 'this is just a video, you can calm down'"	Self-regulation and reassurance
P11: "I don't like to watch these videos so I said to myself 'I will have to look and I don't want to, but I'm in an experiment so I can't say that I can't do it' (…). I said to myself: 'If it is gruesome, I don't know what I'm going to do', but it wasn't so terrible, so it was like: 'Ok, it doesn't matter'"	

P participant, *I* interviewer

5.3.1 Contextual Experiential Categories of Inner Speech

Negative Emotional Feeling Different experiences were related to feeling negative emotional states that emerged in the participants while watching the video. They varied in a wide range of qualities like fear, rage, nervousness, discomfort, stress, and anguish. This emotional experience was emphatically triggered by watching another person having an accident; nonetheless, in some cases, this negative emotion was not centered on the person having the accident, but on the personal discomfort and aversive response that the scene produced in the participants themselves (Table 5.2).

Bodily Sensations The participants felt a wide range of sensations located throughout the whole body (such as the face, throat, heart, stomach, shoulders, or legs), which had specific qualities (such as tension, trembles, spasms, chills, and electricity). Additionally, the subjects reported a volitional component associated with their body, which was a motivation to move toward helping the person having

Table 5.2 Contextual experiential elements of inner speech referring to negative emotional feelings

Meaning units	Negative emotional feeling phenomenological category
P2: "Well, after, when I went self-conscious, I felt that I was more rigid, maybe that's why during the whole video I was more balanced, because I was actually tense"	Tension
P15: "When she falls down is a moment of tension and fear, if I put myself in the shoes of that person almost dying, the pain, and not having control over the situation is something maddening"	Fear
P8: "I felt the anxiety of knowing that the person it's going to fall"	Anxiety/stress
P8: "Ok, yes, so at an emotional level, yes, the part when he falls, is like between laughter and anxiety"	
P1: "It was also super distressing, I felt the anguish because I didn't know what happened after. The video ends with the fall, the guy falls in a very ugly way, so to the audience the end remains open. I didn't know if he fell correctly and he didn't break any bones, or if it messed him up. I would say that he fell from a five-meter height, anything could have happened, so it's terrifying from the medical point of view, the injuries that he could suffer"	Anguish

P participant, *I* interviewer

Table 5.3 Contextual experiential inner speech elements referring to bodily sensations

Meaning units	Bodily sensations phenomenological categories
P13: "I felt it in my arms and legs, some kind of trembling"	Localization of the sensations
P16: "I think that the most intense thing was the sensation that I felt in my chest"	
P14: "I felt a contraction in my buttocks and thighs, and I tried to support myself well, to ground myself"	
P9: "I feel it that way. As if it (the heart) was literally squeezing"	Quality of the sensations
P13: "I think that I felt in a very subtle way, a trembling in my extremities"	
P4: "[referring to his bodily movement] it was like: 'I don't want to see anything after what I just saw'"	Motivation to bodily movement
P1: "I wanted to immerse myself in the TV, to be inside the video and avoid that tragedy"	

P participant, *I* interviewer

the accident verbally or through specific actions, or, on the other hand, to avoid watching the video themselves, or to regulate their physiological response to the videos (Table 5.3).

Felt Knowledge The subjects reported having had the experience of implicitly knowing about different elements of the situation they were watching without any mediation of discursive language, representations, logical inferences, or symbols, but, instead, through an intuition that involved their bodies as a whole. This felt knowledge consisted mainly of implicitly predicting the accident's occurrence and being concerned and frustrated because of that catastrophic intuition (Table 5.4).

5.4 Discussion

The main objective of this research was to study the phenomenology of the inner speech and its experiential context in empathy for pain paradigm. To achieve this goal, we designed an experimental phenomenological method in which the subjects were exposed to videos of people having physical accidents while practicing extreme sports. This study found that there are two main kinds of inner speech related to the empathic experience: (a) a concern related with the worries about the possible consequences the accident could generate to the sportswomen/sportsmen and (b) a concern focused on the unpleasant experience that participants have

Table 5.4 Contextual experiential inner speech elements that emerge as felt knowledge

Verbatim statements	Felt knowledge phenomenological category
P1: "The feeling that something was about to happen was growing inside me, somehow I knew that it was going to end with the guy falling, and he kept going up, and he arrived to the higher point and then he fell and it was like: 'aaaah!'"	Being expectant and implicitly feeling the imminent occurrence of a catastrophic event
P7: "I felt some kind of spasm when this person was going up, I sensed that it was going to end up badly through an intuition"	
P4: "It was an electrifying sensation, like, I don't know how to say it, I don't know how to explain it, but it was a sensation just… electrifying, and I knew that something bad was going to happen"	
P15: "I felt a separation between what was going well and what started to go wrong, I felt that something was coming, something was coming…"	

P participant, *I* interviewer

themselves. These utterances were not unfolded as an isolated internal verbal process, but together with a meaningful bodily and emotional context, which we named the "experiential context" of inner speech.

Our inner speech findings could be related to two aspects of emotional empathy (Perry & Shamay-Tsoory, 2013; Smith, 2006) described in cognitive neuroscience's literature: the empathic concern, characterized by being worried about the other's wellbeing and associated with altruistic behaviors (FeldmanHall et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2012), and personal distress, related to self-centered behaviors that block empathic interaction (Kim & Han, 2018). In this sense, the first group of our "inner voices" results could be related to the phenomena that empathic literature has described as empathic concern, while, on the other hand, the second group of "inner voices" could be related to personal distress. These results suggest that the "inner voice" could be a constitutive aspect of the empathic experience or, as other contemporary authors have proposed (Philippi & Koenigs, 2014; Williams & Jarrold, 2010), inner speech could be mediating the empathic dispositions and actions a person has toward someone else. This approach is consistent with the suggestion that someone's "mind-reading" capacity is mediated by her ability to introspect, as stated by the *Simulation Theory* (ST) (Focquaert et al., 2008). The ST proposes that mind-reading comes from the ability to place oneself in someone else's "shoes" and to imagine how the world looks like through her/his eyes (Goldman, 2006) via introspection (Carruthers & Smith, 1996; Nichols & Stich, 2003). Crucially, as some authors have suggested, it is possible that the relevant introspective process requires the exercise of inner speech (Philippi & Koenigs, 2014; Williams & Jarrold, 2010), in which case inner speech would be a necessary ingredient of empathy.

Although our results could not say whether inner speech mediates self-awareness or not, they at least suggest that inner speech is an important aspect of the emphatic experience. Particularly, in this case, the content of someone's inner speech expressed if she/he was more centered in their own wellbeing or in the sports-women/sportsmen's wellbeing.

Concerning the phenomenological characterization of inner speech through the *Descriptive Experiential Sampling* (DES) method (Heavey & Hurlburt, 2008; Hurlburt & Heavey, 2018; Hurlburt et al., 2013), our results confirm some of their findings. As them, we also found that inner speech (1) is experienced as conveying a diverse range of feelings and emotions; (2) sometimes is aimed at another, in our study, at the person having the accident and the people surrounding him/her; (3) sometimes is aimed at the inner speaker herself/himself (the experimental subject); and (4) sometimes is aimed to no one in particular. However, what we think is more relevant is that our results can illuminate what Hurlburt et al. (2013) describe as the individual differences in the bodily location of inner speech. They write that some people experience their inner speaking as taking place in their chest or midsection, while others locate their inner voice in their head. However, they do not tell us anything more about other components of the experience that could explain how people differ in the location of their inner speech, especially given the widespread view that inner speech is experienced in the head and not elsewhere. In other words, it is possible that there could be other elements in the experience of inner speech that could differ between subjects and be relevant for the difference in the experience of the felt location of the inner voice. Our results, especially those that concern the localization of the bodily sensations that are part of the "experiential context" of inner speech, suggest the possibility that where the inner voice is experientially located is influenced by the localization of salient bodily sensations that appear simultaneously with inner speaking. We found that those sensations are felt in diverse parts of the body such as legs, arms, buttocks, and chest. For instance, it is not unreasonable to expect that people describing their experience of innerly speaking as located in their chest also have, as part of their overall experience, a salient sensation located in the same place. From our view, this raises two possibilities. First, the inner voice is phenomenologically located (probably within certain limits) where a salient bodily sensation is located (while the experience is actually happening), and this co-location is then reported, or, second, the inner voice is phenomenologically unallocated or located elsewhere, but given the co-occurrence of a salient bodily sensation, when reported (after the experience), the localization of the inner speaking is retrospectively misplaced under the unnoticed influence of the remembered bodily sensation. We hope that future studies could provide a better comprehension of the bodily location of inner speech based on these two possibilities.

Another finding using the DES method deserves consideration (Heavey & Hurlburt, 2008; Hurlburt & Heavey, 2018; Hurlburt et al., 2013). These studies reported that people sometimes experience innerly speaking without any accompanying words, in what they call "unworded inner speech," and also a related but distinct phenomenon of thinking without any words, images, or any other symbol, what they call "unsymbolized thinking." Based on our findings, we suggest that

both phenomena may be closely related to the phenomenological category within the experiential context of inner speech that we called felt knowledge. As mentioned, this category refers to an implicit, body-based, pre-reflective knowledge participants had about the imminent occurrence of the accident of the people they were watching. The exciting possibility that suggests itself is that both unworded inner speech and unsymbolized thinking are both subtle variations of the ways in which people feel, and/or then describe, the experience of having a specific, but not verbally articulated, knowledge about something. This idea converges with what Petitmengin (2007) describes as a pre-reflective, rhythmic, concrete, and embodied form of knowledge that seems to be the very source of our innerly spoken thoughts. Importantly, future work focusing on this pre-verbal bodily understanding has the potential of shedding significant light on the "unworded inner speech" and "unsymbolized thinking" constructs, determining, for instance, the degree to which they may be constitutionally dependent on a specific pattern of bodily experience and, most intriguingly, the extent to which they may be just one unitary conscious phenomenon that is wrongly doubly classified because of the different ways in which participants in DES studies may conceptualize it.

A critical result that our phenomenological study shows is that inner speech is not only a cognitive process that occurs in isolation from the experience of being alive. But it rather happens in an experiential context together with bodily sensations, emotions, and felt knowledge. Although traditionally the study of inner speech has empathized its relevance as a higher cognitive process (e.g., problem-solving, planning, logical reasoning, self-regulation), contemporary authors have also pointed out the embodied aspect of inner speech (McCafferty, 2004; Zurina & Williams, 2011). One of the pioneers of the language embodiment was Karl Bühler (1965), who claimed that the language has a representational dimension, which refers to the classical view in psychology to the act of communicating something to someone. However, more importantly for this study, he also pointed out the expressive dimension of language, which refers to the sender's embodied subjectivity in the act of communicating and, more specifically, to her gestural expression. From this view, the sender is "a constituent part of the message and which is manifested [*gesturally*] through him" (italic add by authors) (Fossa, 2017a, p. 321). Although Bühler's theory was initially not specifically applied to inner speech, contemporary researchers have associated the expressive dimension of language with internal voice (e.g., Fossa, 2017a, 2017b). For instance, Fossa (2019) found that inner speech comprises an affective-motivational sphere that evolves into concrete spoken thoughts (below, we will present an integrative proposal of inner speech from the enactive approach).

Having discussed the embodied and affective character of the overall experience in which inner speech takes place, it is worth relating our study to the enactive framework that inspires and informs it (Froese & Di Paolo, 2011; Thompson, 2007; Thompson & Varela, 2001; Varela, 1984, 1991, 1997; Varela & Thompson, 2003; Varela et al., 1991). As mentioned in the introduction, the lived body, that is, the experience of being a body animated from within, capable of exerting effort and being affected by the world, is at the center of the enactive approach to cognition,

perception, and affect. However, as far as we know, this approach has not been applied to empirical studies of inner speech before. Fortunately, our study suggests that the enactive premise of the centrality of the lived body is likely to be correct in the case of inner speech also. Our results show that the experience of innerly speaking to oneself does not occur in an experiential vacuum. On the contrary, it appears within an experiential context that is phenomenologically integrated, including the bodily and affective-emotional dimensions of our sentient being. For instance, our study suggests that someone pre-reflectively feeling, in/through her body, the imminent occurrence of the accident (our "being expectant…" Subcategory within the "felt knowledge" category) will experience some congruent sensation in her body (our "bodily sensation" category). Some of these sensations will be related to negative emotion (our "negative emotional feeling" category) and, most importantly, will experience in their inner speech a concordant propositional content, for instance, expressing her worries about what is about to happen to the sportsman/women (our "expectations…" Subcategory within the "inner spoken voice" category). In other words, the phenomenological categories we found surrounding inner speech, what we call its experiential context, and which, together with the former, constitute a unitary multidimensional experiential whole, make us hypothesize that the contents, style, rate, and other properties of inner speech may be directly influenced, and, in turn, may influence, the phenomenological properties of the affective and bodily dimension, in a kind of cross-talk between pre-discursive, implicit, but precise bodily meanings on the one hand and discursively articulated, explicit, innerly spoken thoughts on the other. To this end, a dynamical, real-time registration of the ways in which meanings and knowledge vary within these pre- and post-discursive dimensions may be ideally suited to address this enactive hypothesis. Moreover, given the enactive premise that the body is both an experiential structure and a living dynamical system, future work should also include neurophysiological measures that correlate with the phenomenological ones. This view would achieve a mutually illuminating explanatory interaction between the phenomenology and neurophysiology of inner speech, as envisioned by Varela's neurophenomenology (Bitbol & Petitmengin, 2017; Olivares et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2005; Varela, 1996).

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Part III
Conclusion

Chapter 6
The Inner Other: Who Speaks When I Speak to Myself in Silence?

Pablo Fossa

In the different chapters presented in this book, two important theoretical aspects are evidenced that find evidence in the empirical applications also presented in this volume. The first of them corresponds to the role of "otherness" in the constitution of the self. That is, the intersubjective space of the self-other relationship that, through internalization processes, is established as an essentially dialogical inner speech. The interaction and dialogue with that internalized other – real or imagined – are what generate psychological development during the experience of talking to oneself. At this point, the theoretical relevance of the internalization process, so emphatically described by Vygotsky (1934), in different passages of his work, makes sense again. For Vygotsky, the psychological processes that take place in the "inter-psychic" space will later take place in the "intra-psychic" space. Through the process of internalization, each person dialogues with the culture and the environment (including significant others) in their inner language. These notions are clearly evidenced in the theoretical integration carried out by De Luca Piccione and Freda (in this volume) and the empirical work carried out by Pinheiro, Mélo, and Barros (in this volume). For De Luca Piccione and Freda (in this volume), otherness plays a fundamental role in the construction of identity in particular and of the psyche in general; meanwhile, for Pinheiro, Mélo, and Barros (in this volume), otherness is expressed in the dialogical nature of the inner speech during the recording of online diaries. The internal speech of the study participant expresses a dialogical nature, as well as the demands of the other (Pinheiro, Mélo, and Barros, in this volume).

The second theoretical elaboration that finds empirical evidence in this book corresponds to the notion of pre-reflexive inner speech. In relation to this, what Fossa and Pacheco present (in this volume) constitute the theoretical framework of what Vergara et al. (in this volume) show empirically, that is, a pre-reflective and

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pre-conceptual dimension of inner speech, non-propositional and bodily felt. As presented at the beginning of this book, inner speech was understood as a psychic function in the service of problem-solving and executive functions. This means that inner speech was understood as a problem-solving function (Piaget, 1923; Vygotsky, 1934). However, current works have shown the important role of inner speech in other psychological processes, such as imagination, creativity, and mental wandering (Barros et al., 2020; Fossa et al., 2018b), among others. In this book, Fossa and Pacheco (in this volume), revisiting Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, propose the existence of a pre-reflective dimension of inner speech. This means an uncontrolled, involuntary, less conscious, and pre-verbal form of inner speech. To the reader's eyes, speaking of "pre-verbal inner speech" may seem like a contradiction. And so it is if we take the notion of "speech" as text. If we follow the classic psychological description of understanding language as a text or a set of words, it is clear that pre-reflective inner speech is a contradiction. However, if we focus on a broader understanding of human language, understanding inner language as any activity of the consciousness of communication toward itself, speaking of pre-reflective inner speech does not constitute a contradiction. This is what Bühler (1980) stated in his classic *Theory of Expression*, but unfortunately little is considered in modern psychology.

There are current antecedents of the existence of a pre-reflective dimension of inner speech (Fossa, 2017, 2019; Fossa et al., 2018a, b, 2020), although the first indications of this dimension are found in the final passages of Vygotsky's work (Cornejo, 2012). One dimension of consciousness, namely, pre-reflective consciousness, which has been mainly developed in phenomenological philosophy (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2013) is today articulated with Vygotskian inner speech theory. What Fossa and Pacheco propose (in this volume) clearly finds support in the experimental phenomenology presented by Vergara et al. (in this volume). An important reflection that emerges from the chapters presented in this book is related to the integration of otherness in the levels of inner speech functioning. There is no inner speech without otherness. That other within us is ourselves as interlocutors of our own motivations, interests, and intentions. It seems that in the course of ordinary life, we need to listen to ourselves. The experience of alterity is inherent and constitutive of the psyche, and we ourselves are the main "other," both in company contexts and alone. In the course of daily life, we are not always aware of our inner language. On several occasions, daily activities force us to be attentive to the tasks of the environment. We are not always aware of the form that our inner dialogue takes, in all the activities that we carry out. In other moments – of calm, (self)-contemplation, or leisure – we can enter into an experience of encounter with ourselves, in which the inner speech is filled with images, sensations, and even diffuse ideas. By this, I mean that we are not always aware of our inner language and the level of awareness of inner speech seems to depend on the level of reflection or cognitive control that we exercise at each moment. As Fossa and Pacheco (in this volume) point out, much of life occurs from a passive dimension of consciousness,

from an experience suffered. This dimension enables pre-reflective inner speech, which occupies a large part of our daily activities. At times, reflection emerges and we are aware of our inner mental activity (Fossa et al., 2018b). Of course, there is no sharp division between reflexivity and pre-reflexivity; on the contrary, the experience is passive-suffered, at the same time that we control and direct our cognitive processes toward the different goals or tasks of the environment. It is here that a new component emerges, along with otherness: thirdness. There is also a third position in inner speech, which transcends the self-other relationship and which observes or analyzes dialogical positions. Thirdness constitutes a recursive position or meta-position, which maintains a dynamic relationship with dialogical positions, generating rather a triadic relationship. This third position constitutes a kind of metacognitive and reflexive position on the other two positions in dialogue. Following the approach of Cornejo (2012), in this reflection, the notion of "position" or "inner voice" should not be taken as a synonym for "person," but as a tool for the expression of subjectivity. In this way, the inner word is just a stone in the building of meaning, following the Vygotskian approach. In synthesis, the reader to whom this book has reached has had the opportunity to read new theoretical reflections on the phenomenon of inner speech and new methodological approaches to be able to capture it empirically. Undoubtedly, the chapters presented in this book open new questions to continue exploring that inexhaustible voice that resonates daily within us.

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