



Review Article

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The Dialogical Dynamics of Happiness in Nursing and Care by Jacques Poulain, Université de Paris 8

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To Cite This Article: Jacques Poulain*. *The Dialogical Dynamics of Happiness in Nursing and Care* by Jacques Poulain, Université de Paris 8. *Am J Biomed Sci & Res.* 2024 23(6) *AJBSR.MS.ID.003131*, DOI: [10.34297/AJBSR.2024.23.003131](https://doi.org/10.34297/AJBSR.2024.23.003131)

Received: 📅 August 16, 2024; Published: 📅 August 23, 2024

The Dynamics of Happiness in the Use of Language

The contemporary anthropology of language has completely upset the benchmarks of the pramatico-analytical philosophy of language by showing that the chronic abortive being that is the human being, in order to be able to live, has to attach oneself to language by making the world speak. For what? To find there the same happiness that he had taken from listening to the voice of the mother in intra-uterine listening, as the audio-phonologist Alfred Tomatis discovered [1]. Because the human being is not a biologically well-formed being and was born a year too early—compared to mammals of similar complexity—he is only endowed with intraspecific instincts (nutritional, sexual and defensive) towards its human fellows. He therefore needs to invent his world by projecting in the world and in the other the harmony between the sounds that he emits and receives.

This use of language was called “prosopopoeia” by William von Humboldt to [2] make it clear that the way in which poets and playwrights make the world, stones, springs, animals speak in their poems or in their plays does not constitute only an artistic process, but that it presented itself as the original use of language, as the source of dialogue, of intersubjective actions and of art. In this way we also discovered that our life was exclusively a dialogue because this dialogue is the only thing that makes its life possible. First, the human child has to make the world speak by using this prosopopoeia to be able to perceive it with his own eyes. The child experiences this harmony in an animistic way in its use of sounds because of its inability to perceive a difference between the sounds it emits and those it then hears, also it lends its heard sounds to the world with which it identifies itself for the same reason. Arnold Gehlen’s anthropobiology

confirmed this linguistic hypothesis [3]. This audio-phonetic harmony lends its own law to the dynamics of the imagination, of our thought and of our desires in the following way: every hiatus and every disharmony with the world must be overcome by projecting a new form of pre-harmony with the world, with others and with ourselves. As we spontaneously pre-harmonize by ear the sounds, we emit with the same sounds we try to hear, we pre-harmonize our perceptions, actions and desires as the most favorable responses we can expect from the world, from others and from ourselves. The happiness felt by listening to the favorable prosopopoeia of the world that speaks to us in our visual perception of something in this world has become thus a source of delight.

Because access to perception is always filtered by the words, we project into the world to isolate objects and identify them with what we see of them using our predicates, we experience the verbal activity of this perception as a response as favorable as our own sounds when we listen to them. Converting chaotic sensations into gratifying perceptions, the child links the gratifications felt in listening to the world with the joys it feels in seeing it. Projecting into the world the privileged access to communication that it shared with one’s mother and since its mother’s responses were felt to be rewarding and gratifying, it comes to perceive this visual world as the speaker of a positive answer, expressing simultaneously both its need and the way to meet it. This movement allows it to produce an effective reversal of his impulses: instead of perceiving stimuli requiring a physical reaction on its part and of being projected towards the appropriate consummatory action, it transforms the visual perceptual stimulus linked to the sounds he means, in a pure consummatory action of itself [4]. Because this inversion of the biological circuits which characterizes the use of the voice can be

transferred to any sensible experience, because the use of listening to our sounds underlies any use of our five senses, this articulation of the sense of reality to the experience of enjoying it, is itself transferred to the use of these five senses. This gives us a key to understand what the Greeks called "*aesthesis*".

It makes our life a dialogue with the world, with our fellow human beings as well as with ourselves that is producing the happiness that we are striving for. We seek a world that responds to our expectations as gratifyingly as our mother's voice, and these multi-functional responses of worlds to our own sounds are what in turn allows us to attune ourselves to that world. We can only access any reality whatsoever because we rejoice in this reality by making it speak. The use of language makes all perceptions possible because the structure of agreement between the propositional subject and its predicate is projected into it, to make recognize that to exist for the named reality is effectively to be what we consume of it by using the propositional predicate, i. e. by identifying this object with its property denoted by this predicate. In the example most used by logicians: "the snow is white", the thought of this proposition or its expressive use transforms the received and external sensation because the identification of the thing called "snow" is produced in it with what we perceive of it, that is to say its property, by the use of the predicate "white." To be thought as true, the proposition describing a perception must trigger by its reception its own understanding as the unique consummatory action of itself accompanied by this perception. Instead of triggering a mechanical reaction as happens in any instinctive biological circuit, the perception that is made possible using a proposition only triggers as a reaction the consummatory action of its reality and its truth.

Every dialogical use of a proposition is indeed consuming itself the happiness that it is producing, i. e. we are dialogically consuming our mime of the voice of our mother in every proposition and in every perception that it makes possible to see. This hedonic component is operative in the activation of our audio-phonicsensibility, but it is itself transformed into cultural eudaimonia with the help of this filter of truth. This mime of the audio-phonics movement which is carried out by the utterance of a proposition and by the movement of truth-gratifying reflection that it triggers by means of the affirmative proposition, is inseparably a test of truth and of the perceptual gratification which accompanies him. The cognitive and logical pre-harmonization which carries the propositions by which we objectify perceptions, actions, thoughts, feelings, and desires is always the same: we are incapable of thinking a proposition without thinking that this proposition is true. Expressed in the words of Charles Sanders Peirce, "every proposition asserts its own truth" [5]. In our own terms, we must think our propositions as true to be able to objectify the visual facts that correspond to them as well as our physical actions or our desires in order to enjoy ourselves with them. This is also what remains true of the Kantian doctrine of the "transcendental truth", this movement of thought which he conceived as the anticipation of truth conditioning access to any reality whatsoever. But Kant conceived it as an *a priori* datum of reflection and was completely unaware that the use of the reality principle

and the use of the pleasure principle are inextricably linked in any perceptual experience, producing both a happiness of truth and a happiness of life. The life experience of human being finds its own specific dynamics in the search for all the experiments of the world who respond to us in a way as favorable as the voice of our mother. The dialogical specificity of the arts emerges in the different arts in the form of the different ways of producing and recognizing the different happiness's that we seek in our life to overcome any hiatus. What characterizes the production of a new idea is not that it apparently emerges independently of our past perceptions, but it is its capacity to figure objectively the happiness of life to which its use of the dialogue with five senses gives access. When we separate the specific creativity of our ideas and of our dialogue from its origin, i. e. from the use of language, it appears as a natural miracle emerging fortuitously from a brilliant imagination capable of seeing the world, for unknown reasons, in a different way than we usually see it.

All our relations with the world, others and ourselves cannot therefore be produced or completed without judging whether these pre-harmonized linguistic relations which are shown in our proposals show us or not the objective conditions of life that they are presumed to show in order to come into existence. As addressees of ourselves, we need to know (1) whether or not they are in harmony with ourselves as speakers or as thinking beings and (2) whether we ourselves are in harmony with these different realities that are made accessible by our thoughts and by our words. Our relations with ourselves are therefore necessarily indirect. We cannot judge and transform ourselves without judging the objectivity of the experience of speech, of thought or of the intersubjective interaction that guarantees these relationships and these experiences of life. We cannot gratify ourselves and be in harmony with ourselves and with our addressees without judging the truth of the propositions or of the dialogue expressing our knowledge, our needs to act or our desires. This law of truth also governs and validates all our uses of dialogue.

The Dialogical Dynamics of Happiness in Nursing and Care

It is enough to know the cognitive and hedonic dynamics of our dialogical experiment of ourselves to understand that we cannot talk to our addressees without projecting the dynamics of this hedonic prosopopoeia into the use of speech acts, i. e. without taking his (or her) point of view. We only follow here a law that is already constitutive of our use of language and of our dialogical imagination because his agreement is together what we are anticipating and what we are expecting to enjoy. We can only imagine the states of affairs, the actions or the desires about which we speak (or about which we speak to ourselves in our thoughts) to others or to ourselves as responses that respond to them or respond to us in the most favorable and gratifying way. Because this dialogical dynamics of anticipated happiness of truth gives us the ability to objectively judge the objectivity of the harmony that we create there as an agreement with others and ourselves, every speech act makes us dependent on the agreement or disagreement of our addressees.

We can indeed easily apply to our dialogical agreement of truth what we have learnt about the affirmation of a descriptive proposition of perception. Contrary to their conventionalist and pragmatic description given by John L. Austin [6] and contrary to John Searle's reduction of them to contractual promises [7], it is necessary to take the aesthetical dynamics of truth and happiness in the speech acts much more seriously than they do. They define indeed these speech acts as the unique acts that it is enough to designate to perform them, i. e. as a sort of magical and reflexive characteristics derived from their self-referential meaning. But the dynamics of our prosopopoeia obliges us to recognize that these speech acts must and can be redescribed as affirmations. When we say: "I affirm that p is true", this statement can be reconstructed as: "p is as true as I say that it is and that the fact described in p exists". The self-referential character of this description only registers our recognitive judgment on its truth, in short, on its objectivity.

The self-referential character of our speech acts follows the same logic of recognition. We can and must therefore redescribe, for example, our promises in the same way if we wish to make explicit the dynamics of truth and objectivity which is inherent in them. "I promise to come tomorrow" means in effect: "it is as true that I will come tomorrow as I say so and that, by saying it, I judge that I have to come tomorrow". My utterance registers my recognition of the objective necessity of doing such and such an action as well as the fact that I recognize having to do this action by means of my assertion of the true judgment that I operate here and now. My reflexive judgment and the agreement that I expect from my addressee express both the common desire to see me come tomorrow and the determining judgment of the affirmation that I express to confirm my coming tomorrow as a mutual and common happiness that will exist as based on this statement.

This statement of truth expresses a common desire for truth about the action I designate by my words, and it simultaneously fulfils this desire for truth as a factual experience that I produce and that only my addressee can complete and fulfil by his (or her) agreement. The anticipation of this agreement expressed by the utterance in its use of the indicative mood: "I promise to come tomorrow" as if the addressee's agreement thus already arrived in my statement and was expressed in my performative utterance, constitutes and makes an objective judgment that gives the addressee the opportunity to accept this fact as well as to accept the expression of our common desire as being real. This gives him (or her) the ability to accept as real the objective relationship that I anticipate between us as our reality in this dialogical relationship. All the speech-acts that will occur in this dialogue have this character of prosopopoeia where we are affirming the objective determination of the mutual and common happiness sought after as well as on the anticipated satisfaction of this desire in life itself.

We must also admit that our addressees therefore must judge the objective truth value of these speech acts as constituting the real reharmonizations of the common world which they need as well as they have to judge the objectivity of their mutual and common rejoicing in the face of this common happiness that is antic-

ipated there. Statements, commands, expressions of feelings and beliefs have to be redescribed in similar ways because they are all created by the speech acts that we have to articulate by identifying the elements of the mental world and the social world that are there, as well as they are claimed to be as necessary for their lives as they are actually as enjoyable for their social partners as they are for themselves. Because they are embedded in the articulation of five-senses language, they are transcultural, although the cultural blisses that are searched and eventually produced dialogically in different languages can be expressed in different natural languages that seemingly seem to have nothing in common.

Nursing is developing not only a dialogical use of language where one is teaching pragmatically to children their capacity to appropriate by themselves their own mime of the voice of their mother, it is developing too their capacity to create all the relations to the world, to others and themselves that are allowing them to enjoy the experiences of desires, of moves and of knowledges that they need in order to be able to live and to enjoy the experiences that they need to achieve in order to be able to live. The dialogical use of nursing is not only linked to the apprenticeship of the use of language and of dialogue, but it is producing too the possibility for the children to experiment the world, the others and themselves as living beings producing and reflecting their own conditions of life and the experiences of life the others. The creativity of nursing is therefore not only based on the empathy and on the sympathy felt towards these children as it is usually thought in order to achieve wholly the role of the "second mother" that one is intended to fulfil: one has first to recognize the objective needs that are mobilizing the children and to help them to answer of these needs and to enjoy their fulfilment. Their job is not to transmit their presupposed empathy and sympathy towards others to them, it is to become conscious of the desires of happiness that are already motivating them and to let become conscious these children of their strive of happiness that is expressing itself through these desires. The own dialogue that these children are developing with themselves by using the dynamics of happiness that is moving it, is above all what nurses have to make conscious the children that they are helping to live. This dialogue is indeed not only an affair of words, but this is also above all for every child that they are nursing an affair of appropriating its own conditions of life through this dialogue and through the happiness that this dialogue is producing with themselves if it is indeed producing this one as a real event. The achievement of nursing is therefore tested and recognized by this common event of happiness that is crowning the entire dialogue of words and of life that it is developing.

Care is indeed following the same dynamics and is demanding to fulfil the same exigencies as nursing. Like nursing, it is too often reduced to a kind of morals linked to physical and psychical needs demanding some help from us. It seems too to be regulated only by the respect of the otherhood of the persons that are needing care or to whom we are willing to give some help. Nursing owes its radicality to the childish need of assimilating all the elements of language and experience that could allow them to live. Care is at best oriented

towards the compensation of physical or mental deficiencies that are demanding to be overcome by some action or some therapy. Its aim is to restore a kind of resiliency that is allowing to the persons that need it to live the to-day life as if they would not have to ask for this help. Like nursing, care is often presumed to be inspired by some kind of empathy or of sympathy towards deficient persons that is motivating the agent of care. But it needs first to identify the deficiencies that the person who needs help is unable to overcome by himself or by herself. Secondly it needs to acquire the objective capacity and the mastery of the objective actions that are enabling the agent of care the desired resiliency. This resiliency has indeed to be desired both by the helped person and by the agent who is taking care. Because this common aim must be assumed by them, it needs to be recognized as necessary or useful by means of a dialogue that allows to identify this aim as the common physical or mental happiness that the social partners accept both to strive for.

Although the challenge of care seems more ordinary and less radical than nursing, it may sometimes become as radical as nursing and more difficult to meet. This happens in the case of a childish autism as well as in the case of an adult autism. Since its diagnostic in 1943 by Kanner, it is too often reduced to its psychological effect and to its overt symptom: the solipsistic retreat of the autist in himself or in herself and the refusal to speak, his or her aphasia [8]. The other symptoms that are following this one, i. e. agnosia, apraxia, anorexia, apathy and analgesia and their genetic evolution are usually described as the effects of this aphasia without the possibility of giving an objective explanation of the physical and psychical correlation of them. This connexion seems inextricably mysterious and is giving rise to all hypotheses that one can imagine. One needs an anthropobiology of language in order to explain that one needs language in order to live and to do any experience whatever and that language is able to allow us to overcome our congenital hiatus between our sensibility and our praxis by correlating words, reality and happiness. It remains the only theory able to explain that the correlation that the use of language is establishing between our sensibility and our action, may be destroyed and disconnected by aphasia, by the autistic refusal of speak. More, its explanation is the only one that makes us able to take care of these sensitivity and mental disorders that are characterizing the emergence, the persistency and the evolution of these symptoms.

Because the extra-specific instincts are not well programmed in the human being, this being has to create them by the use of language. This use is conditioning his or her ability to see with the eyes the objects because he or she is projecting the use of these eyes following the model of the use of sounds. It is allowing the child to feel this visualized world as a world that is answering to him or her as favorably as the voice of the mother that he or she heard in her bosom. The inability to distinguish the emitted sound, the heard sound and the visualized object is producing the identification of the child with world that is called usually "animism". But this animism is bound with a consciousness of the magical power of this use of words. This magical power is usually used positively in order to see the world and the others and to be able of acting in

this world, but it can also be used negatively and it is precisely this ability that is used in the case of autism. Obsessed by the memory of a traumatizing event that seemed to be mortal for him, the child thinks that it is enough that he stops to speak in order that this event will not occur again and it this negative power of hindering this repetition that he is using in aphasia. Because this oral link between the use of language and the perception that it makes possible, is not known this phenomenon cannot be correctly understood and the therapy remains a case of hermeneutic interrogation about its meaning or the use of a will to restore or instore the use of an important vocabulary against the will of the child. It remains focalized uniquely upon the use of language and upon the rewarding compensations that are arbitrarily linked with the restoration of the activity of speaking.

It remains particularly blind concerning the phenomenon of agnosia that is accompanying the aphasia: the progressive incapacity of perceiving in the visual space that is not the repetition of the traumatized event. The child is indeed continuously experimenting his negative power of hindering this repetition, his perceptive horizon is becoming progressively completely void and nothing visual cannot anymore be perceived. The same is true of the other phenomenon that are progressively appearing as dynamical consequences. The apraxia is affecting progressively his capacity to regulate his actions. These ones are progressively reduced to reflexes of discharging energy of his organism and finished by being completely unconscious. The anorexia is instating itself as a negative capacity of not responding to his stimulations of hungriness. The apatheia and the ataraxia that are concluding this process allows the child to ignore the most dolorous experiences and to let dye himself by his capacity to enjoy of his negative power of not speaking without having to be conscious of this.

This radical and progressive deterioration of all the correlations that the use of language is producing between perceptions, stimuli and consummatory actions cannot be overcome without a continuously reinforced personal care that is wholly specific to autism. Like Bruno Bettelheim [9] once wrote, it needs a personal care that is necessitating the continuous presence of one caregiver for one child. But it needs much more than this: if we consider the happiness that is accompanying the emergence of one perception consecutive to one proposition, it needs the invention by the care giver of the most possible perceptive, active and consummatory happinesses that are accompanying the restoration of the thought and of the speech acts by this caregiver in order to be able to let forget the trauma that were initiating this whole autistic process at every stage of this process. It needs a whole work of anticipative imagination of his part by taking into account the specificity of this trauma and an enterprise of imaginative power that is not limited by the Freudian psychoanalytical boundaries as it was the case in the clinics of Bettelheim. This care must be deeply a kind of art in its corn because it must propose to the child the needed happiness that is correlated with the initial trauma in order to be able to let forget it. Nursing must become here a kind of very smart art and it is indeed here not sufficient that it could be only love oriented.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

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