

The Silent Communication

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The essay discloses dimensions of communicative awareness, which are both local and general in the sense that they are recognised in all civilisations and pervade the researches of anthropologists, archeologists and historians. These dimensions are bodily activities composed of six practical orientations: up-down, left-right and forward-backward. Our social architecture, our systems of practical implements, our spaces and times of orientations are inscribed by both, the specific bodily situations and their silent background in all communicative awareness. Even languages are variations on these silent dimensions of activities: we face the future – a forward orientation; we leave the past behind – pertaining to our backward dimension; there are upper and lower social classes, left and right political movements. These silent dimensions are both universal and contingent.

Keywords: fields of action, situated body, inter-corporeity, lived spaces and times, social architectonic

INTRODUCTION

The ‘linguistic turn’ in the mainstream thinking of the 20th century, whether in Ordinary Language Theory, hermeneutics, semiotics and structuralism, took meaning for granted as an inevitable aspect of language. This move is an effort to replace the need for awareness, mind and subject by a metaphysical assumption that there is meaning and it resides in language. Following this it could be said that the world has meaning because it is framed in linguistic forms, while the world of awareness has no meaning. It is still the modern metaphysics and ontology, and even a presumption that despite the plethora of theories of language, and a multitude of cultures and their languages, we shall be able to construct a ‘meta language’ capable of explaining and subsuming all languages. Such meta language will contain objective rules to decide the status of all other languages. Some went so far as to claim that such language inheres in the deep structures of the brain, sending communication scientists to consult brain physiologists as to whereabouts is this language to be found. Yet the search for the origins of meaning is the very activity that engages the worldly phenomena and not a reflective or descriptive task of a subject. Such an engagement is not a way of deciphering some universal essences but an investigation of the texture and style of our being toward the world in such a way that the distinction between this movement toward is coextensive with the world’s inscription in our very being. It is necessary to disclose how the things of the world are intertwined with human ways of comporting toward the world and not how things are transformed into essential structures by linguistic categories.

The way the world is disclosed by human activity and how the world invites and composes such activity is prior to the pragmatism of Heidegger's famous pronouncement of 'being in the world' and his suggestion that the things in the world appear primarily as meaning, where each thing points to other things (Heidegger 1969). The primary presence of things is their being 'in hand – in order to...': the hammer points to the nail, the nail to the board, the board to the wall... in order to build a house. But being in the world at the outset is bodily and active, and the activity deploys a field which is a context of any 'in order to'. Apart from that, the modern notion of reason and a universe of located sum of things in space and time requires an awareness of 'locations', spaces and times which deploy things in their 'places', distances, accessibility, requiring exploration, orientation, intersubjective and inter-corporeal cooperation. These features are absent from Heidegger, rationalists, positivists and empiricists and yet they are the ways we are 'at home' as a place where Being might decide to descend.

INTERACTION

A principal extension of phenomenology as a way of 'being in the world' is the direct understanding that bodily activities, its abilities to perform tasks, precede the modern postulation of the primacy of reflective thought. While such thought, expressed in language, was regarded as the origin of meaning, the investigation of human communication reveals a more fundamental source: the engaged and situated body. Perception is not an empirical metaphysics of stimulus response, but the body abilities engaged with and intertwined with the field of phenomena (Mickunas 1988). The perceived world is available in ways that we interact with the phenomena and the ways that the phenomena disclose what activities we must perform to master our environment. In brief, our being 'toward the world', being oriented toward tasks to be performed is also to adhere to the way the such abilities are 'intended' by the phenomena of the world. The meaning of human ways of being toward the world – and not 'in' the world as a bee in a hive – depends on the tasks requiring body as active in correlation to the concrete demands of the structures of the phenomena. The spatial constitution of the body is not a physiological position in a specific location but an articulated structure of action. The active body subject is a phenomenal composition of orientations which comprise the basic communicative interaction with a phenomenal field which speaks: Facing a building one is directed by it in a field logic of 'if-then' structure. The building tells the active bodily subject 'if you want to see the other side, then you must walk around'. And the answer is 'I can' walk around and not just simply react to light waves striking by eyes'. Thus, being bodily is an active engagement in a way that the engaged phenomena are absolutely intertwined with such activities. The latter are the communicative media with the world and equally communicative media with others who can 'read' directly that they too can act in similar ways. The acting self and the other are in a primal communication on the basis of 'I can' and thus 'We can' have the same world which we both can communicate to any other by directly recognizable activities having a world or a signifying embodiment of the worldly phenomena. Here the one-sided signification of the world by the subject is surrendered; corporeal being toward the world inscribes the phenomenal field with meaning, the latter signifies what human activity means. This mutual signification must be conceived quite strictly: human action is oriented toward and signifies the phenomena, and discovers that, despite the wisdom of empiricists and rationalists, the phenomena are not 'dumb and speechless', but are also media which are active in signifying human action. This mutual signifying is 'centrifugal and centripetal' (Merleau-Ponty 1962). The 'speech' of the phenomena instructs one how to engage with it. My cat

behind the bush tells me how to catch it, but the bush also communicates which way I must move in order to be successful with my effort to catch the cat. Of course, if the cat shifts its orientation, the entire field of my activities will be recomposed and the bush will instruct the required changes in my activities.

The mutual signification indicates that bodily activities, just as the worldly phenomena, preclude some universal or univocal designation of meanings; the latter are constantly and dynamically contextualising and contextualised. Any meaning appears with an emergent and never finalised context and equally signifies and resignifies the context. As mentioned, the bodily actions are not separated from, nor are they perceivable without the context. Meaning bodily and constantly emerges with the changing actions and transfiguring phenomena. This implies that being toward the worldly phenomena is a multiplication, segregation and propagation of the context and its recontextualisation – including the very ways of being toward the world. The phenomena engage our activity beginning with the minimal, ‘diacritical’ composition. The term ‘diacritical’ – minimal dual separation and mutuality – is present in all field awareness and even linguistic composition. The composition of any perceived phenomena requires at least two aspects: background and foreground. The simplest perceptual phenomenon contains differences within the phenomenon or from other phenomena. The black is dull and deep, and the blue is bright because it is next to a faded green, and the green is darker due to a tree shade cast across it. There is no univocal meaning of any phenomenon, but found as a differential among phenomena such that the large bush is large due to the small stump next to it. Here even a size of something is a function of a difference between the things and the most varied phenomena composing a field. The differences compose a visibility in mutual articulation. Every perceptual moment is in a system of meanings. Any bodily engagement as active – indeed kinesthetic – testifies to this play of shifting differences. Walking past a forest our movement locates the trees: one tree is behind another while other trees are to the left or the right. But with the next two steps the tree behind is now to the left and the one that was to the right is now behind another tree. Meanwhile, while I was in front of that tree, now I am to its left. The trees also locate my position as being next to the forest and walking at its edge. This silent communication of active body and interactive phenomena is ‘universal’ in the sense that anyone can ‘read’ my movements in a way that they also can take the same walk. Subsequently, the dimensions of this ‘contextualised universality’ will become apparent.

It can be argued that the arts of cultures can disclose more visibility by capturing the vectors of signification of diverse phenomena: deep black may be evil while radiant white might be good in the Western world, while somewhere else, such as India, it might be reversed. Thus art can disclose a ‘transparent wall of the world’: any perceptual phenomenon is never alone or at the limit behind which one cannot penetrate. Every phenomenon signifies more and opens to differentiations of visibility and meaning that cannot offer finality. The radiant sunset is disclosed by the approaching dimness of the evening, and the latter is dim due to the rising clouds in the east. Each contributes to their appearance in their silent difference from the others and yet in their total mutuality. Thus every perceptual feature is ambiguous and incessantly interrogates the shifting gaze. It asks for explication and thus of opening up of vectors of meaning and more visibility (Kačerauskas, Mickūnas 2020). Obviously, we have left the world of communication composed of quantifiable sense data. Even reduced to light waves the empirical analyses never found a correlation between a light wave and a pure blue – and all of this despite the maintenance of the prevalent constancy hypothesis expressed in terms of light wave spectrum.

Any bodily action is a way of opening space-time horizons, which while limited are open to continuous expansion. This could be called 'local-global' to the extent that any task to be performed must be located and yet encompassed by an indefinite field related to a task. While the common interpretation of locations and their surroundings point to a three dimensional – Euclidean space where things are one next to the other, with corporeal activity the composition of space is not a Euclidean box but one in which the body activities signify and select specific phenomena interconnected with the task and exclude others. This selectivity also includes time as a horizon and as a field in which certain phenomena are relevant at a specific temporal location. This constitutes 'signifying space-time'. The other background – space-time horizon – from which emerge figures that are solicited by actions is the never exhausted world. Many names have been given to this world horizon, but we shall limit ourselves to 'possibilities for exploration'. As we already noted, there are no things, no chromatic components that would appear as parts; they are field phenomena where each signifies and continuously opens indefinite and always ambiguous diacritical explications. In this sense, the world horizon as a background is never exhausted, but is at the same time limited by the figures of action emerging from the body background and how such action comprises situatedness while intertwining with the figures emerging from the world background. This movement toward the world and the world's coming into visibility is the centrifugal and centripetal process wherein it is not yet possible to separate human action from the worldly phenomena. Such inter-communication is not reducible to the traditional action and reaction; the interaction reveals that signifying human action is mixed in with the silent signifying by the emerging figures from the world horizon. The figures signify their differentiated present with other figures coming into visibility forming a field which, when restricted, is open and hence comprise a primary reflexivity that interrogates our activity and asks us about the way of comportment toward such figures: Is the figure in the shop window a person or a manikin? Did I move or did it move? As I come closer this interrogation continues till finally I can say that it is a manikin. And our vision gains insight and opens answers that themselves turn to questions and thus continues to elicit visibility and depth from the world horizon.

THE DIMENSIONS OF ACTIVE BODY

Whichever mythology one proclaims – 'man as a fallen angel' or 'man as a risen ape', all take for granted that we are 'up-right beings'. We can add that this mode of being is a silent background for the deployment of the world with regions of up and down, above and below – regions not available for beings who are purely in a homogeneous, geometric space composed of indifferent points. Moreover, we also take for granted a silent and yet acting body with other orientations: left-right, front-back and, of course, up-down. Thus, the body orientations open six distinct dimensions, six interrelated and yet diverse asymmetrical regions. The simple box of homogeneous world, divisible into mathematical points, allowing a physiological body to be located in it, could not move from here to there without assuming an oriented and active body communicating places in front, behind, to the left, higher and 'beyond' the visible horizon. It is obvious that a homogeneous space, understood as a sum of indifferent points, could not even offer us any awareness of extension, such as from here to there is 100 meters, or that it looks like the airplane is flying 10 km above the earth. While making such claims under the assumption of homogeneous space, we are introducing a silent dimension which communicates our understanding of being engaged with oriented body activity (Stroeker 1986). The acting body signifies the dimensions of orientation which open diverse regions for the deployment

of phenomena, their distances, accesses, availability and beginning with the most common things in our surroundings. The chair is behind the table, the coffee cup is on the table and the bakery is across the street. And the dog is looking at the door telling the owner that it wants to go out. This defies the box in which not even extension of space is possible but also comprises the silent understanding of linguistic rules, specifically with claims that our behaviour depends on the rules of some language game. When one is instructed how to play chess by such terms as 'the castle can move only forward or sideways in straight lines, one's instruction assumes a silent communication of body activities'. The oriented activities cannot be reduced to some 'subjective' impositions but are part of lived awareness of orientations by others. As Stroeker points out, 'the oriented, practical body functions in a way that the directions are not completely exchangeable. What is up front, reachable by a forward movement is distinct from what is in the back, and the latter is present as a virtual continuation of the forward movement, best reached in directional reversal. The same can be said of left-right orientations which, in many cases can overlap when reaching for something that requires both hands. The up-down is equally a coordinate movement which anyone can read as their own movement. The traditionally conceived structure of practical activity concerned with ends-means relationship would be impossible without the assumption that we express such ends-means on the background of the oriented body as a mobile field of functions' (Stroeker 1986: 57).

There are many claims that we are dominated by cultural 'unconscious' and multiple discourses, and yet despite the different discourses we are directly aware of the meaning of the claims that gods are 'up', and demons are 'down', that some ideologies are of the 'left' and others are of the 'right' persuasions, we are moving 'forward' and making progress and thus facing a brighter tomorrow, and the bright tomorrow depends on 'higher education' which would allow us to leave the 'lower' class and move up to the 'middle' class. The composition of the dimensional orientations also communicates silently our social architecture (Mickunas 2019). Our architectural constructs have fronts and backs, 'up' one floor and 'down' another, show their left and right sides and even account for our understanding of the positions of occupants of architectural constructs: the 'top' floor is for the 'top' executive, while lower floors signify lesser beings on the 'upward' ladder of success. Our carts, wagons and vehicles have 'front' and 'rear' seats, our bus drivers do not have to explain the meaning of a request 'please move to the rear of the bus'; this silent communication is our oriented bodies. We move 'forward to face' the future and leave the past 'behind', favouring the frontal movement not only as spatial, but also as temporal orientation. We not only move from here to there, but from now to then and open new 'frontiers'. This activity includes planning taking into account, and yet understood because we know what it means to say that we are leaving some tasks behind, and are looking forward to engage in new ventures. Such a linguistic interpretation may be historical, but without the frontal orientation the language of history and goals would make no sense. The entire Soviet experiment was completely 'forward' looking ahead to better days, building the forward movement of history, of progress, and leaving the decadent past behind. The very historical language of overcoming, building a future is a frontal language (Mickunas 1977). In this sense, the historical hermeneutics, reading all events in a given historical context, requires a functional lived body with its asymmetrical activities. The silent activities of the dimensional body are ever present in any discourse as the very fabric of understanding of our dynamically oriented activities and lifeworld.

To speak of situations, of a specific context, is to introduce the perceiving body both as singular and general. The latter mediates between conceptual terms, historically sediment

intersubjective rules, and the objects present in our tasks. When we deal with laws, or linguistic rules, even moral prescripts and general ontological prejudgments, we make sense of them in a situation, because the situation itself is not a simple local fact but communicates a corporeal generality which is not quite encompassed by conceptual constructs, but neither is it totally individualistic and singular. The richness of awareness requires the richness of the phenomena such that the latter cannot be captured by some linguistic metaphors or even analogies. Our various practices and engagement in tasks provide a more fundamental grasp of analogies, of comparisons as practical communication between bodily activities and world. A simple task of cleaning a yard can be performed by finding what is 'handy': a broom, a bundle of short branches or even an automatic blower. Despite their differences, they are analogates of each other due to the generality of 'I can' find something 'handy'. The hand itself is capable of such 'generality'. All technologies are analogical extensions of such general handiness, transgressing categorical distinctions. In this sense, most of our tasks are an open field to such analogical generalities and can be read globally. One needs not speak Japanese to understand the activities of Japanese doing their tasks whether sweeping a sidewalk or directing a robot which also 'embodies' our analogical abilities.

The practical activities can be widened or narrowed due to the task and the field that the task discloses. In short, the task deploys a specific composition of a space of locations and actions. Cooking a dinner opens the locations of implements and produce and each has its place which is never a point in the Euclidean box. The pot is in the cabin, on the second shelf, next to the frying pan, while the spoon is in the drawer among other utensils. Here our activities are narrowed down to a specific location of a kitchen and its 'active' composition of space and indeed time. Once the soup starts boiling I shall have to put some pepper in it. The acting body is the very situation of preparing a meal and completely intertwined with the places of implements and produce. The place of something is usually taken for granted due to sedimented body habits of the acting subject. Something is always 'there' and can be reached without 'looking'. But such places and times can be transformed and broadened. One reaches for the pepper in the usual place and it is not there, immediately interrogating the actor with a question 'what happened' or 'let me look around' and thus reorient the activities and normal places. Indeed, the space and time can be opened up with a question whether I shall go to the shop to get some pepper which is 'there' and 'then'. This world of active orientations is the silent communication, both local and global. One could call it 'contingent generality'. If one has to go to the shop for pepper, one is not in a space with precise points, but is engaged in a generality of the situation that is signified by the missing pepper and equally accessible to others even if in a slightly different way. Such articulation involves the identity of the I can by others insofar as they also can do similar activities of going to same or different places (Mickunas 2015).

ACTIVE SELF AND OTHER

The 'situated generality' of our activities is not only 'mine' but also 'our' to the extent that we do not start from a beginning but find ourselves with others with whom we engage in common tasks and taken for granted places and times of our world. Here the presence of the other is not an object to be investigated in order to prove that he or she exists. The other is 'next' to me and is coextensive with the field of places and times disclosed by a task. Thus, we do not confront the other in an effort to discover what meanings the other might 'project' by the use of some mass medium devised to send a message which would allow a passive

receiver to make sense of the message the medium carries; at the outset we communicate through the meaning of the perceptual phenomena and the ways our being toward the world intertwine our activities. When a person asks me how to get to a book store, I instruct him to go down this street for two blocks, then turn left and walk past a fast food restaurant and turn a corner, also to the left and there you will see a sign 'books for sale'. My arm gestures sketch the spatial composition beyond the visual range, and yet the person understands their communication. We already are in the presence of 'inter-corporeal world'. His movements are a larger trace of my hand gestures; they take over and fill in kinesthetically the composition of my oriented gestures composing the space and its shape resulting in the finding of a specific place.

There are countless accounts how to understand the other, and one of them is an invention of psychological empathy. We somehow can 'feel' what the other feels. I see that he is troubled about something and I can 'empathise' with his feeling evoking in myself such feelings. While this account might appear adequate, it defeats itself on the basis of modern ontology of physiological bodies present in a pre-given location in space and time. Yet the primal encounter is the seeing of what I and he can do and what he needs of me. His actions indicate directly what the other needs and how I can 'fill in' what he calls for. This is the active level where the term empathy can be modified by 'filling in'. Even in a simple situation when someone is indisposed and cannot perform some activity, he/she may ask someone else to 'fill in for me'. I cannot come to teach today; please take over and fill in for me. We do fill in for someone at the job, by performing her task, or by lending a hand. All these ways of filling in suggest a commonality and a variation. This is active body individuation and inter-corporeal awareness that subtends both the conceptual universality and empirical singularity and constitutes a primal level of reflexivity, of direct apperception of the abilities of both active bodies and their commonality and differentiation. I am trying to reach something but cannot, while she can reach and show both our ability of reaching and their difference: she can reach higher than I can. Here the ability of what I can is prior to the pure I, since the former is a recognition of myself as having abilities and of others as having the same abilities but differentiated by the extent such abilities can accomplish the same task. This is an inter-corporeal reflexivity constituting commonality and differentiations.

The silent communication of bodily activities is the most basic constituents of self-reflexivity which are also self-reference. In a missed reaching for an apple, the latter reflects why one missed to reach it and how one must stand on his toes to extend the reach. The very missing is a reflective movement which turns back upon itself and suggests variation for a second attempt. The missed movement opens a kinesthetic question: how else I can do this, communicating a field of possible variations of extended and different abilities. Before any psychologically invented 'mirror image' one constitutes a recognition of oneself in terms of what one can do in distinction from what others can do. To have an awareness of an Ego as some center of the self, one recognises singular abilities as 'mine' in terms of what 'I can'. At the outset, such kinesthetic reflexivity allows one to differentiate oneself from the others. The postulating of an ego as 'I think' does not account for individuality, since the thinking that $2 + 2 = 4$ is identical for everyone and has no signs of an individual which could be differentiated from others. But 'I cannot do this' shows my awareness that others can. The correlation of abilities and inabilities is an inter-corporeal experience present in the handling of tasks and undertakings. Corporeal abilities comprise an understanding of commonalities and individuating differences.

The common awareness requires a common task of our engagements and the variation of activities focused on the same task. We lift the same thing, but we do so from different sides. I cannot lift that end because it is heavier, but you can reveal that I can lift the other, lighter end. We have a common task and discover a common activity of lifting with corporeal differentiation. This can be called a polycentric, inter-corporal field of activities and might include others who are not present at the task. 'It would be nice if Joe were here – he is a weight lifter and could lift anything,' suggesting that the abilities of Joe are coextensive with, and differentiated from our abilities. Here we encounter once more the notion of 'empathy' or filling in with what we can do to 'lend a hand' as the task indicates. From this follows the very notion of direct awareness of what is needed and what the others need from us. I can see a person struggling to climb the stairs and 'know' how to give him a hand to keep his balance and upward lift by his elbow. This is corporeal individuation – he is being helped by holding on to a rail by the steps and I can be the prop from the other side – forming an inter-corporeal field that is neither a simple fact, nor an essence; it subtends both. Thus, the I is prior to the pure I, since the former is individuated and differentiated from others, and yet is directly aware of them as well as of itself (Mickunas, Pilotta 2018).

Scholars write and people read the histories of great deed, the founding of empires, victories and defeats, the building of fortresses and cities, and assume that we understand the past of the world. No doubt, in fact, from such histories we attempt to decipher our future and even find legitimation for our place in the world. Yet these depictions are communicated on the silent background of bodily activity. We know that the charge of the Light Brigade was a forward movement and that the soldiers knew to mount their horses to make sure that they face in the same direction as the horses. We ask of archeologists and even architects what abilities were required of the Egyptians to 'lift' those huge blocks up, how to move them from there to here and how to make handy tools to shape those blocks to fit other blocks; an archeologist will find a pile of stones and through them he will see 'ruins' which once were a fortress built on the basis of bodily orientations and abilities and proclaim that 'This is how they built this fortress,' implying that we too understand that we could build such a fortress – 'We can.' History is not thought but made and many contemporary members of specific cultures proudly point to monuments and proclaim: 'We Incas built them' and invite the tourists to marvel what Incas can do. The buildings, the monuments, the discoveries of ruins and implements allow an archeologist, a historian and an anthropologist to decipher the history of a given people, whether the find is the ruins of Troy or a shard of a broken pot. Before the scholars and researchers think of historical time 'when' such a palace was built or this arrowhead was made, the scholar understands these findings on the basis of human corporeal abilities – they made the arrowhead, they lifted those stones, and they placed ornaments on the pot. What the scholars encounter it as an analogate of what they could do with this object and imply that we too already recognise that we could equally do similar things (Mickunas, Pilotta 2018). As meager and fragile our corporeal abilities are, they 'can' extend themselves through vast making of implements which reach beyond our physical strength and perceptual horizon. We do not see what is happening in Malaysia, but we have a 'distant vision', a 'tele-vision' which we take for granted that what it sees is a direct, bodily presence of what we see. The Hubble telescope peers into distant galaxies and sees the 'big bang'. And all this is on the basis of contingent generality of 'I can.'

CONCLUSIONS

There is no necessary interconnection among all activities; some are continued, others discontinued, and still others postponed, thus constituting varied time structures and task formations that prohibit any teleological direction to history. With such a prohibition, any quest for history as something, that is unidirectional and above the activities and tasks that build it, ceases to make sense. The activities are, of course, interconnected in various ways, inclusive of the above delimited commonalities and differentiations, yet they comprise a field without a telos, without a direction and hence a continuous building but not in any sense temporal building. It is rather an atemporal intersection of activities wherein the so-called past and the presumed future, as ontologising, come too late. In brief, the lived world as historical is a world of praxis that does not admit either of essentiality or of facticity; rather both are coextensive with a 'primordial technē.' Any given society in its practical tasks also composes a specific sedimented activities of bodies and inter-corporeal awareness that comprise a silent background as concrete and general consciousness.

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Tylioji komunikacija

Santrauka

Šio straipsnio užduotis – atverti veiklius komunikacijos patirties klodus, kurie yra ir vietiniai, ir bendri. Jie atpažįstami visose civilizacijose ir sudaro prielaidas antropologų, istorikų ir archeologų tyrinėjimams. Šie klodai yra kūniškos veiklos, susidedančios iš šešių veiklos orientacijų: aukštyn-žemyn, priekin-atgal, kairėn-dešinėn. Visa bendruomenės architektūra, praktinių priemonių sistemos, orientuotos erdvės ir laikai yra įrašyti tiek specifinių kūno veiklos situacijų, tiek visuotinės komunikacijos patirties. Net ir kalbos sudaro šių tylių, nors veiklių, klodų atmainas: mes žvelgiame į ateitį (orientacija į priekį), mes paliekame praeitį (ji dingsta užnugaryje), randasi aukštos ir žemos bendruomenės klasės, kairieji ir dešinieji politiniai judesiai. Šie tylūs klodai yra „atsitiktinai universalūs“.

Raktažodžiai: veiklos laukai, kūniška situacija, tarpkūniškumas, gyvenamosios erdvės ir laikai, bendruomenės arkitektonika